

INSPECTION REPORT

WOOLTON HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Newbury

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116076

Headteacher: Mr. D. H. Gent

Reporting inspector: Carol Worthington
20609

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th June 2001

Inspection number: 192169

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Woolton Hill Newbury
Postcode:	RG20 9XE
Telephone number:	01635 253364
Fax number:	01635 255144
Email number:	whjs@woolton-hill-jun.hants.sch.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. G. W. Archer
Date of previous inspection:	24 th February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20609	Carol Worthington	Registered inspector	Science Design and Technology Music	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9624	Graeme Norval	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?
17517	Vreta Bagilhole	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities English History Geography	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15011	Marion Wallace	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and Communications Technology Art Physical Education Religious Education Special Educational Needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Bedford Primary Inspections
2 Grange Lane
Cople
Bedford
MK44 3TT

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woolton Hill is a smaller than average sized Junior school on the Hampshire/Berkshire border serving the local village and rural community. Social and economic circumstances vary greatly from local authority housing and tied cottages to private detached houses, but is generally above average. There are 159 pupils on roll aged 7 to 11 years, all of whom are white; one is bilingual. The six classes are vertically grouped with two years in each. An above average percentage of pupils (38) is currently on the special educational needs register; two pupils have statements. Attainment on entry to the school is above average. Eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school, with some excellent features. Standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communications technology (ICT), physical education and religious education are all well above average. Teaching is very good, enabling all pupils to achieve their full potential. Leadership and management are excellent. The head teacher is well respected, and the school has excellent links with the community and other schools. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The standards in English, mathematics, science, physical education, religious education and ICT are very high
- It has excellent leadership and management
- It has very good teaching
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs
- There are excellent links with the community and other schools
- It promotes very good attitudes and behaviour from its pupils
- It provides excellent training for newly qualified and student teachers
- The head teacher seizes every opportunity to obtain funds from other sources

What could be improved

- There are no key aspects of the school's provision which require special attention to effect improvement

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1997, since when improvement has been very good. All key issues from that inspection have been successfully addressed. Areas identified for development, such as science and technology, have received very good attention, and have now become considerable strengths. Leadership and management have improved; leadership is now excellent with the head teacher, his deputy, the subject managers and the governing body playing their roles to capacity. Standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communications technology (ICT), physical education and religious education have improved and are now well above average. Standards in all other subjects have also improved to be above average. Evidence was insufficient to judge the standard of music at the end of the key stage. The school has very good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards have improved since the last inspection, and have been consistently high in science, in which they rose dramatically after the last inspection and have remained considerably well above average since then. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average, and in most years they leave school well above average. The standard of work seen in English, mathematics and science was well above average. The school meets or exceeds its targets each year. Standards seen in ICT, physical education and religious education were also well above average. Those in all other subjects are judged to be above average, except music, where the standard seen was not as high as reported in the last inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school; they show great enthusiasm and pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are polite and show a good sense of social responsibility.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils show a mature and responsible attitude to their work and readily undertake monitoring duties in all years. Older ones take responsibility as prefects and as team captains.
Attendance	Good, and above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:		aged 7-11 years	
Lessons seen overall	34	Very good	

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

The quality of teaching is very good overall. Of the 34 lessons observed, 12 per cent were excellent, 67 per cent were very good, and 12 per cent were good. None was unsatisfactory. English and mathematics are very well taught through the established literacy and numeracy strategies, producing very high standards of work. Teachers adapt the literacy strategy to meet the needs of their pupils, effecting high standards in writing, in particular. The teaching of physical education and religious education is also very good. Teachers have a systematic approach to lessons in all subjects, and effectively challenge every pupil throughout, enabling them to learn very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides a good variety of learning opportunities. Provision for the literacy and numeracy strategies is very good, resulting in high standards. There are particular strengths in links with the community and in extracurricular activity in physical education, where there is high quality provision in all aspects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Support is put where it is most needed and is, therefore, effective in raising standards pupils attain. Pupils are quickly identified and specific needs are addressed precisely. This is very successful as these pupils generally achieve at least the national average standards. Documentation is excellent.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for moral education is very good. For spiritual, social and cultural development, it is good. Provision for personal and social education is also good. The school prepares pupils well for life in multi-cultural Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. The school monitors its pupils' academic performance and personal development well. The school works very well in partnership with parents, who are enthusiastically supportive of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The head teacher is a well respected leader who has excellent vision for the development of the school, and is well supported by his deputy. He delegates responsibility well to subject managers who ensure the maintenance of high standards and future development of their subjects. The school gives priority to the training of newly qualified teachers and students, in which it is most successful.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. The governing body fulfils all its responsibilities in a most efficient way and, with the excellent leadership of its chairman, is corporately committed to the school
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. This is successfully carried out by all staff together. The school improvement plan has clear priorities and is well matched to the needs of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school applies the principles of best value very well in consideration of its performance, and in purchasing goods and staff training.

The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. The support staff are very committed to the school and make a most valuable contribution. Accommodation is satisfactory and improving with new building in progress; learning resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are very happy at this school • Standards of attainment • Standards of behaviour • High expectation of children's work • Good leadership and management • They find the school approachable • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the promptness of marking of homework • information about their children's progress • the school's links with parents • provision for extracurricular activities, particularly music

Inspectors agree with all the positive comments made by parents. They also agree that provision for music could be better, but find the criticism of extracurricular provision unjustified. The school is doing all it can to find ways of improving music, both in class and extracurricular, after the loss of the previous subject manager. Inspectors found the marking of homework to be rigorous and prompt, and the information about children's progress good. The school's links with parents are very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communications technology (ICT), physical education and religious education are well above average; those for art, design and technology, history and geography are above average. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about music at the end of the key stage.
2. Pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests for 11 year-olds in 2000 was well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, the standard of mathematics was well above average; that of English and science was above average. A particularly strong feature of these standards was the number of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in all subjects, which was well above average. In mathematics, 8 per cent of pupils, identified as gifted, achieved level 6, which is exceptional for juniors. There were also far fewer pupils failing to achieve the expected level 4 in all three core subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve well in national tests. This shows how the school successfully provides for all its pupils, and gets the best from them. The standards achieved by the school in the National Curriculum tests have steadily risen since the last inspection and at a rate higher than the national trend. In general, boys have done slightly better than girls in the last three years, but in 2000, girls' performance was better than boys' in English, mathematics and science.
3. In English, standards of reading were observed to be well above average. All pupils are competent readers of fiction, plays, fables and poetry, and have clear views on what they like to read and which authors please them. They learn to read with expression and to use the punctuation to guide their voices. They find information in the library and on the internet. In the lowest set of 11 year-olds, pupils were seen reading 'Back home' by Amy Johnson in an animated way, which showed they understood its Caribbean background, and empathised with the writer. Higher ability pupils competently read text for and against capital punishment containing words such as 'homicide' and 'psychologist'.
4. Pupils' writing is above average for their age; they write plays about the Pied Piper, do character studies and write their own versions of stories, or police reports, for example, with very good attention to grammar and punctuation and with the use of comparative and superlative adjectives. They are skilled in writing poetry and show a good understanding about different styles of poems. Higher ability pupils design a brochure, showing a good awareness of content, layout and design. Written work is extended into other subjects, as seen in design and technology where older pupils took clearly written notes when the teacher talked about steps to be undertaken in making a product. The pupils with statements of special educational need achieve well. They write well reasoned arguments, for example, as to why football should be banned from the playground saying 'The ball goes onto the muddy field and children get very dirty.' They write whole sentences, and are beginning to use inverted commas and capital letters properly. Improvement in handwriting is evident as these pupils develop clarity and style as the year progresses.

5. Pupils' speaking and listening is above average; they speak articulately and are able to sustain an argument, as seen in a debate in religious education about the nature of the origins of the universe, where they showed great ability to reason and argue for the existence of God. They are used to presenting their work to others during plenary sessions when, for example, describing how they had used tracing paper to show reflective symmetry in mathematics.
6. Standards in mathematics are well above average. Higher ability pupils in the top set understand reflective symmetry to the point where they confidently reflect a quadrilateral through the x and y axes, even when it overlaps the origin, and use their knowledge of co-ordinates to generate shapes. Average pupils detect straight away when their teacher made a deliberate error in reflecting a triangle from one quadrant to another on the board. Their knowledge of mathematical vocabulary was impressive, and they explained clearly how their teacher had gone wrong.
7. Mental mathematics develops well, and pupils explain the way they work out answers. The majority of 11 year-olds know their multiplication tables and use them well. They are confident in the use of the four rules of number, measure length and capacity in the correct units, and analyse data with a high degree of competence, often using ICT to draw line graphs and bar charts, but it is not used sufficiently by higher ability pupils.
8. In science, attainment is well above average. Year 6 pupils have a very good knowledge of all aspects of science; they confidently describe several different methods of separating mixtures, such as sand and salt, using correct terminology, for example 'dissolve' and 'evaporation'. They show very good understanding of the nature of sound, able to relate the pitch of sound produced to the length of, for example, a stretched string or column of air. They talk unself-consciously about the changes their own bodies are undergoing, and find their early studies of genetics fascinating, able to trace characteristics such as eye colour through their families.
9. Pupils' books show a good emphasis on the development of scientific enquiry and investigative skills. Average pupils understand and use terms 'hypothesis' and 'prediction', and those of higher ability identify variables which need to be controlled to perform a fair test in investigations, such as the effect of friction caused by different surfaces as a model car runs down a ramp. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) to draw graphs, and those of higher ability predict how their current study of spreadsheets will be very useful in science. They also use the internet to research the solar system, and are very well motivated by this. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and reach at least average standards because of the identification of their specific learning difficulties.
10. Standards in art are above average. Pupils in Year 6 have good knowledge of the style and technique used by a range of artists. They describe the characteristic style of Mondrian, Monet, and Van Gogh. They know facts and information about their lives. Good links with ICT enable pupils to produce a range of attractive pictures using the computer.
11. In design and technology, standards are above average. Pupils aged 11 have a good knowledge of the design process and their current project to design and make fair ground rides exemplified this well. They have done good research, designed and made simple prototypes of big wheels and carousels, and are now at the point

