

INSPECTION REPORT

STEEP CE SCHOOL

PETERSFIELD

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116319

Headteacher: Mrs H Wilson

Reporting inspector: Mr Andrew Folker
2437

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th June 2001

Inspection number: 193616

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	95 Church Road Steep Petersfield Hampshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Rollo Wicksteed
Date of previous inspection:	19 th April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2437	Andrew Folker	Registered inspector	Mathematics, science, art, history, music, foundation stage, Equal opportunities, English as an additional language	The school's results and achievements; How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1329	Kevern Oliver	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?
3586	Betty Camplin	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, physical education, religious education, special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This small primary school is situated in the village of Steep, which is two miles north of Petersfield. There are 98 pupils on roll organised into three mixed age classes. Approximately 70 per cent of pupils attend from outside the immediate area because of parental preference.

The majority of pupils come from relatively favoured socio-economic backgrounds. All pupils have experienced some form of pre-school education and, on entry to school, have attainment which is at least in line with and often above, that found nationally. The school loses a significant number of pupils to private education, often the higher attainers, midway through Key Stage 2. There is a smaller number of pupils than average eligible for free school meals. There are ten pupils on the school's register of special education needs which is below the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. One pupil has English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many very good features. Pupils achieve high standards in most aspects of their education because of the good teaching they receive. Pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes to their learning allow them to achieve their full potential. The leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are good and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils achieve high standards in most subjects and make progress in their learning.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good.
- Pupils personal development is very good.
- Relationships are very good.
- Attendance is very good.
- There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school takes good care of its pupils.
- Pupils with special education needs are well catered for.
- The leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are very good.
- The school meets parents' aspirations.

What could be improved

- The quality of the School Improvement Plan.
- Standards in science.
- More effective written communication of the school's procedures and practices.
- The accommodation to provide a hall and library.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in April 1997. The high standards seen at that time have been maintained and improved upon in many subjects. There has been good improvement in the provision for information communication technology. The curriculum is now well planned. Assessments of pupils' attainments and progress are made on a regular basis in all subjects, although these are not yet used sufficiently for setting targets for pupils' future performance. The current school improvement plan is tightly costed and has appropriate priorities but there is a need to evaluate success more rigorously.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

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

Results in national tests for 11 year olds in 2000 are well above the national average in English and mathematics and are broadly in line with the national average in science. When compared with similar schools results are very good in mathematics, good in English, but disappointing in science. The small number of pupils taking the tests makes statistical interpretation unreliable; the group of pupils taking the tests in 2000 contained a higher proportion than normal who were on the school's register of special education needs. The results obtained by pupils who were seven in the Year 2000 were well above the national average in reading and writing in relation to both schools nationally and similar schools and above average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science were very high in comparison with the national average

The findings of this inspection are that the oldest pupils achieve good standards in English and mathematics and satisfactory standards in science. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls during the inspection. Pupils in Year 2 achieve good standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in other subjects are mostly above those expected. The targets set by the school for the future are appropriately challenging. Almost all children in the foundation stage will achieve or exceed the Early Learning goals by the time they are five.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are consistently well behaved in lessons and at other times around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There is mutual respect between all adults and pupils. They work well together in lessons and play amicably at lunch and playtime.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance rates are above the national average and unauthorised absences are much lower than that found nationally.

The positive attitudes displayed by pupils have a significant positive impact on the standards they achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Of the 39 lessons seen all were at least satisfactory, 50 per cent were good and 30 per cent were very good or better. Good planning and the wide range of activities linked to the early learning goals are provided by the teacher in the foundation stage and are typical of the very good teaching they receive. This ensures a good start to work in the National Curriculum. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 teachers manage pupils well and establish very good relationships with them. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught and generally effectively used in other subjects. A suitable range of teaching methods are employed, although in Key Stage 2 some activities do not allow pupils to work on their own initiative sufficiently. Overall teachers have high expectations of pupils, both in terms of what they will achieve and their behaviour. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of pupils' individual needs. As a consequence pupils understand what they are doing and acquire new skills and knowledge effectively.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There are particular strengths in the school's provision for children in the foundation stage.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special education needs receive good access to all aspects of the curriculum and receive well-matched support from teachers and teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The pupils receive good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. It is particularly good in respect of pupils' moral and social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure as the school provides a high level of pastoral care.

The school provides a broad curriculum that is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Parents support the school holding it in high regard. The school maintains close informal links with parents, although there is a need to improve communication so that parents are more fully aware of what their children are learning in school. Teachers are easily accessible to parents. There is a high level of care for pupils with a good induction system for new pupils entering the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides effective leadership to a committed team of hard working staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are supportive and maintain good informal communications with staff. The governors meet most statutory requirements although there are some omissions. Many governors visit the school to observe lessons and meet staff but the results of these visits are not formally recorded. Governors need to be more actively involved in the formulation of the school improvement plan.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school compares its results with local schools and national results and takes appropriate actions.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources available to the school are well managed. The school uses the different grants available effectively. Funds to support pupils with special education needs and to liaise with other schools are particularly well used.

The school employs an appropriate number of well-qualified teachers. Good use is made of teachers' specialist skills such as in the teaching of music. Teaching assistants are well qualified and provide very good support to teachers. Staff receive good opportunities for their professional development. The schools aims are fully reflected in its work. The school improvement plan needs to identify with greater clarity how initiatives will be evaluated. The accommodation is well managed but is insufficient, lacking a hall and library. The school always seeks value for money when purchasing goods and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is good. • Children like coming to school. • The school is approachable. • The attitudes and values that the school promotes. • Behaviour is good. • The school is led and managed well. • The induction procedures for the youngest pupils. • The school expects pupils to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons. • The amount of homework set. • Information about what their children will be studying. • Better behaviour at lunch time (raised at the parents meeting).