- of making the final product, due to be enhanced by computer control as a result of their teachers' recent in-service training project.
12. Standards in geography and history are above average and have improved in both subjects since the last inspection. By the age of 11, pupils have a good knowledge of countries and major towns of the world and place them on a map. They locate places on a map of the world where they have been on holiday, such as Miami, France and Scotland. Although no history lessons were seen, it is clear from the evidence of pupils' work and teachers' planning, that standards are above those expected of 11 year-olds nationally. They have a good understanding of the need for evidence, and use it well, for example, in the identification of an evacuee from the contents of his suitcase.
 13. Standards in ICT have risen since the last inspection and are now well above average. Most 11 year-olds use the computer to communicate their ideas in a variety of forms such as text, pictures, tables and graphs. They know how to store data and use it to collate and organise information, using bar and line graphs and pie graphs, for example, to communicate findings of their research in science. They have a good knowledge of the keyboard and explain the different functions, use the word processor and spreadsheets competently, and higher ability pupils have made a presentations using power-point, explaining confidently how they made the background, added cartoons and music.
 14. Insufficient evidence was available to make firm judgements about the standard of music. Only one lesson in the lower school was seen in which pupils showed average ability for their age in the understanding of a graphic score. Singing and recorder playing in assembly was satisfactorily in tune. There are some good musicians in the school who have instrumental lessons. However, it was evident from the lack of musical activity that the standard of music is not as high as at the time of the last inspection when there was plenty of extracurricular ensemble work, both vocal and instrumental.
 15. Physical education is well above average. Pupils in Year 6 have developed a very good knowledge and a high level of performance in all aspects of the subject. All pupils demonstrate good style when sprinting; body lean is correct, arm action is effective and co-ordinated, knee lift and stride are good. Pupils show developing style as they run confidently over low hurdles extending their stride rather than jumping high. They have a good understanding of the principles of attack and defence, and about gaining and losing possession of the ball in an invasion game. In swimming, many pupils are well on course to exceed the expected standard for 11 year-olds. Talented pupils who attend swimming clubs cannot improve their standards in lesson, because all pupils are taught the same skills.
 16. Standards in religious education are well above those expected for children this age. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate very good knowledge of Christianity, Judaism and Hindu religions, and empathise well with people who have different religious beliefs. They have a very good understanding and explain elements associated with religion, such as ceremonies and holy books, and this enables them to gain understanding of different cultures created by religious beliefs.
 17. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very good standards, according to their ability, completing work in all subjects alongside others, often with support in the classroom. They receive appropriate individual help in small groups for literacy and numeracy, and personal support in individual sessions with the co-ordinator for

special educational needs. Pupils in Year 4, for example, made very good progress in reading because they read books at a suitable level of challenge, and enjoyed it. The smaller working group, continual checking and the support in class are all very effective. Pupils generally achieve the targets identified on their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Ninety six per cent of the parents who returned the 'Parents' Questionnaire' indicated that their children like school. Evidence from the inspection supports them. Pupils' attitudes to their work are always at least good: in 81 per cent of lessons observed, pupils' attitudes were excellent or very good. Most pupils listen carefully, are interested in what they have been asked to do, contribute to discussions and sustain their concentration well. Pupils respond well to the pace and challenge that feature in most lessons; they want to do well and are eager to participate.
19. The local authority conducted a survey of 5,483 Year 6 school leavers in July 2000; thirty-eight records from Woolton Hill were included. The results showed that pupils from this school were generally more responsive, enthusiastic and interested in their work and progressed better than the average. Their attitudes to work and their response to very good teaching made a strong impact upon the very good progress observed in this inspection.
20. The last inspection concluded that behaviour was generally good. It has improved, and is now very good throughout the school. Pupils' consideration, initiative, ability to work and play with each other, and their ability to relate easily to teachers and visitors reflect the standards expected at this school. There was no evidence during the inspection of bullying, sexism or racism. There are very successful boys', girls' and mixed teams in various sports. Pupils show respect for property and this is evident in the tidiness of the school site and the way in which pupils care for their environment. Pupils have decorated and signed rubbish bins in the playground, for example. 99 per cent of parents returning the inspection questionnaire felt that the school achieves good standards of behaviour. Inspection evidence concurs.
21. The school acts within the guidelines set by the local authority when deciding to exclude pupils, as demonstrated last year when five pupils flagrantly disobeyed rules regarding personal safety and exhibited persistently unacceptable behaviour. Where possible, measures are taken to provide further support for such pupils affected. There has been one exclusion this year.
22. Relationships in the school are good; this has a positive effect on pupils' progress. They collaborate on projects and work well together. During lessons, when pupils' work is shown, there is often spontaneous applause. At play, pupils of various ages and backgrounds mix happily together. There is obvious and mutual high respect between staff and pupils.
23. Pupils willingly accept responsibility; classroom monitors, for example, return attendance registers to the office. Although there is no school council, pupils' sense of initiative is very strong. When the dance club ceased, for instance, pupils asked if they could continue on their own. Year 6 pupils are elected as prefects for library and computer duties, and contribute around the school in other ways, such as helping to run assemblies. The House system is effective in supporting the high standards of behaviour and is developing to generate team spirit in competitive games.

24. Pupils with special educational needs are happy and secure within their class and smaller support groups. They relate very well to their classmates and adults. This good relationship gives them the confidence to join in with all school activities and explore new areas of learning. Pupils work well in the classroom, with good levels of concentration, and are eager to learn. They are encouraged to work independently and like to do so. They respond well to the firm and consistent implementation of the behaviour code that they experience throughout the school.
25. The good overall attendance is above the national average although it has declined very slightly since the last inspection. Unauthorised absence is negligible. Punctuality is good. This helps teachers to start the day promptly and pupils to gain the maximum benefit from lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

26. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Of the 34 lessons observed, 12 per cent were excellent, 67 per cent were very good, and 12 per cent were good. None was unsatisfactory.
27. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is very good. The work of subject managers in disseminating their expertise is particularly effective, especially where teachers have identified areas where they need to improve. The results of in-service training on control work in design and technology, for example, were seen in the classroom, and teachers were honest in saying that this was a new area in which everyone would be learning, throughout the forthcoming project. This motivated pupils well because they were made to feel that their contribution would be valued. The effects of teachers' very good knowledge in science was evident from the standard of work seen in the books of pupils' of all abilities, and is well above average in all aspects of science, enabling higher ability pupils in particular to obtain standards which would not be out of place in the next key stage.
28. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well. Literacy, in particular, is a strength of the school, and the literacy hour has been very well adapted by the school to cater for all abilities of its above average intake, so that time is devoted to writing outside the literacy hour. This enables pupils to demonstrate expertise in writing for many different purposes, such as formal letters or advertising. Literacy is very well developed in other subjects, for example in science, where pupils wrote a comic strip story aptly illustrating the life of a water molecule in the water cycle. They also write structured reports of their science investigations. In mathematics, the importance of correct vocabulary was emphasised by pupils' inability to draw shapes, such as triangles, for example, when only a general description of 'three sides' was given, helping pupils realise the significance of the terms 'isosceles', 'scalene' and 'equilateral'. In religious education, extended writing is an integral part of the subject.
29. Numeracy is well established through the National Numeracy Strategy and, again, well adapted to the needs of all pupils through effective setting throughout the school, which enables higher ability pupils to extend their learning, and those of lower ability to be given specific help in small classes with support assistants. Gifted and talented mathematicians are provided for by extra sessions out of normal lesson time.

30. Teaching of ICT skills has improved since the last inspection and is now very good; good use is made of the co-ordinator's valuable expertise in teaching other Year 5/6 classes as well as his own, and teachers encourage pupils to use ICT in all curriculum areas. Good use is made of student teachers in guiding pupils with research projects on such topics as 'The Planets of the Solar System'; pupils use data analysis well in geography and science, though data logging using sensors is in early stages.
31. Teachers' planning is very good; this is an improvement since the last inspection. They take their shorter term plans from the schemes of work mostly based on guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). They plan weekly for literacy and numeracy, providing for all abilities by setting pupils for English and mathematics, and then providing further for differing abilities in most lessons. A very good feature of the planning is the way in which the results of assessment are fully used to plan the next stage of the curriculum. There were several examples in literacy and numeracy where pupils had not reached the standard expected, and teachers had changed planning in order to go over work in different contexts. In a mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher had assessed pupils' performance on the previous day and judged they needed more practice in rounding up after division. This was successful in reinforcing the concept, and pupils were able to demonstrate their improvement by the end of the lesson. They could work out, for example, that if articles cost £4 each, they could not buy more than three if they only had £15 to spend, but that if there were four people to a taxi, 15 people would need four cars.
32. Teachers use a very good variety of teaching methods, ranging from whole class teaching - especially at the beginning and end of lessons – to individual work which may be a research project or work under close guidance of the teaching assistant. They effectively build on the good team skills evident in the pupils; in many lessons, paired and small group work are strong features, and pupils are often asked to discuss and debate. Year 5/6 pupils, for example, in an excellent religious education lesson were asked to debate the origin of the universe, considering the issues of God as creator versus the Big Bang. Pupils rose to this occasion and a very lively, informed and spirited discussion ensued in which pupils showed their very good ability to debate and argue a cause. In science and design and technology, practical work is planned for in most lessons, and pupils spoke with enjoyment about this when, for example, investigating the effect of air resistance on different sizes of parachute. They said that, although they knew their timing was not very accurate, they could see the effect of having a large canopy as the parachute fell, and hence have a good idea of the relationship between gravity and air resistance for falling objects.
33. Teachers keep a brisk pace to lessons, and no time is wasted; lessons start promptly. Teachers make the best use of all resources, including teaching assistants, students and equipment. A good example of this was in an ICT lesson where the teacher firstly demonstrated spreadsheets on the classroom computer, then sent pupils in pairs to make good use of the computers in the practical area of both upper and lower school. The result was that all pupils had sufficient time on the computer to complete the spreadsheet the teacher had set, including devising a formula for finding total of the cost of a holiday. They also had time to make a shopping list for their own room, which elicited some fanciful ideas and also enabled them to understand how a spreadsheet works. Teachers have high expectations of all their pupils, including those with special educational needs. They plan work accordingly and targets for improvement are well understood. Learning support

assistants all know what they are expected to do with these pupils and enable them to make good progress. In a religious education lesson, for example, one assistant helped a pupil with little confidence to work independently with such success that this pupil was soon putting up her hand to answer questions in front of the whole class.