The inspectors' judgements support the parents' and carers' positive views. Little evidence was found to substantiate the concerns of a minority of parents, although inspectors agree that the school needs to do more to inform parents about forthcoming work to be studied. Behaviour seen during the inspection was consistently good and the homework set was appropriate. It consolidated and extended pupils' work in school. The range of extra-curricular activities, and opportunities for residential visits on offer to pupils during the school year, is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Attainment on entry to the school is above that of children of a similar age. As a result of the high expectations of staff, good teaching and a well-planned curriculum supported by positive relationships pupils make good progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage children's attainments are above those expected nationally in the Early Learning Goals.

2. Any comparison with national percentages in National Curriculum tests and assessments needs to be approached with caution as the number of pupils in each cohort in the school is small and results can vary considerably from year to year. Over the past three years results at the end of Key Stage 1 have been consistently well above average in reading and writing. The results of the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven were well above the national average in reading and writing in relation to both schools nationally and similar schools. In teacher assessments of speaking and listening standards were very high compared to national results. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in reading and writing was well above the national average. In mathematics results were above average nationally and in line with similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level is in line with national averages overall. Teacher assessments in science show that attainment is very high in comparison with the national average with performance at the higher level being above the national average. There was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

3. The same proviso about small numbers in the cohort applies to Key Stage 2. The Year 2000 cohort contained an unusually high proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. In addition many pupils, often the high attainers, left the school mid way through this key stage for private education. In the Year 2000 National Curriculum tests taken by pupils aged 11, results in English were well above the national average and above those achieved by similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels was well above the national average but average when compared to similar schools. In mathematics the results were well above the national average and the standards attained by similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was well above the national average. In science, attainment was in line with the national average but below that in similar schools. Less than an average number of pupils attained the higher levels.

4. Over the past three years performance in all these core subjects has exceeded the national average with no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. However the trend in results over the last five years has been below that found nationally. This is explained by the fact that in 1999 the school's results were well above those found nationally and the effect of the results of the Year 2000 cohort, which were below those of the previous year. The targets set for the Year 2001 tests are appropriate for the group of pupils and indications from inspection evidence are that these will be met and may be exceeded.

5. The findings of the inspection are that the proportion of pupils in Year 2 likely to attain standards typically expected for their age is above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils in Year 6 are also likely to exceed the national averages in English, mathematics and science.

6. As a result of good assessment and additional support pupils with special education needs make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans. These plans are reviewed each term with the involvement of parents. Pupils with English as an additional language are similarly well supported ensuring they make good progress. Pupils who are gifted or talented make sound progress. Effective use is made of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects.

7. In other subjects pupils attain standards which are above national expectation in history, art, design and technology in both key stages and in music at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in religious education are above local expectations in Key Stage 1 and in line at Key Stage 2. Standards in geography and information communication technology meet national expectations at the end of both key stages. Insufficient evidence was available to make a secure judgement about standards in physical education or music in Key Stage 1. Overall the school sustains and builds upon the high standards that pupils arrive with.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The praise, which the previous inspection team gave to Steep School's pupils for their "vigorous and enthusiastic approach to learning", accurately describes the attitude of the school's current pupils. The overwhelming majority of them are very happy to come to school. They enjoy learning and have very positive attitudes to their work. For example, in a Reception class lesson about sounds and the ear, pupils' concentration and responses to their teacher's prompts and questions, were thoughtful, imaginative and generally excellent throughout. In a Year 3 and 4 art lesson pupils concentrated and worked consistently hard through a series of successively more difficult sketches of a bicycle. By the end of the lesson everyone, whatever their abilities, had made good progress and developed their drawing skills.

9. There is a behaviour policy but no formal school rules or code of conduct although pupils of all ages know exactly what is expected of them. They understand and accept the system of rewards and sanctions, which the school operates. Behaviour in class is very good. During break times, there was a normal and natural amount of boisterous behaviour as pupils played happily and imaginatively on the green beside the school. No bullying or bad behaviour was seen during the course of the inspection. Older pupils confirmed that bullying is rare and totally unacceptable at Steep. They are confident that if any problems were to arise they would be dealt with quickly and fairly.

10. Pupils respect and accept each other's property and points of view. They look after each other and are polite and friendly towards all the adults who work with them. They are pleased to see each other succeed. In a Year 5 and 6 music lesson, for example, the whole class was noticeably delighted with the sounds produced by a pupil who played a syncopated rhythm on wood blocks. All pupils are given the chance to make responsible contributions to the smooth running of the community. Even the youngest, for example, deliver attendance registers to the school office. Older pupils help to rearrange furniture and set up equipment for assemblies. They also contribute to the smooth running of lunchtimes by clearing tables and serving drinks to the younger ones. They recognise that "these things have to be done" and clearly enjoy helping younger pupils by listening to them read.

11. Pupils generally, including those with special educational needs, help each other with their work and on occasions, such as when a Year 6 gymnast lead a "warm up

session”, take the lead. A weakness of the current system however is that pupils are given too few opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and work out how to improve the standard of their work.

12. Attendance is very good and unauthorised absences are well below the national average. Punctuality is also very good. Lessons start and finish on time and the school day moves along at a brisk and enthusiastic pace. There have been no exclusions during the last school year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and has a significant impact on pupils’ learning. Overall, teaching is good or better in three-quarters of the lessons seen and is never less than satisfactory. It is very good in a quarter of all lessons. The school has maintained the high standards observed in the previous inspection.

14. Teaching in the foundation stage is good in a quarter of lessons and very good in the remainder. The teacher is enthusiastic, has a good knowledge of the early learning goals and this good teaching ensures pupils are well prepared for the start of the National Curriculum. Other strengths of the teaching in the foundation stage are the high expectations of children, the stimulating environment in which the children learn and the way in which teachers promote their self-confidence and independence. As a result, the work children do is interesting and enjoyable so that they come to school bursting with enthusiasm. The early years assistant is knowledgeable and works closely with the teacher to develop children’s skills in all areas of their learning.

15. At Key Stage 1 teaching is good in over two thirds of lessons, with approximately a quarter of lessons being very good or excellent. Teachers’ planning is very good; it clearly sets out what pupils are expected to learn and these objectives are shared with the pupils. Good use is made of questions to assess and extend pupils’ understanding. For example in a mathematics lesson pupils were asked if they could describe the pattern made on a hundred square, when counting in fours to which a child accurately replied ‘down one back 2’. This focussed pupils attention on the emerging pattern and allowed pupils to predict future numbers in the sequence. Instructions are clear and pupils settle quickly to the tasks set. Support staff are knowledgeable; they are well briefed and help pupils to learn well. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of the needs of individual pupils. In a very good English lesson, linked to a topic in history, lower attaining pupils were helped by a list of words and phrases to support their writing which ensured they were able to express their own ideas in written form. The teaching of basic skills, such as phonics and addition, are very well taught. Behaviour is very well managed, so that pupils maintain high levels of concentration helped by the stimulating resources used to capture their interest, such as the collection of historical artefacts from washdays in the past.

16. At Key Stage 2 teaching is good overall, with one in ten lessons being judged very good. There are particular strengths in the teaching in the Year 5/6 class. Where teaching is very good it is characterised by high expectations of what pupils can achieve and of their behaviour, a secure knowledge of the subjects being taught, resulting in appropriate activities, which are well matched to the needs of all pupils. The activities set are intrinsically interesting and challenging so that pupils become engrossed in them. Examples of this were seen when older pupils were asked to focus on what underlying messages portraits of Henry VIII were designed to convey and, in another lesson where pupils used percussion instruments to work out a syncopated rhythm. In all lessons

effective use is made of pupils developing numeracy and literacy skills in other subject areas although there is the potential to improve the various styles of writing in science and religious education. Lessons are well planned, with clear identification of what pupils are expected to learn, which are shared with them. Good use is made of questions to make pupils think hard about their answers. For example, in a religious education lesson pupils were asked to consider the inferences behind proverbs. Classroom organisation and management are effective so that little time is wasted enabling teachers to work with small groups of pupils of similar attainment. Lessons usually conclude with a brief plenary session checking on what pupils have learnt and teachers make effective use of this in planning future lessons although this is not always closely linked to the individual targets set for pupils learning. Pupils work is regularly marked, although too often this fails to provide advice to pupils on ways they can improve.

17. There are common strengths in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and establish very good relationships with them. Overall, the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching provided and pupils' effective learning. Teachers in all classes use a range of methods including clear instructions, modelling of activities such as how to make a weaving loom, group work where pupils are given opportunities to discuss their work and effective recapitulation of what has been learnt. All these methods maintain pupils' interest in their learning.

18. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special education needs is good. As a result they make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans. The very able team of support staff is effectively used to ensure pupils with special education needs are included in all lessons. They are well trained and able to assist with the teaching of these pupils both in lessons and in small groups when withdrawn for support. The special needs co-ordinator demonstrates very good knowledge and understanding of each pupil's needs. The teaching of pupils who have English as a additional language is good, enabling them to play a full part in lessons.

19. A minority of parents expressed some concerns about the insufficient amount of work pupils are asked to do at home. During the inspection a scrutiny of homework books, discussion with pupils and observation of lessons showed that the amount of homework is appropriate and it is usually well used by teachers who ensure it supports work done in lessons.

20. A weakness identified in the previous inspection was that, in some cases, pupils working away from the direct supervision of the teacher were insufficiently involved in the tasks which limited their progress. There was no evidence of this during the inspection and pupils were generally seen to be responsible for their own learning. In a science lesson, with Year 5 and 6 the pupils maintained high levels of concentration when working away from close supervision in the schools woodland area. Another weakness identified in the previous report was pupils over dependence of the teacher whilst waiting for spellings, but in the lessons seen pupils were encouraged to use their phonic knowledge to spell words of which they were unsure or were provided with word lists they use themselves.

21. The effects of this good teaching are that learning is effective in all lessons as pupils increase their knowledge and develop their ideas well. All pupils are made aware of what needs to be learnt and are encouraged to settle quickly, sustaining good levels of concentration and applying effort to the work they do. Pupils independence is generally encouraged, although in Key Stage 2 some activities such as experimental work seen in science books allow insufficient opportunities for pupils to work on their own initiative. They

are interested in their work and take a pride in it. Teachers' high expectations of them and their behaviour are well met in practice; consequently they make good progress. Because of the very positive attitudes developed by the school all pupils show good personal development and are able to benefit from the positive relationships they establish with other pupils and the adults with whom they work.

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

22. The school provides a balanced and broad curriculum of good quality. It meets statutory requirements very well in the Foundation Stage in all the areas of learning, and in National Curriculum subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2. The school is also taking appropriate action to familiarise itself with the recently introduced syllabus for religious education. It has effective arrangements for delivering personal and health education, and takes care to consult parents about when, where and how sex education will be taught.

23. The way in which the curriculum is planned is designed to ensure that teaching is relevant to the needs of all pupils, including the one pupil with a statement of special educational need and the one pupil with English as an additional language. The cycle of topics and themes frequently makes very effective and imaginative links between subjects. The work on transport, for example, has creatively met design and technology targets and those related to forces, and materials and their properties, in science.

24. The overall quality of curricular provision is better than at the time of the last inspection. The thought invested into providing a variety of opportunities to practise literacy and numeracy skills has been effective. This contributes to the good standards pupils achieve at the end of each stage, particularly in reading, number, art, design and technology and history. Notably, there has been good improvement in the range of design and technology and information communication technology experiences planned for pupils. Teachers identify interesting ways to develop understanding and skill in communicating ideas and information effectively. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils are currently making an English/American dictionary, and Year 2 pupils are designing and making playground equipment designs of good quality. Provision has the potential to improve further in science, in the way that opportunities are created for pupils in Key Stage 2 to decide on their own approach to investigations. At present they do not make sufficient use of their writing skills to predict, describe working methods, or explain what they found out or wish to explore further. In physical education, improvement has not been as rapid as the school would have wished. This is almost entirely due to significant deficiencies in accommodation beyond its direct control.