34. Learning support assistants are very well deployed, particularly in the lower sets in English and mathematics. Teachers' very good planning takes into account not only the lesson objectives but also pupils' individual education plans, which enables these pupils to make very good progress in, for example, identifying complex rhyming patterns of a poem and to go on to write their own. Pupils were further guided in this by the teachers' well-constructed writing frame.
35. Teachers manage their classes very well, and there is always sufficient work. Pupils are very well behaved; this is because they are so well motivated and involved in their lessons, which always challenge their intellect.
36. Teachers set homework regularly. It is sufficient and of a high standard, further extending the taught curriculum at home. Some parents at the pre-inspection meeting said they thought that homework was not marked properly, but there was no evidence of this in pupils' books, in which marking was completely up-to-date.

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

37. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. All subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and personal, social and health education are extensively covered. English, mathematics, science, physical and religious education are particularly good. Religious education is taught for the appropriate amount of time as a class lesson and during literacy. Science had a low profile at the time of the last inspection and did not meet statutory requirements. The school put into place an action plan to improve the curriculum in this subject. A new science co-ordinator was appointed and given non-contact time for a term to plan and implement a new science curriculum. As a result the subject now has a very high profile in the school and standards are high. Good improvements have also been made in the curriculum for design and technology and information and communication technology, both of which now fully meet statutory requirements. The curriculum ensures equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. Time allocation for subjects is good; this is another very good improvement since the previous inspection.
38. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been fully implemented and are very effective. High priority has been given to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Following evaluation of the outcomes of the Literacy Strategy, the school has made certain effective adaptations. Extra lessons for writing in each class are planned weekly to improve standards. There are good opportunities for pupils to read, write and speak at length during the day.
39. The school provides a broad range of worthwhile opportunities, which meet the interest, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils, including those having special educational needs. Physical activities are particularly well catered for and pupils take part in a very good range of local sports competitions that often progress into county events. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum,

such as the twice weekly lunchtime tables club, which has made a noticeable impact on pupils' numeracy. Other clubs provide for dance, gymnastics, football, netball, tag rugby, cricket, recorder, needlework and crafts. There is also a violin group.

40. The curriculum is planned very well for the development and progression of pupils' knowledge and understanding. There are detailed and effective long and medium term plans for all subjects, which are well evaluated and then improved. Pupils are taught mainly in ability sets for English and mathematics, and this has had a very good impact on standards. The school has identified that, since the specialist teacher left, the school's plans for music need to be reviewed.
41. The school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. They are identified early, and the school reviews the register regularly. Pupils are moved up and down the register according to their needs. They have access to all areas of the curriculum and the appropriate range of learning opportunities. The provision within and without the classroom ensures this. Documentation is excellent. Observation records and the listening and behaviour diaries are rigorously recorded.
42. The provision for gifted and talented pupils has improved, and they are now consistently given challenging work in most subjects. Those gifted in mathematics in Year 5, for example, attend a 'Maths Master Class' after school at a partner comprehensive school, and another school has planned to host an able child group challenge in July. However, all pupils are taught the same in swimming, whatever their ability, and some computer programmes in mathematics do not stretch the gifted and talented.
43. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Issues, such as developing a healthy lifestyle and a respect for other people's feelings, are effectively explored through a programme for all year groups. It is taught as a separate subject and also overlaps with science. Pupils have opportunities to understand the dangers of drugs, and all staff attend the related training. Appropriate sex education is given to older pupils. Year 6 attend a Junior Citizen Day involving the rescue and utility services.
44. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The daily assemblies have religious content, and consideration for others, justice and responsibility are dominant themes. A visitor from a local Christian trust takes assembly regularly, following the planned programme. There are opportunities for reflection and quiet times when pupils can contemplate on the content of the assembly. Religious education lessons have an excellent impact on developing pupils' spiritual development. Opportunities to develop aesthetic appreciation, for example, elicit pupils' reflection on the beauty of the world. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 write their own verse of a poem entitled 'Our beautiful world', and pupils in Years 3 and 4 write about the beauty of whales. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of awe and wonder in other lessons. In ICT, for example, they show wonder when they see the teacher unfold the possibilities of a painting package. Pupils' work is very well presented and their workbooks display the pride and pleasure that they have in their work.
45. The provision for moral development is very good. Pupils have a clear sense of what is right and wrong and respond very well to the school's expectation of

behaviour. There is a long established system of rewards through house points. Consistently good behaviour entitles the pupils to a privilege reward where they can choose from different activities for a short time each week, and the highly valued 'Cedric' award, given by the lunchtime controllers, is presented each week to the class that exhibits the best behaviour in the playground. Good opportunities to discuss moral issues are planned by teachers, such as a debate in English for and against capital punishment. Pupils are very proud of their school and respect the buildings and resources. They are very polite and friendly and relate well to their peers and to all adults. All staff are very caring and provide good role models. Teachers are totally trusted by the pupils. They notice and deal with any incidents of bullying in a fair and constructive manner. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to motivate the pupils and raise their self-esteem.

46. The provision for pupils' social development is good. Pupils learn to take responsibility through such opportunities as being in a house team, becoming a prefect or house captain, and running the school bank. They organise the school fete with the parent teacher association, and Year 5 and 6 have their own stalls. They participate in many sporting events, school play productions and extra-curricular activities. They take part in regular theme lunches at school such as the recent Caribbean Day. During the lunchtime and informal breaks, social interaction on the playground between pupils is good. Pupils visit the local church and learn about the Egyptians at a local castle, and there are visits to places of worship of other faiths. There are no visits arranged to National museums or historic sites to enhance the pupils' learning further, but Year 5 and 6 pupils benefit from residential visits to places such as Osmington Bay. Visitors to the school further enrich the school's provision for social development, for example people who had been evacuees in the area during the war talk to the pupils about their experiences.
47. The provision for cultural development is good. Pupils study other cultures and religions in religious education, history and geography lessons. A pupil from Lithuania has told the pupils about life and culture in her homeland. In history, pupils study the life of people in the ancient Aztec and Egyptian civilisations. In geography, they study life in a contrasting locality in St Lucia and, in art, draw inspiration from the work of many famous artists, such as Monet and Van Gogh. Planning for personal, social and health education includes recognition of the views of other faiths and cultures. There is a large selection of books and videos to support the teaching of pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversities and richness of other British cultures, and the school has visitors from Africa and India to speak at assembly. This and the excellent sporting links with schools with teams of an ethnic mix help pupils at Woolton Hill to understand the diverse nature of British society.
48. The quality of links with the community and with other schools is excellent. This makes a very significant contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. The community policeman, the police liaison officer and school nurse make important contributions to pupils' personal, social and health education. The rector talks to pupils in religious education lessons on topics such as baptism and communion. Pupils distribute gifts to residents in the community at harvest festival. The local authority has given the school very good support, particularly in improving the curriculum for science. Businesses, such as a local pizza chain, have taken pupils to see pizza being made and a business partnership has organised practical science and technology days. The school has benefited greatly by a construction company giving the school a new playground, saving the school a very sizeable

amount of money. Another company has given the school a cricket strip, working to local authority specifications. There are excellent links with secondary schools in the area. Year 5 and 6 pupils attend 'taster days' and evening meetings with their parents. Year 6 pupils feel comfortable and happy about their transfer. A dance teacher from the sports college teaches dance to all the junior classes and supports and advises the junior staff. The headteachers of the comprehensive schools take an assembly in the junior school once a term. The pupils use the sports hall in the college for sporting activities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

49. Very good assessment of all pupils' progress helps teachers to identify learning needs and plan lessons accordingly. Marking of completed work is a very strong feature in this school. It gives pupils clear guidance to overcome their errors and encouragement when they have done well. All class teachers plan together for every subject each term, with a prediction of where pupils are expected to be week by week. This is reviewed every week and plans adjusted accordingly. All teachers evaluate their day's lessons and assess pupils' progress, re-planning for the next day where necessary. In all subjects, pupils undertake tests at the end of each unit of work, the results of which are carefully recorded on an assessment database so that progress can be seen. In addition to the statutory tests at the end of Year 6, external tests take place in other year groups. The results of these are analysed to determine the reasons for any differences between gender or age groups at the end of the year. This has led to the realisation, for example, that girls do better in some attainment targets for science than boys and vice versa, which is now addressed in teaching. There has been considerable improvement here since the last inspection. The assessment co-ordinator keeps the headteacher and senior management team fully informed. Staff monitor pupils' personal development, although this is not yet recorded in the same detail as academic progress.
50. The school keeps excellent detailed records and documentation on all pupils with special educational needs. This ensures teachers are knowledgeable about individual difficulties pupils might encounter so they may receive the appropriate support and guidance. All members of staff are totally committed to pupils in their care, and have information about pupils' particular learning difficulties. An important element in the provision is the pastoral care. Pupils are encouraged by all members of staff to become independent in their learning and to improve their social skills. Both within the classroom and in support groups, staff are effective in establishing a supportive environment where pupils feel secure and can develop their self-esteem and confidence. From an early stage, assessments are used effectively to identify attainment, progress and targets for further development. Pupils are moved up and down the special educational needs register as their needs change. Informative records of each pupil with special educational needs enable progress to be tracked over time. Teachers can then identify any problems and plan future targets effectively. The school has excellent links with support agencies and uses their expertise well. The very close partnership with county staff and specialist support staff has helped to develop a very effective special needs department.
51. The school liaises effectively with outside agencies, including the educational welfare officer, nurse and social services. There is particularly strong liaison with the community police officer, who attends the annual residential visit as a helper, and with the drugs education officer. The 'Get it right' scheme includes advice on such matters as talking to strangers. The school efficiently monitors attendance and

punctuality and follows up absence rigorously. The school meets all requirements for recording and reporting attendance.