25. There is potential to continue to improve the approach to communicating the framework that sets out the school's vision for delivering the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The ways in which curricular aims are met through the judicious allocation of time, use of assessment information, and the school's resources, are not as clear to governors and parents as they could be. This hinders their ability to monitor the quality of the curriculum, and its effect on pupils' academic and personal development.

26. The school's ethos strongly embraces the principles of educational inclusion, and equal access to the curriculum for all pupils. Children with special educational needs are served well. There is substantial evidence, for example, of very regular help provided by classroom support assistants, and effective liaison with feeder secondary schools. The match of curricular tasks to individual need is usually appropriate, and sometimes very good. An example is when older junior pupils are given fiction texts to investigate the

meaning of new vocabulary that they can use in their future writing. Homework tasks are particularly well integrated into curricular planning, to enable pupils, whether high or less confident achievers, to advance their knowledge, skills and confidence in classroom activities. It was successfully incorporated, for example, into work in religious education about words of wisdom in sacred texts.

27. There is a clear emphasis on finding creative and stimulating ways of catering for pupils' personal, social, and health education. Care of the body and the need to exercise it were, for example, key elements of athletics and games lessons. The flexible organisation of teaching groups, and frequent learning in pairs and threes, aids social and personal development considerably. The impact of this kind of organisation could be even better with more consistency in the quality of planned opportunities for pupils to exercise initiative, and evaluate their own progress.

28. Links with the community are good in both key stages. Two very good examples are the educational visits to Portsmouth and to the local Watercress Line, to learn more about a contrasting urban community, and railways, past and present. The efforts made to work in partnership with other educational providers are very good. The use of a local independent school's resources, and professional development days shared with a group of local primary schools, are appreciated by staff. They ultimately benefit pupils enormously, particularly in design and technology, art, history, drama and physical education.

29. The enrichment provided through extra-curricular opportunities is also good. A very worthwhile feature is the overnight camp opportunity for older juniors. There are many special events over the year that fit into optional extra-curriculum time and that promote interest in leisure pursuits, such as gardening and playing musical instruments as well as games against other schools. At a time when workload on staff is increasing, the school does well to offer such a variety of experiences for personal, academic and social development outside normal lessons.

30. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was one of the strongest aspects of provision. The school is still very strongly committed to these aspects of education and continues to provide opportunities of high quality. Most pupils respond to school in a responsible and cheerful manner, because the teachers, support staff, and volunteer helpers, encourage and support them. Adults exemplify how to respect and work in close harmony with each other, and children follow their lead. The subtle, but consistent, behaviour management procedures help pupils recognise right from wrong, and take personal responsibility for their own actions. The thought given to helping children to develop social skills, care for the environment, and to consider their lives in the context of people in other parts of the world, is very good. Special picnics are but one good example of this provision.

31. Members of staff, when they take assembly, or read stories, often leave space for quiet thought and reflection. This aids spiritual and personal development, as does dialogue to encourage the appreciation of the environment and nature. Cultural development, and pride in national heritage, is embedded in project work about the local and wider community. Both are reflected in concerts and special events throughout the academic year, such as the visit of a steel band and visits to a local Sikh temple. An awareness of cultural diversity is also well developed through work in religious education, and the humanities. Pupils share their developing knowledge of the influence of Christianity, and other world faiths, sensitively in religious education lessons. They show no hint of disrespect or disinterest when finding out about lifestyles that differ from their own. The quality of some of the displays of work is high. They speak volumes about the school's

success in preparing pupils for secondary transfer, and to value their contribution as citizens in the modern world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. Steep School is a safe and secure place. The governors, headteacher and the rest of the staff take very good care of all their pupils who are properly supervised through the whole of the school day. There are very good arrangements for the induction of pupils new to the school. Health and safety arrangements, which are based on the local authority's recommendations and procedures, are good. They include regular inspection of the premises and grounds and there are normally up to three trained first-aiders on site during school hours. Child protection arrangements are good and include links with all the appropriate local agencies.

33. The school's arrangements for monitoring attendance and improving punctuality are very good. On the rare occasions when problems do arise with, for instance, unauthorised absence or poor punctuality there are well-established arrangements for dealing with them. The headteacher discourages authorised absences for in-term holidays by reminding parents of the impact which non-attendance has on their children's learning and development.

34. The school has recently revised its behaviour and discipline policy. It does not include any specific arrangements for dealing with bullying. There are no formal school rules or code of conduct but very good behaviour is very much the norm.

35. All the teachers and support staff are very well aware of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Pupils are expected to learn and work hard and contribute to school life. Their teachers encourage them to do this by recognising and praising their achievements in all aspects of school life. The result is that pupils are generally very attentive in lessons and make good progress.

36. The previous inspection criticised the school for not making proper use of the results of assessment for short term planning and the monitoring of pupils' progress. Since then some progress has been made and a number of formal and informal systems are now in place. In the reception class baseline tests are used to establish pupils' starting points and the results of the national tests at Key Stage 1 and 2 in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 and 2 are carefully analysed. A range of school based assessments is used to check progress in other areas of the curriculum, such as design and technology. Lesson plans do not, as yet, make sufficient use of all the information, which comes from all these assessments. There is, in addition, no consistent approach to the setting of targets, based on assessment results, which groups and individual pupils should be working towards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. Parents are pleased to send their children to Steep Primary School. They are confident that their children are happy in school. They value the fact that the school is a small community, which pays very good attention to the educational and general needs of all its pupils. Parents admire and respect the headteacher and staff and have confidence in the ways that their children are helped and encouraged to learn and develop. More than 90 per cent of parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed with the statement "the school is helping my child become mature and responsible".

38. Arrangements for the induction of new pupils are good. They include visits to school before actually starting school, briefing sessions for parents and an informative booklet about what life will be like in the reception class.

39. Formal documentation such as the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are well produced, but the current editions of both have some omissions. There are regular newsletters that keep parents in touch with what is going on in the school. The school is at the planning stage of preparations for the launch of its own website.