52. Staff understand and consistently implement the school's behaviour policy in which an accent is put on the positive reinforcement of good behaviour. Sanctions are progressive, and in general, the school achieves very successful results without the need for rigid or authoritarian regimes. Pupils are well aware and respond positively to the staff's high expectations; almost all pupils behave accordingly.
53. Child protection procedures are very good, and are the responsibility of the headteacher. All staff are well aware of these procedures, and trainee teachers receive personal induction from the headteacher. The arrangements for the medical welfare of pupils are very good. Two members of staff are trained in First Aid. The school recognises the need to extend this number.
54. The school has an effective health and safety policy. Staff and governors, with the help of the relevant professionals, carry out regular checks on the safety of the buildings and site, including all electrical, fire and physical education equipment. Staff make careful assessments of health and safety issues before pupils undertake new activities or go on visits outside the school. A class teacher carefully reminded pupils about the safety rules to follow during a physical education lesson, for example. Fire drills take place regularly, and the fire signs around the building are clear.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Partnership with parents is very good, and has improved since the last inspection when information on the curriculum and the quality of report writing were both criticised. The school now sends out regular newsletters and gives clear information about what pupils will be learning. The turnout of parents for meetings with class teachers is very high; parents also appreciate teachers being available at any other time to discuss children's progress.
56. The full academic reports on pupils' progress state what pupils have learned, their level of attainment, and targets for the following school year. Parents are given a full annual report, and a recent initiative to issue interim reports has been well received. The Year 6 pupils receive their full report in March, which is very helpful in identifying any weaknesses that need to be worked at before they take their national tests, and parents are thus fully informed. Year 4 pupils also receive their full report at this time. Years 3 and 5 receive theirs in July. A significant minority of parents returning the inspection questionnaire does not feel well informed about their children's progress; inspection evidence does not support the view of these parents.
57. Homework is a strong feature of the link between parents and the school, with an unusually high level of parental guidance. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. They help with transport for sports matches and school visits, some acting as referees for football and cricket. The school never struggles to find help with trips or swimming, the parents are so keen. They are very generous with their support at sports days, some even wearing the house colours of their children. Despite the many parents who work, the Parent Teacher Association is very active, and considerable funds, managed by the School Educational Trust, are provided for the benefit of pupils. As well as fundraising, the Association

successfully brings together members of the community who are generous with their time, resources and enthusiasm.

58. All parents of children with special educational needs are invited to attend meetings to discuss the achievement and progress of their children. The school keeps parents very well informed at every stage, so that they have a good understanding of their children's problems and how they are being tackled.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. Leadership and management of the school is excellent, which is a tremendous improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher has outstanding vision for the development of the school and strives ceaselessly to achieve excellence in all aspects. He keeps a firm grip on whole school progress by very effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching, which has both formal and informal elements. Formal monitoring of every teacher in the classroom takes place every term and is very well linked to the school's performance management procedures with agreed targets and focus for observation. In addition, informal monitoring of teaching takes place every day, and he also monitors six pupils' progress, chosen by him, but not named to teachers. This is a very effective way of evaluating day to day standards of work and behaviour in the school. The headteacher is ably supported by the acting deputy head and by the subject managers. His management style is to delegate complete responsibility to these managers, who devise their action plans for the development of their subject. These plans are all well thought out and have tracked progress since the last inspection well. As a result of careful evaluation, new targets are planned over a specific period of time.
60. The school development plan was criticised at the last inspection but has undergone very good improvement to be truly reflective of the way in which the management, governors and staff see the school developing with the constant quest to improve standards. All staff and governors make a contribution to its development, but the headteacher retains overall control and matches the financial outlay to the priorities of the development plan well. Although the school has an average sized budget and is situated in an expensive area on the Hampshire/Berkshire, borders, the headteacher has excellent links with the community and obtains funding whenever possible from many different sources, such as a local company who supplied computers.
61. The governors, under the excellent leadership of their chairman, give first class service to the school. They are as committed to the school's achievement of all-round excellence as the headteacher and staff. Since the last inspection, when their proceedings were criticised, they have completely changed their working practices, which are now efficient and carefully minuted, with action points for individuals. There is a satisfactory committee structure. The school's budget is carefully monitored through the finance committee, which receives regular printouts from the very efficient administration staff. Governors have excellent knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have had particular trouble with recruiting new teachers to cover the loss of two key members of staff, but have a set of strategic plans, which are designed to meet all eventualities. They also have plans in hand to address the current lower standard in music that the school is used to, particularly extracurricular choir and orchestra, which was a strength at the last inspection.

62. Management by the headteacher, governing body and the manager for pupils with special educational needs is very good; documentation is excellent. The manager has great expertise, knows what she needs to do and how to manage provision successfully. The governor for special educational needs is enthusiastic, fully appreciative, knowledgeable and fully supportive of the work of the school. He makes an excellent contribution to special needs within the school and regularly meets the manager to discuss the progress of pupils and methods used to support them. They have a very good working relationship. Resources for special educational needs are good and the school is continually reviewing current resources and monitoring their effectiveness.
63. The school's financial planning is excellent. The headteacher and governing body are very clear about spending priorities and they budget systematically for significant expenditure. They evaluate major spending decisions regarding pupils' achievement and progress. Financial decisions are based on careful budget projections made for future years, and the allocation and spending of financial resources are closely linked to priorities identified in the school development plan. The governing body has a very efficient committee that deals with financial matters. The headteacher and administrative officers contribute very well to the effectiveness of the governing body by supplying detailed information as a basis for decision making. The headteacher seizes every opportunity to obtain funds from other sources, whether it be a small or considerable sum.
64. Funds for special educational needs are used very well and pupils' interests are foremost when planning the budget and funding allocation. The manager plans systematically to ensure that teaching and methods of organisation have maximum benefit for individuals, and this has had a positive impact on progress in reading and writing. Both teaching and support staff are very effectively deployed. The manager is part-time for two days a week and holds weekly meetings with support staff to review pupils' progress and discuss training opportunities. The learning support within the school is very good; its high quality contributes to the standards achieved and the very good provision for these pupils.
65. The efficiency of day-to-day financial control and school administration is excellent. The minor recommendations in the most recent audit report have been effectively implemented. Very good procedures incorporating careful checks control ordering, invoicing and spending. Administration is carried out extremely efficiently and unobtrusively by the school's office staff. The school applies the principles of best value very well, including the use of questionnaires to parents and pupils.
66. The level of staffing is sufficient to contribute positively to pupils' academic progress and personal development. Teachers are well qualified and have appropriate experience. Corporately, they have secure knowledge of all National Curriculum subjects, though none is qualified in English, science or music. The school is acutely aware of this deficiency, which is magnified by the gap left by the previous music teacher and science co-ordinator, both of whom were exceptionally good. There has been a very high turnover of staff since the last inspection, and recruitment is proving very difficult because of the high cost of living in this locality. The head teacher and governing body are examining every possibility of attracting staff of the same high calibre as are currently employed. They also recognise the increasing numbers of infant school pupils who will attend Woolton Hill over the next academic cycle.

67. Sufficient classroom assistants provide good-quality support, mainly for pupils with special educational needs. Support staff are very committed, working closely with teachers in planning and preparing activities. They are fully integrated into the work of the school and have had training related to their responsibilities. The administrative staff contribute very effectively to the smooth running of the school. The recently appointed caretaker has a firm grasp of his duties and has, in a short period, much improved the ancillary areas of the school such as the boiler and switchgear rooms. His skills as an accredited football coach are also of great benefit. Midday supervisors are receiving training to improve their knowledge of the behaviour code and to extend the skills needed to encourage constructive play at lunch time.
68. Procedures for the induction of new staff and the support of trainee teachers are excellent. A comprehensive staff handbook effectively introduces new staff to the school's policies, routines and curricular organisation. The school provides excellent training for a large number of student teachers each year. Conversation with those on site during the inspection provided clear evidence that they are enjoying the experience as well as gaining first hand knowledge of good classroom practice. Newly qualified teachers benefit from a supportive induction programme; professional development arrangements are very good. A planned programme of in-service development supports the school's identified priorities for improvement, and takes into account the outcome of professional development interviews for all staff.
69. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but the small hall makes it difficult to teach the full physical education curriculum, particularly for Year 6. A lack of storage for large equipment makes the cramped conditions in the hall much worse. The school is aware of this and has been trying for some time to remedy this, but has not been able to obtain funds for the purpose. Classrooms are too small for Year 6 pupils, particularly when in ability sets for English and mathematics. The extension to the main building to be commissioned during the week following inspection will enhance the school administration area and provide a more welcoming atmosphere for parents and visitors. The building work has severely limited the display space; very little was seen in public areas of the school.
70. The external grounds are delightful. Very hard work by the headteacher over the years has persuaded the authorities to drain the playing field areas and provide coppices of mature trees, which pupils use at break for constructive play. The fields are marked out for cricket, football, and rounders, and in the winter there is room for two football pitches. A major civil engineering contractor working on the Newbury bypass donated a large hard surface playground. The school, with support from the Educational Trust, has marked it to encourage both informal and formal games.
71. Resources for learning are good overall. Recently, a supply of good quality computers has been acquired to add to those already in every classroom. The school library records are maintained on computer, and older pupils are fully conversant with the procedures. There are sufficient religious artefacts demonstrating the beliefs and cultures of other races and people, which help to give insight into the diverse nature of British society.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. There are no key issues because this school is already striving for, and succeeding in achieving, the highest quality in all aspects of education. However, in order to reach all-round excellence, the following minor issues should be addressed:

- (1) Widen the use of ICT to include data logging in science and more challenging work for higher ability pupils in mathematical applications (paragraphs 7, 87, 90, 114)
- (2) Ensure that gifted and talented pupils are challenged to the limits of their ability in all aspects of the curriculum (paragraphs 15,42, 128)
- (3) Restore music provision to its previous high standard (paragraphs 14, 40, 61 66, 121, 122, 123)
- (4) Given the restrictions of the hall, consider how best to teach every aspect of physical education (paragraphs 69, 130)
- (5) Extend classroom observation to subject managers in order to share good practice (paragraphs 59, 79, 104)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	67	12	9	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	159
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	60

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	28	11	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	24	27
	Girls	11	10	11
	Total	35	34	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (73)	87 (73)	97 (89)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	25	26
	Girls	11	9	11
	Total	35	34	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (70)	87 (70)	95 (89)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	159
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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	26.6

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	79

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	335421
Total expenditure	334692
Expenditure per pupil	2066
Balance brought forward from previous year	32444
Balance carried forward to next year	33173

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

159

Number of questionnaires returned

93

Percentage of responses in each category

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.