40. There is a home school agreement that all but a very few parents support. There is a straightforward homework policy and schedule and pupils use homework books, many of which are filled with very good work, and reading diaries. Some parents however are concerned that the range and amount of homework is inconsistent, especially as far as Year 5 and 6 is concerned. Other parents, particularly those with children in the reception class and Year 1 would like more information about the curriculum so that they can help their children more effectively to learn at home.

41. Formal arrangements for keeping parents in touch with their children's progress include a one to one meeting every term with the class teacher and an end of year report. These reports meet statutory requirements. They include a self-evaluating comment from pupils but, in their present form, they lack real evaluation of pupils' progress in some subjects and there is no provision for parents' written comments.

42. The informal arrangements for keeping parents in touch with their children's progress, are very good. Parents are welcomed into the school and the headteacher can be contacted at almost any time. She and the rest of the staff meet and mix with parents at the beginning and the end of the school day. Every term there are open afternoons, when parents come into school and look, with their children's help, at the results of pupils' work and see what is going on in the classrooms. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in planning their children's education and are kept well informed of progress.

43. The school's new discipline and behaviour policy was drawn up in consultation with parents. A small number of parents raised concerns about bad behaviour and bullying in the school with the inspection team. The headteacher is aware of these concerns and although confident that any problems which do arise are dealt with promptly and properly, is always willing to work with parents in order to sort things out. Neither bad behaviour nor bullying was observed during the inspection and older pupils reported that bullying was not a problem.

44. The staff and governors value the major contribution which parents make to the life and work of the school. Twenty or more parent volunteers help, for example, by regularly listening to pupils read, teaching sewing and accompanying and providing transport for trips. The Friends of Steep School is very active and is a valued focal point of the community. It organises many social events and raises significant amounts of extra money for the school.

45. Some of the parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that the school did not "provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons". The inspection team however does not agree with this point of view. There is a wide range of clubs, sports, events and visits, which go on throughout the school year.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The headteacher provides strong, effective leadership to a committed team of hardworking staff. In this the senior teacher ably supports her. There is a commitment to

pupils and a strong work ethic, which is a strength of the school. The school's aim of providing a caring atmosphere is very well met in practice. A strong sense of teamwork is evident, which includes non-teaching staff and the governors.

47. There is good informal communication between staff and governors with staff invited to governors meetings as observers. The chair of governors knows the school well and is a frequent visitor. Governors meet most statutory requirements, although there are some omissions, such as reporting on the success of the special needs policy, in the annual report. Governors regularly attend further training on their role. Most of the key issues arising from the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed although the school improvement plan still requires greater rigour. This plan is formulated by the headteacher and staff and presented to the governors for their approval. Whilst last year's plan identified appropriate priorities, such as improving the skills of teaching assistants, there is insufficient detail on how this will be achieved. There is limited formal monitoring and evaluation of the plan and this is a weakness, as governors and staff cannot be sure that the criteria for success have been met. There are good arrangements to link governors with subjects and several governors make visits to observe teaching and discuss provision with subject managers. The results of these monitoring visits are not always reported back to the Governing body representing a missed opportunity for all governors to be as well informed as they might be.

48. Good monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum has been established by frequent observations of teaching by the headteacher and subject managers. The results of this are fed back to the teacher and used to set objectives for further improvement. This system contributes to the good teaching seen during inspection. Samples of pupils' work are reviewed by all staff on a termly basis, to check that standards are being maintained. Close curriculum links are maintained with the local cluster group of schools to compare performance. A suitable range of formal tests is used and the results of these are investigated and used, in conjunction to teachers' ongoing assessments, to track pupils progress. The results of national tests are analysed and used to set school targets such as the improvement of writing.

49. All teachers are suitably qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum. Teachers with specialist knowledge, for example in music, are effectively deployed to make use of their skills by teaching pupils across the school. Performance management systems are securely established with all staff agreeing objectives for the future, which are supported by training. Teachers attending training report back during staff meetings on the implications of this training for the school. All teachers have a heavy load of subject responsibilities to manage in this small school. They receive regular release time that is effectively used to allow them to monitor standards and provision. Teachers are very well supported by teaching assistants. They have received further training and provide high quality support to the pupils with whom they work.

50. The space available to the school is restricted which places constraints on provision. The accommodation is well maintained and kept clean. The school does all it can to maximise the use of the available space but, as some teaching spaces are thoroughfares, there are unavoidable interruptions to lessons. The outdoor space is generous and very effectively used to support the curriculum such as investigating habitats in the wooded area. Good use is made of the common adjacent to the school to provide space for playtime and outdoor physical education. There are informal arrangements to use the sporting facilities at a nearby private school, although it is likely that these may cease next year because of increased demand. The lack of a hall is a significant weakness. It means that physical education can only take place when the weather is fine, classrooms have to

be used for dining which sometimes leaves a lingering smell for afternoon lessons and the furniture in one classroom has to be completely cleared for the act of collective worship.

51. The school makes good use of specific grants. For example the grant to support small schools is used to foster links with other local schools. The principles of best value are soundly applied. There is some comparison of costs with similar local schools and tenders are obtained for significant planned spending. The budget is well targeted at meeting the school's priorities such as the recent improvement in computer provision. The governors have accumulated a large planned rollover with the specific purpose of improving the accommodation by providing a hall and library. They have agreed outline plans and are applying for central government funding to assist with the building.

52. The administration of the school is efficient and unobtrusive. The administration officer carries out day to day administration and financial management. She provides good support, which allows the headteacher and staff to focus their work on improving pupils' learning. The school makes effective use of new technology and is introducing a computerised system for monitoring and tracking pupil performance data.

53. Taking into account the good leadership and effective management resulting in pupil's positive attitudes and the high standards attained the school provides good value for money. The school has a shared commitment to ongoing improvement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to raise standards further the governors and headteacher should:

1 Raise standards in Science to those attained in other core subjects by:

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to conduct experiments working on their own initiative.
- Providing a clear framework within which pupils can predict, test and record the results of experiments when working on their own.