The teaching is good.

I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.

I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.

The school works closely with parents.

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	45	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	57	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	63	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	62	10	5	1
The teaching is good.	47	49	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	45	20	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	38	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	46	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	33	50	15	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	45	47	4	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	53	2	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	49	15	0	5

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

ENGLISH

73. Results of the National Curriculum tests for 11 year-olds in 2000 were well above the national average and above the average of similar schools. The trend over the last three years has been well above average. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 5 is also well above average. Inspection findings reflect the test results. Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are high and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils are effective communicators and speak and write with increasing accuracy and relevance. This is because of the consistency in the quality of planning and teaching in all classes. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well and boys do as well as girls. Higher ability pupils are well challenged and this is a very good improvement from the previous inspection.
74. Throughout the school, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average. Pupils listen closely to staff and other pupils in whole class and small group sessions. Standards are high, not only in English but also across the curriculum. Pupils' listening ability enhances learning and contributed to the very good behaviour. They express ideas confidently and have a very good command of spoken English. In a lesson on persuasive writing in Year 5, pupils discussed arguments with their teacher for and against the opening of a new superstore. They backed up their arguments well with reasons and asked questions if they needed more information. Through the use of questioning, teachers constantly challenge pupils to think and express themselves. In a design and technology lesson in Year 6, the pupils asked questions to further their understanding of how to plan and make a fairground ride and thought of how to overcome difficulties that may arise. Year 3 pupils showed appreciation of humour when they listened to a letter read out from 'Mother Christmas' to 'Father Christmas' with witty content. Drama is used well to enhance the curriculum, as seen in religious education to explore emotions.
75. Standards in reading are high. Pupils are very confident readers and show a deep appreciation and care of books. They are fluent and accurate, only stumbling sometimes at words, such as 'alleged', when it is the first time they have encountered them. They are good at building complex polysyllabic words such as 'physiologists'. They are able to find information they need from other sources, such as the Internet, newspapers and reference books in the library, and they are competent readers of fiction, plays, fables and poetry. In geography, Year 3 and 4 pupils found the hottest and coldest countries of the world from the weather section of a daily paper and they researched information on St Lucia from the Internet. Pupils have clear views on what they like to read and which authors please them. Pupils learn to read with expression and to use the punctuation to guide their voices. One pupil in Year 4 observed that 'punctuation makes the reading more exciting'.
76. Standards in writing are well above average. Very good teaching has enabled pupils to become independent and confident writers across a comprehensive range of writing styles. Pupils in all year groups are adept at writing letters. Year 3 understand the formal language needed in a business letter. Years 5 and 6 write letters of complaint about the effects of television on children or the safety in a local park. They are confident when writing letters on the computer and understand when this is the more effective medium to choose. The younger pupils make very good

progress in planning and drafting a story showing the introduction, build up, climax and resolution. They write using correct punctuation and organise their work into paragraphs. A particular strength is the teaching of a range of different styles of text. Pupils in Year 6 examine opposing views for and against capital punishment, and study a text for views for and against drilling for oil. Pupils in all year groups write instructional text such as how to make toast or a robot. Their writing shows a growing awareness of grammar, such as comparative and superlative adjectives, and active and passive sentences. Good quality reports for newspapers, character studies, police reports, brochures are all produced with confidence and independence, showing a good awareness of layout and design. Pupils are skilled in writing poetry and show a good understanding about different styles of poems. Spelling and handwriting are well above average. Older pupils use pen and have a very good neat joined style. Pupils write very well in other subjects. In history, for example, they have written letters home from an evacuee; they have also written a biography of the life of John Lennon. In geography they lay out a campaign of posters and literature saying 'Down with the Dome'. Good use is made of the Internet; pupils have also used email to communicate with each other and their teachers.

77. The high standards achieved by the pupils are a result of very good teaching. Pupils' learning is very good and they are highly motivated, interested and able to apply themselves independently for long periods of time. Many of the pupils with special educational needs in reading and writing attain the nationally expected standards as a result of the effective teaching. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and there are very effective methods for teaching literacy skills. They make sure pupils know what they are expected to learn. Learning objectives for each lesson are written visibly in the classroom and referred to during the lesson. When introducing a new skill, the initial teaching sessions are very clear and well-paced, and very good use is made of learning resources. Planning and preparation is very thorough. In a Year 5 lesson on persuasive writing, for example, the teacher introduced subordinate clauses. She discussed them with the pupils and then had a practical session using flash cards where they could arrange clauses for themselves. The teacher moved round the class constantly reinforcing the lesson objectives until she was sure that all the pupils had understood. In a lesson in Year 6, the teacher explained active and passive sentences very clearly to the pupils using big books and large texts as an aid. In some classes, the teachers give time targets, which sets a very good pace. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils had 30 seconds to decide what style of brochure for a science and technology park they would plan and produce. Later they had a further target for drafting it. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour, attention and standards. Because relationships and the management of pupils are so good, these expectations are fully repaid, and pupils work willingly and very productively. Pupils' work is very well presented in books and well marked by the teacher. Pupils show a great pride and care in their work. At the end of the lessons there are clear instructions about the homework the pupils should do.
78. The assessment procedures are good and used very well to plan the next stage of the curriculum. Teachers keep good records about how the pupils are progressing and evaluative comments are made. They evaluate their planning for the lesson and make a note on the improvements to be made on their weekly planning sheet. Work samples have been assessed and the school is tracking the progress in writing of three boys and three girls. Pupils are set into three groups for literacy according to age and ability, and this has a very good impact on the standards achieved. Pupils

with special educational needs have clearly written individual education plans and are supported very well.

79. Subject leadership is good. The new subject manager has continued to drive English forward with the help of the previous manager, who now works with the school as a literacy consultant. After evaluating the impact of the literacy strategy, they have put guidelines into practice to improve the standard of writing, and introduced an extra writing lesson. The subject manager effectively monitors plans, books and talks to pupils; the headteacher does the formal monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom. There is a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books. The number and condition of the reading scheme books are good.

MATHEMATICS

80. In the National Curriculum tests for 11 year-olds in 2000, attainment in mathematics was well above average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was also well above average, both nationally and compared with similar schools; three pupils achieved level 6. Over the last four years, standards have been rising steadily with an increasing number of pupils achieving level 5 and 6. Boys obtain better results at the higher level, which does not reflect the national picture. The school has set realistic targets for improvement, and standards in the work seen suggest that the school will achieve these targets. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are well above average, and pupils are achieving very well for their age and ability. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress throughout the school.
81. Since the last inspection, the standards pupils achieve has improved significantly from average to well above average. The quality of teaching has improved from mostly satisfactory to mostly very good, with instances of excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6. The school is constantly looking for ways to improve performance, and evidence of their success is seen in the higher numbers of pupils achieving the higher grades.
82. In the work observed during the inspection, attainment of 11 year-olds is well above average. Pupils of higher ability in Year 5 and 6 visualise two-dimensional shapes and images. They recognise where the shape will be after reflection in a mirror line to one side, and when the sides are not all parallel or perpendicular to the mirror line. They have a good understanding of isosceles, right angle and equilateral triangles, able to understand, describe and use obtuse angles and reflex angles. Pupils are knowledgeable about a range of mathematical methods because their teachers continually remind them and encourage them to explain their own methods. They use their mathematical reasoning well, for example, when plotting co-ordinates, they explain confidently that x comes before y in the alphabet and, therefore, you plot across the line before you go up. Average pupils in Year 6 defined an equilateral triangle; lower ability pupils drew the reflection of a simple shape in a mirror line, touching at one point and where the edges were not parallel or perpendicular to the mirror line. These pupils and those with special educational needs complete the work with guidance from classroom assistants.
83. Pupils are given very good opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge in problem solving, and use the four rules of number very well in most situations. Average pupils, for example, calculated the area of a bedroom and then the cost of decorating the room for Christmas. Pupils used calculators to calculate the cost of

the wallpaper and took account of the height and dimensions of the fireplace and door, identifying the most efficient way to decorate a room. Long multiplication and division were well used to calculate the cost per product. High ability pupils applied their knowledge of data handling when investigating population changes from 1821-1991 for Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and rounded up to the nearest 100,000.

84. The majority of the teaching seen was very good, with some excellent lessons given in Year 5 and 6. All teachers have a very good knowledge of the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons are very well planned so that they contain different learning activities and this engages pupils' interest and it ensures learning is rapid. Very good teaching and level of challenge ensures the lower ability group for mathematics achieves average standards. In a bottom Year 3/4 set, an inter-active game helped pupils recognise vocabulary associated with division and multiplication. Pupils were eager to place their word under the correct sign. Excitement grew as the teacher challenged them to think of a number, for example, that equalled 60 when multiplied by 12. All pupils were involved, and the teacher directed the question to the pupils with the correct challenge. This ability to challenge all pupils appropriately ensures they all make very good progress and develop their confidence and enjoyment of mathematics and numeracy. Pupils with special educational needs draw reflected shapes across a vertical and a horizontal line because the teacher clearly emphasises learning and teaching points. Teachers use a wide range of methods and interact with pupils very well, using questions well to explore knowledge and understanding. Teachers have suitably high expectations of pupil's ability and use assessment very well. In an exemplary Year 5 and 6 lesson excellent time keeping ensured all pupils kept working and completed their work. The teacher made a deliberate mistake explaining reflection, and all the class identified this; even humour contributed to learning. Homework is given and marked regularly, and used well to extend the lesson, such as that for weighing and measuring when pupils were asked to make cakes for the fete.
85. Pupils make very good progress overall because of the high quality of teaching. The excellent pace and level of challenge contributes to pupil's competent ability in mental calculations. Higher ability pupils in Year 3 and 4, for example, explained their methods for multiplying 7 by 17. They use simple fractions and use partitioning well. They know many ways to communicate the value of simple fractions, and how to write 1 as 1.0, 100%, single, or $10/10^{\text{ths}}$, applying their knowledge to more complex fractions. The quick fire questions effectively ensure all pupils are responding swiftly and giving the lesson maximum attention and concentration.
86. Assessment is rigorous and the school is constantly striving to improve standards. The school analyses pupils' test results and identifies targets. Pupils are taught in sets according to their ability, with booster classes for certain Year 6 pupils, and Year 5 Springboard mathematics, which contributes to the improving standards. Attainment is monitored formally and records of achievement are conscientiously recorded, so that pupils' progress can be tracked over time and checked against their expected performance. Homework is given regularly every week and covers all aspects of mathematics.
87. Mathematics is used effectively across the curriculum, especially in design technology in measurement, and in science where graphs and charts are used well. The subject manager has identified increased use of ICT in numeracy across the school; the current programmes do not challenge and extend high ability pupils in

Year 6. The group names of Pythagoras, Einstein and Archimedes develop awareness and knowledge of mathematicians in Years 5 and 6. The manager is highly motivated and committed to improving standards. Her enthusiasm and drive are significant in the marked improvement of mathematics within the school. She has a clear action plan for development linked to the school development plan with a time line for achievement.

SCIENCE

88. The standard achieved by 11 year-olds in the National Curriculum tests in science in 2000 was well above the national average and that of similar schools. Almost all achieved at least level 4, and a well above average proportion made level 5. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs made very good progress and achieved well, shown by the very small number who did not achieve level 4. Standards have risen dramatically since the last inspection when science was judged to be below average and not meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. Over the last three years, standards have been well above average and have risen steadily in line with the national trend. The standard of work observed during the inspection was of high quality and well above that expected from primary school children. The work of many and of those of higher ability was solidly into level 5, and contained work of such breadth and depth that much of it would not be out of place in Key Stage 3.
89. The teaching of science is very good overall, and pupils have a very good attitude to the subject resulting in very good progress in learning. Only two lessons were seen because Year 6 pupils were timetabled to do sex education with outside speakers at the time, but there was ample evidence from books and from discussion with pupils. One lesson observed was very good and the other was good. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of science, and teach to a high level from Year 3 upwards, recognising the above average ability of their pupils. Science is taught in mixed ability classes; because of the vertical grouping, a two-year rolling programme of topics is carried out, enabling the full National Curriculum to be covered. Years 3 and 4 are taught together, but Years 5 and 6 are split for specific topics, such as sex education. Teaching of sound and light in Years 3 and 4 showed some good examples of how teachers' very good knowledge of the subject enables them to raise pupils' attainment. A very well thought out study of light, for example, showing its passage through transparent and translucent objects – but not opaque – leads younger pupils through some imaginative creation of shadows using Halloween pumpkin shapes and shadow puppets. Teachers make very good use of common objects, such as tablespoons to show the production of images by concave and convex mirrors.
90. Teachers develop the skills of scientific enquiry very well and this features strongly in pupils' work. Older pupils, for example, who had studied the separation of mixtures predicted during discussion how to separate a mixture of salt and sand, even though they had not done this particular investigation in class. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are developed very well by teachers in science. Pupils themselves said they felt mathematics was strongly featured, concurred by evidence in their books. Teachers take every opportunity to reinforce numeracy through science, for example, by using thermometer scales to give examples of negative numbers in every day use, and measurement in centimetres when pupils compare the length of their arms in class. Literacy develops well through science, with an emphasis on vocabulary, structured writing for the purpose of recording science investigation and,

especially noticeable, the use of cartoons, for example, to exemplify the life of a water molecule undergoing the water cycle, which is carefully explained through the captions. Teachers are beginning to use ICT for data analysis, presenting graphs and charts of the results of investigations, for example, but not yet regularly for data logging during this work.

91. All teachers plan lessons very well, and make sure they match the needs of all pupils. The two-year rolling programme in the scheme of work ensures that pupils encounter the same topic twice during their time in school; older pupils questioned about this were clear that they were consolidating and repeating at a higher level the second time round, and gave examples of how their early knowledge of flowering plants, for example, was built upon from being a simple identification of roots, leaves, and flowers in the lower school to having to know about the functions of the various parts, such as the flower in reproduction and the leaves in photosynthesis.
92. Marking and assessment of work is very thoroughly done, and comments in pupils' books help them to improve as well as giving them a statement about their level of attainment. Formal assessment is made at the end of each topic and recorded by administrative staff on an assessment database. Assessment data has been successfully analysed, and some discrepancies identified by the last subject manager have been addressed, such as the differences between boys and girls in specific attainment targets and differences in National Curriculum levels recorded by teachers for similar work. These have been addressed in planning and by moderation of marking for unit tests.
93. Teachers keep their pupils' attention by using a very good variety of teaching methods; all pupils spoke with enthusiasm of their exciting science lessons, especially those on parachutes and musical instruments. A Year 5 class was seen learning about the organs of the human body by first placing cut-outs of them on a life-sized body drawing. Pupils much enjoyed doing this, surprised to find that their initial placings were fairly close to the right positions. As a consequence of the very stimulating lessons and very good management, pupils behave well and lessons are productive, unmarred by bad conduct. The lessons seen went at a brisk pace, and pupils were learning the whole time, engaged in practical or writing activity. They were very productive. The curriculum is extended by very appropriate homework, which may be consolidation of work done in lessons, research or some piece of written work.
94. There is, at present, no subject manager, as the previous one recently left to travel the world. Her management has been excellent, and her legacy lives on in the planning, assessment, moderation and the exciting schemes of work. The school is now seeking a replacement of similar calibre.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Pupils' standards in art by the age of 11 are above those expected nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Since the last inspection, standards have improved from average to above average because improved planning identifies a clear progression in skills, knowledge and understanding. No lessons were observed in the upper juniors, but a close scrutiny of planning, observation of pupils' work and discussion with pupils enabled judgements to be made.

96. Pupils in Year 6 have good knowledge of the style and technique used by a range of artists. They describe the characteristic styles of Mondrian, Monet, and Van Gogh. Good links with information and communication technology enable pupils to produce a range of attractive pictures using the computer. They research information about the artist from the Internet and they produce imaginative works in the style of Mondrian entitled 'Cyberspace,' 'Deep green sea,' and 'Colour tranquillity.' Progress in line drawings is good, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 create attractive drawings of animals, such as an alligator and an elephant, using tone and shading to add depth to their drawings. They describe how shading can be used to create an effect of dark and light. Colour is used imaginatively to create striking works of art. Eleven-year-olds use primary colours well to create a painting entitled 'Colour and light.' Art makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils use Greek and Aborigine artwork as a stimulus to produce their own patterns in a similar style. Lower junior pupils design and create stained glass windows for the local church.
97. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are well organised. They are enthusiastic and lessons are very well planned to ensure that the range of artwork produced is good. Planning identifies a clear progression in skills, knowledge and understanding. Teachers use a very good variety of resources and methods to widen pupils' experiences. They encourage pupils, for example, to work in small groups to explore medium and scale, copying a quarter section of a picture each and using different colours and mediums to scale the picture and enlarge it. Some good pictures of chairs, rhubarb, and flowers were seen produced in this way. Work with textile fabrics is well developed. Three-dimensional work is very well developed, and shows good levels of imagination and independence. The objectives for each lesson are shared with pupils and technical language is used appropriately. A strength of teaching is the highly systematic way in which skills are introduced and developed as pupils progress through the school. Teachers make sure they use their brushes correctly; pupils take care when mixing paints, and confidently mix lighter and darker shades. Pupils respond with interest to all the tasks given. They work industriously and sustain concentration and enjoyment. They are highly motivated.
98. Teachers develop the appreciation of art, which is a strength throughout the school. Pupils' knowledge of professional artists is good, and they create paintings using the technique of pointillism in the style of Seurat, for example, demonstrate good awareness of the importance of perspective in pictures. They explain the technique they have used and evaluate their own work suggesting ways to improve, for example, by adding more shading to give greater light and tone to the picture. The work of pupils is valued and displayed throughout the school. All have their own art book; this is a development since the last inspection. Assessment records are completed after each lesson.
99. The schemes of work are very good and clearly identify a progression of skills, such as effective brushwork, and knowledge and understanding. They make a significant contribution to progress. As the subject manager has recently left the school, there is currently no-one in charge of art. Resources are adequate and accessible to all pupils; the school is developing a wider range to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of other artist's work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Standards seen in design and technology are above average, having made very good improvement since the last inspection when they were judged to be below the national average. Pupils aged 11 plan a project for making a fairground ride, such as a big wheel, designing this in sketch form, and later adding dimensions to make a working drawing. Their books show evidence of evaluating designs, refining and improving them. Those of younger children also show accurate working drawings and good attempts at evaluating their products, such as marble mazes and vehicles. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
101. Teaching is very good. Three lessons were seen: one excellent, one very good and one satisfactory. Because of this, pupils enjoy the subject and have very good attitudes to learning because they find it exciting. Teachers make every effort to motivate the pupils with interesting projects and expectation of high standards. Much training has taken place since the last inspection, and teachers' expertise is now good, frequently being updated as, for example, in the day's in-service training the day before the inspection on computer control in design and technology. Teachers gained a very good insight through their practical experience into how to use and control small motors to make their roundabouts and big wheels move in an authentic way. During the inspection, this knowledge was communicated to the older pupils who showed great maturity in their realisation that this was something new for their teachers, too, and that they were learning together. They accepted that their teachers may not know everything about the topic; this resulted in some excellent questioning and discussion about control technology, and pupils looked forward with great excitement to the practical work to follow.
102. Teachers' planning is thorough and follows guidelines of the QCA and other documentation. They have very high expectations of their pupils' ability to understand the design process, and all work is based on it, from Year 3 upwards. Teachers motivate pupils very well with exciting projects and challenges, such as designing a vehicle to carry a baked bean can for a specified distance. This became a competition much enjoyed by the pupils, which further fostered the team spirit, already strong in the school. Very good use is made of cross-curricular skills in design and technology, particularly numeracy for accurate measuring of wood. ICT is well used for designing logos and car number plates for the vans project and for showing the results of surveys in the form of graphs and charts. Literacy is also extended into the writing of structured notes to be followed as instructions to make a project. This was seen in a very good lesson in which older pupils took clearly written notes when the teacher talked about steps to be undertaken in making a product. There are good links with science as pupils use their knowledge and understanding of light to make illuminated signs.
103. Teachers use the full range of methods identified in the design process. Younger pupils, for example, make bags for holding money, having researched suitable commercial types, disassembling one and from it, making a prototype, which was later used as the basis for a pattern. Skills of joining textiles neatly were developed well. A needlework club is run by the subject manager to enhance skills. Teachers assess design and technology very well against the lesson objectives and according to the QCA guidance. They keep careful records, which are used for annual reports and refer to National Curriculum levels to be passed on to secondary schools.