(Paragraphs: 16, 24, 89, 91, 94)

2 Improve the quality of the School Improvement Plan by:

- Involving governors in the early stages of the formulation of the plan.
- Providing greater clarity in the actions to be taken.
- Identifying who will evaluate success and how this will be done.

(Paragraph: 47)

3 Ensure that procedures and practices that are important to the school and community are written so that they are known, shared and consistently implemented.

(Paragraphs: 25, 34, 39, 41, 47, 80, 105, 108, 129, 135)

4 Maintain efforts to extend the accommodation to provide a hall and library.

(Paragraphs: 24, 50, 56, 68, 123, 128)

In addition to the above key issues, and in the context of the school's many strengths, the following points for improvement should be considered:

- Ensure reports to parents have a clearer focus of what pupils have achieved in each subject. (Paragraphs: 41, 98, 108, 122)
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. (Paragraphs: 11,27,89,106, 117, 132)
- Ensure greater consistency in the setting of individual targets for improvement. (Paragraphs: 16, 36)
- Ensure marking provides advice to pupils on ways to improve. (Paragraphs: 16, 79)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	26	46	26	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		98
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		10

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	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	96.0
National comparative data	94.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	6	9	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (79)	100 (93)	100 (86)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (79)	100 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	4	10	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	12	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (100)	79 (100)	86 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	7	7	6
	Total	11	11	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (93)	79 (100)	77 (100)
	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	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	77
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.9
Average class size	24.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	103

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	257554
Total expenditure	264420
Expenditure per pupil	2698
Balance brought forward from previous year	52172
Balance carried forward to next year	45306

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	100
Number of questionnaires returned	65

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	40	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	37	8	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	44	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	43	17	5	2
The teaching is good.	56	41	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	31	14	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	25	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	34	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	56	36	6	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	32	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	38	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	40	30	2	3

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Sixteen parents added written comments to the questionnaires. Several parents commented on the caring and supportive atmosphere of the school whilst identifying some areas of concern. These were chiefly related to:

- The need for a more consistent approach to homework.
- More attention for the higher attaining pupils.
- Improving the accommodation by providing a hall.
- Improving behaviour at playtimes.

The inspectors' judgements support the parents' and carers' positive views. Little evidence was found to substantiate the concerns of a minority of parents although inspectors agree that the school needs to do more to inform parents about forthcoming work to be studied. Behaviour seen during the inspection was consistently good and the homework set was appropriate. It consolidated and extended pupils' work in school. The range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for residential visits on offer to pupils during the school year is good.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

55. At the time of the inspection there were 16 children in the foundation year who attend full time and are taught in a class alongside children in Year 1. All the children in this class have had some experience of education before entering school. There are good arrangements for their smooth induction to school involving visits and opportunities for discussion with parents who receive a helpful booklet setting out ways in which they can support the work of the school. The school has maintained the high standards seen during the last inspection.

56. Accommodation for the children is shared with other children in Key Stage 1 with an area designated for practical activities such as painting. Good use is made of all the available space. One area is a thoroughfare however, and this causes frequent distractions for children, having a negative effect on their concentration.

57. Assessments, made when children enter school, show that attainment on entry is above average. These initial assessments are shared with parents and are frequently added to by staff. Assessment is effectively used to ensure planned activities meet children's needs and that all children receive equal access to what is offered.

58. Children make good progress and almost all meet or exceed the expected standards in relation to all the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The teaching is consistently very good. This is because the teacher and early years assistant staff have a clear understanding of children's needs and the early learning goals. Work is carefully and conscientiously planned. All adults have warm supportive relationships with the children, enabling them to learn effectively.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. Children exceed the expected standards by the end of the foundation stage. A good range of activities is provided to promote pupils' personal development. Children's confidence is encouraged by good relationships with adults so that there is mutual respect and trust. The high expectations of staff are well met in practice. During whole class activities such as sharing a story children sit listening attentively and contributing their own ideas about what may happen next. Children are trusted to work independently and to be responsible for their own actions. Children are co-operative and get on well with each other and want to do well in their work. They take turns using resources, such as a fort, and are keen to initiate ideas such as 'how will we get the soldiers to climb the walls'. They make good links with their previous experience, during group role-play activities in the home corner, as seen when one child stated that 'they make our beds for us at a hotel'. When using sand they interact purposefully, discussing ways of making models. They understand the need for rules and one child was heard to tell another child diplomatically that 'there are already four of us in the home corner'. Children use their initiative well, such as weaving a story when using the farmyard set and organise their own equipment. They know the difference between right and wrong.

60. The quality of teaching in this area is very good and has a positive effect on all other aspects of provision. It is one of the main reasons why children make good progress.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Children's language and literacy development is good and standards exceed those expected nationally by the age of five. Children speak confidently to adults, including visitors, and each other. A wide range of interesting and stimulating activities are provided to develop children's language. Many activities are effectively linked to the National Literacy strategy objectives. Teachers' plan work carefully to match children's needs. In whole class lessons children listen attentively to stories such as 'Walking through the Jungle'. They are keen to guess what will happen next. They recognise familiar words and their phonic knowledge is well developed so they are able to sound out phrases in the story such as 'grrrrr'. They make good attempts at reading unknown words using their knowledge of phonics. They are able to write simple words and phrases and spell with increasing accuracy. Letters are clearly shaped and accurately formed. Children enjoy books and many are able to read books from the early stages of the schools' reading scheme.

62. Teaching in this area is very good which contributes to the good progress made by children. Good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy ensures that activities focus upon developing children's skills.

Mathematical development

63. Children make good progress in mathematics and, by the end of the foundation stage, attain standards that are above those expected for their age. Children develop counting skills, number recognition and appropriate mathematical language. Almost all children are able to count to 20 and are familiar with larger numbers in their everyday lives. In a class lesson, involving a number line, children were able to count on and say the number that is one more or one less accurately. Many pupils were able to recognise zero. They use terms such as 'less than' and 'take away' confidently and accurately. When working in the toy shop children count accurately and enjoy buying items. When playing with small models teachers draw attention to mathematical features such as the number of wheels on different vehicles. Activities, such as pegboards and threading beads, are used to extend children's awareness of pattern.