104. The subject is very well led by the manager, who has very good expertise and does all she can to make sure there are high standards in the school by monitoring outcomes, talking to pupils, and taking photographs, but not yet observing teaching by other members of staff. The range of projects introduced is very good and made exciting by the number of competitions that take place. The manager's action plan for further development is very good and because of the good resources and commitment by staff, there is good capacity for the subject to continue to improve.

GEOGRAPHY

105. Standards are above average and have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, including those with special educational needs.
106. By the age of 11, pupils have a good knowledge of countries and major towns of the world and place them on a map. Year 3 and 4 pupils find out about St Lucia and compare it to living in England. They make good use of the Internet to find a map of St Lucia and its national flag. They locate places on a map of the world where they have been on holiday such as Miami, France and Scotland. They describe the clothing needed on their holiday and realise that there are different climates such as polar, tropical and equatorial. They know that the Equator is one of the hottest places of the world and that the Poles are the coldest. They are good at using an atlas and using the index correctly. Older pupils identify important characteristics of a mountain environment, such as the effect of thin air on humans. They know the dangers of an avalanche and glaciers and describe them using a good technical vocabulary. They have a good understanding of the water cycle and study rainfall patterns in the world. For homework, they design weather symbols and keep a three-day record of weather in major towns in England using a newspaper for reference. There are good links with mathematics. The pupils draw block and line graphs to show the water consumption of a household, measuring the water needed by washing machines, baths and garden hoses.
107. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and the pupils are keen to learn. A strength in the teaching in the younger class is the excellent support given to pupils with special educational needs. The teacher spends a good amount of time explaining the task to them and then is careful to check their progress after. Good extension work is given in lessons; this challenges the higher ability pupils. After their work on climates, Year 3 and 4 pupils were asked to find the hottest and coldest countries in the world that day, using a newspaper and then to find them in an atlas. Even more challenging was to transfer the countries onto their own map of the world that was in a different scale. Many pupils struggled with this but were determined to keep trying, some of them successfully, in the time given. The teacher used the house point system to keep the pupils motivated. The very good teaching seen in Years 5 and 6 used skilful questioning to bring about lively discussion and demanded the use of technical vocabulary from the pupils. At the end of the lesson, many pupils could draw conclusions and wrote them down succinctly.
108. The school has adopted national guidance to ensure that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are covered. There is no rigorous system of gauging pupils' levels of attainment regularly and frequently. Subject leadership is satisfactory and there is an action plan, but further improvement is suffering from a lack of emphasis

in the overall school development planning for the last few years because of other priorities. Resources are satisfactory.

HISTORY

109. Because of the timing of the inspection, no history lessons were seen so no judgements are possible about many of the aspects of teaching and learning. Nevertheless, from the evidence of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and through talking with pupils, it is clear that their standards are above those expected nationally at the age of 11. All pupils make good progress throughout the school, including those with special educational needs. This is a good improvement on the last inspection when the quality of pupils' written work showed they were engaged in low-level tasks. Now work is challenging, and involves sustained writing based on their investigations.
110. By the age of 11, pupils have studied all the major topics in the National Curriculum. They describe how important the Nile was to the Egyptians and have a very good knowledge of Tutankhamun. They spell their own names in hieroglyphics. They have an appropriate sense of chronology: they place English kings and queens on a timeline and remember the dates of World War II. They have a good understanding of the need for evidence and how to use it, for example, examining the contents of a suitcase and deducing that the owner would have been an evacuee during World War II. They compare the periods they are studying with conditions today. Younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 find out about objects in a Victorian home, such as a washing tub, scales and a kettle and write about how technology has changed and what we use today. They look at pictures of a Victorian family and decide whether they were rich or poor. They examine pictures of the Vikings and discover that they were expert at weaving and made their own jewellery.
111. There are good links with other curriculum subjects, such as geography when pupils place the Aztecs on a map of Mexico and show on a map of Europe where the Vikings came from. Literacy is very well used in description, for example, of Aztec beliefs and education or the Viking longboats and how they were used to travel long distances. Pupils have written a letter to the King of Spain from Cortez about how he conquered the Aztecs, and have also written about the life of John Lennon, using different styles of layout and presentation. When asked for the piece of work of which they were most proud, pupils showed a letter they had written home, pretending they were evacuees; they had aged the paper with tea or coloured crayon. Good use is made of ICT, using the internet, for example, to find out about Egyptian gods and goddesses.
112. Teachers' planning shows an appropriate coverage of the programmes of study. It is very clear that the school has endowed the pupils with a love of history, and they say they thoroughly enjoy the subject. They visit a local cathedral and a castle, which has an Egyptian exhibition but do not have the opportunity to visit national historic sites or museums. National guidance has been adopted to ensure that all requirements are being met. Subject leadership is satisfactory. There is an appropriate action plan for development, which identifies how work sampling is due to be used for assessment at the end of each unit of work. An audit of resources had also been identified.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. By age of 11, pupils achieve standards that are well above those expected for their age. Standards have risen since the last inspection due to the improved provision and better access to computers, the recently installed network, the regular teaching of skills, and the well-focused scheme of work. ICT is now taught as a separate subject on the timetable. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good.
114. Most 11 year-olds use the computer competently to communicate their ideas in a variety of forms such as text, pictures, tables and graphs. They know how to store data and use it to collate and organise information, using bar and line graphs and pie graphs, for example, to communicate findings of their research in science. They have a good knowledge of the keyboard ably explaining the different functions; they carefully consider the use of colour, size and style of the print produced. Word processing skills are good; pupils confidently follow instructions and have a good understanding of saving and retrieving work. They edit and scan work competently, cutting, pasting and positioning their work. They successfully gain access to information using CD-ROM. They use the computers in their work in other subjects, though in mathematics, it is not used fully enough to challenge pupils of higher ability.
115. Pupils use the computer to enter library books and some have used the digital camera. All classes have four computers and access to a small computer suite that is networked, and all pupils have used e-mail to send and receive information. Higher ability pupils who prepared a power-point presentation using word art and text, confidently explained how they made the background, and added cartoons and music.
116. Teachers make very good use of interesting material to widen their pupils' understanding. When pupils in Years 5 and 6 used spread sheets, for example, the aim was to calculate the cost of their teacher's holiday. Pupils entered data accurately and devised the formulae to work out answers to initial questions about the holiday and they went on to extension questions, which required alterations to the data. Pupils achieved the work successfully and competently, and proceeded to devise their own spreadsheets for their own shopping list. They enjoyed learning how to adapt their spreadsheet, adding data and devising formulae with some guidance, going on to depict 'indispensable' items, such as DVD players and 32 inch televisions.
117. In the two lessons observed in both the lower and upper juniors, the quality of teaching was very good. Teachers are now more confident and knowledgeable of how to use ICT to support other curriculum areas. They provide a good range of activities and opportunities for pupils to develop a good breadth of skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. Since the last inspection, the subject manager and senior colleagues have provided regular in-service training for teachers, and this has begun to have a good impact on standards as well as improving teachers' confidence and competence. Higher ability pupils were seen willingly helping less confident friends and showing maturity in collaborative work. All pupils take a pride in their work; their behaviour is very good.
118. Whole class teaching of new skills throughout the school is effective and has a beneficial effect on progress. Teachers instil their pupils with enthusiasm, as seen when they were designing a poster advertising the forthcoming school fete. They were given clear guidelines for completing the work and expectations of what

techniques would be used were high, and a deadline for the completion of the work. They responded with 'Wow!' as the teacher used the spray colour. The pupils' enthusiasm grew as the lesson progressed because the teacher introduced a range of exciting possibilities to use rainbow colours. The teacher skilfully demonstrated how to insert text and move it. Pupils expressed real disappointment when the lesson had to come to an end.

119. ICT is generally well used to support other subjects especially in art, English and science. Teachers and pupils keep accurate records of their progress in information technology. Planning is very good; the scheme of work shows progression throughout the school and identifies good coverage of all aspects. In lessons, teachers' gave very clear demonstration and used inter-active methods successfully. This involved the pupils quickly in a practical way and contributed to the enthusiasm and enjoyment of the subject. The teachers used small steps to explain information about using excel and spreadsheets. They have very good subject knowledge and present the work in a realistic way, such as designing a poster for the school fete. Assessment is very good; all pupils have a passport to success in which they record their skills acquired and attainment.
120. The subject manager has been instrumental in improving the provision for ICT. He has worked hard to improve the resources and provide good support for less confident teachers. There is a very good scheme of work identifying progression in skills, knowledge and understanding, and a clear action plan with a time line for development. The school has ensured the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report have been eradicated, and are now poised to improve even further.

MUSIC

121. It was only possible to see one music lesson in the lower school during the inspection, so there is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on the standards at the end of the key stage, or the quality of teaching. The lesson was well taught and the standards seen were about average, with pupils understanding the use of graphic notation in writing a short musical score to be sung by their group, and then by the whole class. Pupils followed the scores and interpreted sounds correctly. There were a few pupils who obviously found this work very easy, showing good knowledge learned in private music lessons.
122. Pupils' singing, as seen in this lesson and in assemblies, is about average for their age, though again, there are some obviously better young musicians who are capable of reaching a higher standard under experienced direction. They sing in tune and have a good sense of rhythm when singing, for example, 'sur le pont d'Avignon', keeping accurate to time. A small recorder group showed accuracy and ability to keep time in a few short pieces in assembly.
123. At the time of the last inspection, the standard of music was judged to be good and improving rapidly. There were extensive extracurricular activities, including a forty piece orchestra, judged to be 'sheer delight'. Since then, the school has lost its very experienced music manager who did most of the teaching herself. The orchestra does not meet now, and the lack of activity suggests standards are lower; other teachers have not been able to maintain them, but staff are training to increase their expertise. A new subject manager has been appointed who is enthusiastic and doing a good job, but she also has mathematics to manage, and so in the short time since her appointment, has not had much time to devote to music. Nevertheless,

there is great zeal amongst teachers, and the manager is leading them well in classroom teaching. Parents commented on the current lack of extracurricular music activities. The headteacher and governors are fully aware of this problem, and are doing their utmost to find suitable musicians to take the orchestra and choir, which was also very strong.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. Pupils aged 11 achieve standards well above those typical for their age. High standards reflect the prominent focus of physical education throughout the school. The headteacher enthusiastically promotes sport, and seizes every opportunity to extend pupils' experiences in either competitive or non-competitive activities. The subject manager has specialist knowledge and is a very good role model; most staff, from the site agent to class teachers, have an interest in physical education. Evidence that pupils are physically aware and well educated was observed as pupils walked into assembly and moved around the school. All pupils showed very well developed spatial awareness and with an upright alert posture. Lessons were observed in games, athletic activities and swimming. No lessons were observed in dance and gymnastics, but observation of standards in an extra-curricular club and discussions with pupils about their work in these activities enabled judgements to be made. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement from above average achievement to well above.
125. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed very good knowledge and a high level of performance in all aspects of physical education. Athletic coaches visit the school annually and pupils benefit from this experience. All pupils demonstrate good style when sprinting; body lean is correct, arm action is effective and co-ordinated, knee lift and stride are good. Pupils show developing style as they run confidently over low hurdles extending their stride rather than jumping high. The athletics afternoon is very well organised, and pupils experience sprinting, middle distance running, slalom relays, throwing, estimating distances and general agility and obstacle events. The event generates high levels of enthusiasm and pupils work hard to support their team. Progression is very good throughout the school. In athletics, very good teaching in Year 3 and 4 ensures pupils' knowledge of each event is good, and this reflects the teachers' clear teaching points, such as driving hard with the legs to push off, and using the arms to help lift the body into the air.
126. Pupils have a good understanding of the principles of attack and defence and about gaining and losing possession of the ball in an invasion game. Year 6 pupils talked about work in gymnastics and demonstrated knowledge of a range of different rolls, jumps and ways to travel on hands and feet. Their understanding of the effect of exercise and the importance of activity in maintaining a healthy lifestyle is good.
127. In striking fielding games, pupils show increased control and technical skill. They confidently throw a ball over-arm and under-arm to a partner, and explain the technique involved. Pupils reach out to receive an on-coming ball and adjust their body tension as they receive the ball. They throw long distances accurately to a partner and receive catches successfully. High ability pupils bowl with a cricket style accurately to the wickets. Cricket skills are developing well because pupils have plenty of opportunity to practise bowling, wicket keeping, returning a ball, throwing, fielding and batting.

128. Swimming is very well organised and pupils are taught by specialist teachers in ability groups. Pupils have swimming lessons for ten weeks each year, and all are already achieving or are well on course to achieve or exceed the expected standard for 11 year-olds. High ability pupils swim front crawl demonstrating good style, flat body position and strong propulsion from their arm and leg kick with well-developed technique in breathing. They perform headfirst surface dives confidently. Many average ability pupils achieve good standards in technique and stamina. They swim very well on their fronts and backs. Lower ability pupils are developing a basic style, though cannot swim as far. Progress is good because all instructors have very good specialist knowledge. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make very good progress. They are beginning to demonstrate a flat body position and are developing the appropriate arm and leg kick on their fronts and backs. Pupils who could not swim six weeks ago confidently push and glide and swim half a length. Pupils achieve well and develop a positive attitude towards swimming. However, talented pupils who attend swimming clubs are not always fully extended because all pupils are taught the same skills.
129. Teaching is very good overall with instances of excellent teaching. A significant strength is the teachers' enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge. Clear demonstrations and explanations are followed by encouraging feedback to pupils. Planning is very good throughout the school and teachers clearly identify learning outcomes, activities and organisation, and the progression in skills, knowledge and understanding. The pace of lessons is a strength; no time is wasted as pupils remain active throughout. In the excellent lesson Year 3/4 pupils developed over-arm throwing very well for their age because the teacher gave clear teaching points that extended skills. Pupils were very secure in their ability to catch the ball: they estimated the speed, strength and trajectory of the ball accurately, and hand eye co-ordination was well above that expected for pupils of this age. Very good organisation ensures all pupils have an opportunity to bowl, bat, backstop and field. The teacher's excellent demonstration of bowling in the practical demonstration contributed to the improved bowling. Excellent use of questions enabled pupils to understand why, when batting, they must place the ball away from the fielders in order to score more runs. The teachers gave different tasks and used other resources for lower ability pupils; all made very good progress because the level of challenge was sufficient to ensure success. Pupils are expected to be very well behaved and enjoy their lessons. They are enthusiastic and keen to improve their performance in all aspects. They are sensible and work well individually, with a partner, in small groups and alongside others in a large group.
130. Resources are good and outdoor facilities are very good. The school benefits from two well-marked out playgrounds that encourage pupils to practise their skills. The head teacher ensures the school grounds are verti-drained regularly to guarantee the quality of the games field is very good. The school benefits from a cricket strip in the centre of the field. The hall is too small for older Year 5 and 6 pupils, and this limits the indoor extension activities. Extra-curricular clubs include dance, cricket, tag rugby, netball. The school is well involved with the local sports clubs. The headteacher takes the cricket club and exudes enthusiasm; he has excellent subject knowledge. The club is well attended by both boys and girls. Pupils receive very good instruction on batting, fielding, bowling and the rules of cricket; as a result of the teacher's first class subject knowledge, opportunities for developing skills standards are high. Pupils experience outdoor adventure activities on a residential trip to Osmington Bay. The very good links with cricket, athletics and football extend pupils' experiences and enrich opportunities. The inter-school events enable them to

experience competition in a range of environments. The school is very successful in competitive events in games, football, cricket, athletics, netball and swimming.

131. Leadership of this subject is excellent. The subject manager has enthusiasm and specialist knowledge and this has a significant impact on standards and ethos and profile of physical education within the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132. The standard of religious education for 11 year-olds is well above what is normally expected for pupils of this age. Since the last inspection standards have improved significantly from average to well above average. Improvements in the whole school planning and the quality of the teaching have contributed. The school has developed close links with local churches and visiting clergy make a valuable contribution to curriculum work. Its range of resources and artefacts to enrich the curriculum has been extended.
133. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate good knowledge of Christianity, Judaism and Hindu religions, and empathise well with people who have different religious beliefs. They have a very good understanding and explain elements associated with religion such as ceremonies and holy books. They accurately describe the Christian and Jewish Rites of Passage and identify the main difference between the Christian and the Jewish religion. They knowledgeably write about the significance of the Passover and the seder meal, and are familiar with Jewish customs, such Sukkot and the Barmitzuah, which gives insight into the Jewish culture. Literacy is extended well through religious education, for example in the upper juniors where they wrote 'A mouse view of the nativity', which also showed very good understanding and knowledge of events leading up to the birth of Jesus.
134. Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and a commitment to teaching it well. They devise interesting ways of making pupils think. Questions and answer sessions are well used to make links between learning about religion and learning from religion. Opportunities for discussion, reflection and aesthetic awareness are also strengths. Teachers use a high level of questioning to help pupils reflect on their own understanding. In one excellent lesson, pupils presented well considered group theories such as, 'God made the world from the big bang in six stages and he added things to the world.' The teacher's skilful organisation contributed to the high level of debate in the groups; intense concentration and involvement was evident from all pupils. The teacher gave very clear guidelines for the discussion and time was managed very well. She reminded pupils to order their thinking when preparing to present their thoughts and beliefs to others. Pupils rigorously questioned each other, and showed a very good interaction as they considered everyone's point of view. The teacher skilfully linked the lesson to biblical text. Pupils with special educational needs were encouraged to participate in all aspects of the lesson and often contributed valuable insights to discussion.
135. Assessment is very good, work is assessed at the end of every unit and records are conscientiously updated. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school because of the high quality of teaching. High ability pupils, for example, know that Christians ask God's forgiveness through confession. They know that churches are special places for christenings, weddings and funerals, and also where people pray and speak to God. One pupil wrote 'We also go to church for peace and time out

from noise.' Average pupils have a good understanding of Christian ceremonies and their significance, such as the Christingle service. They have also written knowledgeably about Hindu gods and the significance of the River Ganges. Pupils are extremely well motivated in their religious education lessons. They are eager to contribute their ideas especially when they relate to their own experiences. They reflect on the creation of the world and are eager to take part in activities and contribute to discussions. Excellent work occurs when pupils are asked to reflect on their belief and discuss it with others. Pupils throughout the school write their own prayers, and these form a valuable resource.

136. Moral, spiritual and social issues are thoroughly explored. Pupils discuss and write about their rights, responsibilities and beliefs. They have a good awareness of their responsibilities within the community, and identify events with which they have helped, such as church festivals and barbecues. There are very good opportunities for pupils to reflect on the significance of Christianity in everyday life, for example, and they express clear ideas about the relevance of Christmas cards with a Christian message and those with a commercial message. Pupils use the story of the Good Samaritan and explore moral questions such as how do we forgive and what is forgiveness. The quality of reflection is very good. Pupils reflect on life and record their own special events. They consider significant future events such as marriage, having children and getting old. They think about decision making, considering questions such as whether it is easy not to swear or commit a murder, or whether it is more difficult to stop smoking or say your friend did something wrong. Drama is well used to set the scene and encourage pupils to empathise with emotions, such as happiness and joy and fear and concern. Pupils consider and write their thoughts on whether God would be pleased with the world as it is today.
137. Management of religious education is very good, and the subject manager has specialist knowledge. The whole curriculum has been re-written and is planned to incorporate the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus. The manager monitors and supports teaching by discussion with teachers both formally and informally, and by suggesting ideas, books and resources. There is a very good action plan and timeline for further development. Religious education makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in giving a chance to discuss issues that do not arise in other curriculum areas.