64. Teaching in this area of learning is very good and accounts for the good progress that the children are making. This is rooted in the good planning of activities to promote children's learning in an interesting way. A secure understanding of the National Numeracy strategy ensures that the work dovetails into the early stages of the National Curriculum.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. Children make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding and, by the end of the foundation stage, exceed the standards that are expected for their age. Children develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They explore the properties of materials and how they may be used in different ways. For example when using wet sand to make models one child noted that 'wet sand sticks together but dry sand just comes apart'. They can discuss preferences for food and the reasons 'I don't like salad because my mum always puts salad cream on it'. They have a sound understanding of the skills and techniques needed to use a variety of constructional apparatus and are able to join pieces and build appropriate structures. They are able to make jigsaws based upon looking at the picture. Children use scissors, glue and paint with

increasing control. No use of technology was observed but, in conversation children spoke confidently about using computers and cassette recorders to listen to stories. In a lesson seen on sound children were able to explain the difference between sounds heard made by percussion instruments and gained a good understanding how the ear receives sounds. One child explained that the foot and mouth virus was 'carried on you so you can't use the footpath as you could spread the infection'. Children have a good sense of time and are able to recount events from the past such as birthdays and Christmas celebrations. One child was encouraged to recount a visit to a theme park to the class.

66. The teaching in this area is very good because staff have a secure understanding of how children learn. The emphasis placed on first hand experience and experimentation provides a good basis for further work in the scientific area of the National Curriculum.

Physical development

67. By the end of the foundation stage most children's physical development meets the standards expected for their age. They make good use of the available space and acquire hand eye co-ordination when throwing balls or using bats. They use outdoor climbing equipment confidently and are able to climb and balance. Large wheeled vehicles are used in the playground to develop control with hand and foot. At break time pupils use the grassed area to run and jump and some attempt handstands. Fine motor skills are well developed by the use of scissors, pencils and paintbrushes. In one painting lesson on colour mixing children made a variety of different shades by adding white to a primary colour. They were able to control the amount of paint on the brush to match shades on a colour card. Opportunities for physical development are hampered by the lack of a hall.

68. The teaching in this area is good. Maximum use is made of the available space both indoors and outdoors although the lack of a hall means that during inclement weather opportunities for outdoor play are restricted.

Creative development

69. Attainment in creative development exceeds that expected by the end of the foundation stage. Children use a variety of media and work imaginatively when they paint, draw or make collages. The home play area is effectively used and this allows children to develop their imaginations and expressive language as well as their social skills. In one lesson children were asked to describe a special stone and used terms such as 'smooth', 'rough', 'sparkly' and 'bumpy'. Creative development is extended when working with construction toys, such as farmyards, where children adopt the roles of various animals and weave together a story and use their voices to represent animal sounds. In discussion children are able to talk about special occasions such as birthdays. In discussing stories they empathise with the feelings of characters.

70. Teaching is good as adults intervene whilst children are working and extend their creative ideas such as seen when an adult asked questions about a railway track which led to children developing a story about what was happening.

ENGLISH

71. Standards are well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. They are particularly good in speaking, listening, and reading, and good in writing and spelling. They are good in handwriting in Key Stage 1, and satisfactory

in Key Stage 2. For three consecutive years, the results of statutory assessment tasks for seven and 11 year olds have been consistently well above average compared with all schools nationally. Standards were above expectation in the work seen, and reflect pupils' record of good progress through the primary years, particularly in Key Stage 1.

72. In comparison with schools where pupils' backgrounds and family economic circumstances are similar, pupils' performance in Key Stage 1 is well above average. Pupils who are lower attainers on entry to school make very good progress. They all reach or exceed the middle point of the expected standard in both reading and writing. More able pupils also work well, and perform close to their best potential. Proportionally, they exceed the numbers nationally that reach Level 3. One very able infant pupil achieved a standard in reading in year 2000 to match the expectation of an average Year 6 pupil. On the basis of teacher assessment, the standard achieved in speaking and listening is also above average.

73. During the inspection, some of the work seen in the final infant year was of a high standard, compared with national expectations. Pupils read and write very well. One excellent example of high quality achievement was the work produced about what washday was like one hundred years ago. Six and seven year old children, with different levels of prior ability, had clearly listened very attentively in previous lessons. They ably discussed the way the day was probably organised, to accurately re-call a considerable amount of detail. They remembered the names, for example, of the household equipment used, and could empathise with the time and effort taken to do all the washing by hand. They produced highly imaginative, and well-sequenced, descriptions of the process. The vast majority could sequence the chain of events from the first stage of preparation right through to ironing, and putting away, the laundered clothes. All this was accomplished in the space of just over half an hour in well-formed, legible handwriting, most in a joined style. Most pupils were confident and independent in their spelling and punctuation. Those who needed help sought it sensibly, and persevered very well to complete at least a page of worthwhile text.

74. Junior pupils' achievement in English in the year 2000 was above the standards gained by similar schools. The reason for the difference between the two key stages was investigated. It was found to be unconnected to a decline in the quality of teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6, compared with current Year 2, or compared with the class group's prior attainment in 1996. In the light of the school's very small numbers, and the learning difficulties experienced by a number of pupils, results in English are good and pupils make good progress.

75. The school has set realistic targets, based on knowledge of prior attainment in 1997, for assessment results in Year 6 this year. Appropriate account was taken of the average results of that year compared with all schools nationally. The indicators are that pupils have made good progress over the key stage. They are likely to exceed both the targets set for them and national averages. A few of the small group are achieving a level in reading, speaking and listening attainment above the expected standard. They are articulate, and read widely. They scan and quickly identify key points in a text. They are confident to suggest ideas about the deeper meaning behind the literal in some authors' prose. All pupils express themselves clearly and logically, and research information independently, using books, newspapers, and the Internet, to support their factual, or creative, writing. None are performing below expectation, except for a very small minority with special educational needs. Their difficulties with spelling lower the overall standard of their written work and its presentation. It is, nevertheless, grammatically sound, interesting and shows a good awareness of sentence structure.

76. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. Their behaviour in lessons is very good. They are very attentive and co-operative, and work sensibly together in a variety of groupings. They usually make very constructive use of their time. It is only when they are unsure of the purpose of a task that their motivation wanes and the pace of work slows down.

77. Teaching of predominantly good or better quality in both key stages makes a significant contribution to pupils' good pace of learning notably in Key Stage 1. Indeed, an occasional infant age group lesson, such as the one about washday in Victorian times, is excellent, resulting in remarkable achievement. In Key Stage 1, teachers habitually plan lessons very effectively, and explain learning objectives clearly and patiently. They have taken note of minor weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. They now skilfully identify opportunities for cross-curricular links, and for developing pupils' ability to make up questions for future research. For example, children were set the challenging task of devising questions about sunflowers. They did this well, working in pairs. They then used them effectively in the next day's lesson. The mathematical concept of ordering and sequencing is currently being developed through written work in history and English. The reading aloud of the 'Whatever Next' story, by Jill Murphy, led to valuable exploration of the meaning of new words, such as 'colander' and 'fragile'. Pupils were eager and read the text with understanding, sounding out multi-syllable words, and making sensible predictions about the sequenced events in the unfolding plot. Teachers usually remember to check that pupils completely understand what is expected of them. They try to do this before sending them off to work independently. If they forget, they check when work is in progress. They intervene, when necessary, to help sort out errors such as those related to the correct use of tense within a sentence.

78. Some special extended reading and writing lessons are very good in the class of older juniors. Pupils make effective use of time to discuss and explore the language and ideas in a range of shared texts. These have been carefully selected to match pupils' stages of development. They provide opportunities for pupils whose vocabulary needs extending to look up the definitions of unfamiliar words, such as 'gnarled', and 'scurry'. More able pupils have time to consider meaning beyond the literal, and to explain their feelings about characters in a story or poem.

79. Lessons never fall below a satisfactory quality. Nonetheless, in some lessons in the middle of the key stage, potentially very good learning tasks do not work quite as well as intended. Sometimes, having led the oral and reading part of a lesson very successfully, the teachers' decisions for writing tasks prove too difficult for lower achieving pupils. A few children needed more help with preparing a debate about the rights and wrongs of keeping animals in cages. This happened again when pupils were attempting to write, in the first person, the next page in 'Killer Cat's' diary! Work is marked regularly and is helpful when comments are very specific and linked to either the class or individual pupil's improvement targets. The practice is well established in some classes but is not consistent throughout the school. This makes a difference to the extent that pupils are clear about how they can make the best possible progress.

80. Leadership and management of the subject are good and ensures the school has maintained the standards seen during the previous inspection. English is given high priority in the curriculum, and coverage of the National Literacy Strategy is rigorous. The subject contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities for developing literacy skills for gifted and slower learning pupils are usually planned to extend them as much as possible. Pupils' test results and daily work are

monitored and weaknesses are identified. Action to address them is effective, but not sufficiently documented. Pupils are disadvantaged, also, by the lack of a library to provide stimulus for browsing and initiating independent research which limits pupils' opportunities to complete work 'out of class'. The school should take immediate action to improve its library facilities.

MATHEMATICS

81. The 2000 National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 showed that the overall performance of pupils was above the national average and consistent with attainment in similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 2, the performance of pupils was well above the national average and also when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was well above the national average. The school has maintained the high standards found in the previous inspection. Girls have performed slightly better than boys in tests over the past three years. Pupils with special education needs make good progress. The school is confident of meeting the targets it has set itself for the Year 2001 tests which are appropriately challenging for the group of pupils and slightly above last years results.

82. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils use mathematical language accurately and with confidence. For instance they are able to understand a sequence of numbers and are clear on basic mathematical operations such as addition and subtraction. The oral mental arithmetic at the start of each lesson captures pupils interest and they are keen to find the correct answer when asked to find multiples of 2, 4, 5 and 10. They have a secure understanding of place value and are able to use this knowledge to add two digit numbers accurately. Pupils are able to recognise odd and even numbers and to recognise patterns and relationships in numbers when looking at a hundred square. Pupils are aware of using different methods of solving problems and are able to explain these, such as looking for pairs of numbers that make ten when adding a sequence of numbers. In written work pupils are able to add and subtract amounts of money and divide numbers by a half and quarter. They measure length, using centimetres and are able to recognise and identify two and three dimensional shapes. Pupils produce block graphs and are able to interpret these confidently. Indications are that a higher proportion of pupils than expected will attain the average standards in the Year 2001 tests.

83. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have extended their knowledge of number. Most pupils use a range of methods to add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately and have a good understanding of the relationships between these operations. Their understanding of place value is secure and this extends to an understanding of decimals to two places and negative numbers. Pupils are able to approximate the results of adding numbers and use this to check the reasonableness of their answer. They have a sound grasp of multiplication tables. They measure angles accurately using a protractor and have an understanding of symmetry and the rotation of shapes. Pupils have good mental arithmetic skills and use a variety of methods to solve problems such as adding sequences of decimal numbers that they are able to explain to others. They are able to tessellate shapes and find their area and perimeter. They are able to collect data, find the average and record it graphically and talk about what it shows.

84. Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in other subjects. In history pupils use a timeline to chronicle events and in science pupils use graphs to record the results of experiments. Some use is made of information communication technology to record the results of investigations.

85. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with that in Year 2 and Year 6 being good. In the previous inspection teaching was reported to be sound so this represents an improvement. Teachers manage pupils well. They have a secure understanding of the National Numeracy strategy and combine this with a good knowledge of individual pupils. This results in work that is well-planned and matched to pupils' learning needs. The introduction of the numeracy strategy has had a positive impact on the quality of teachers'

planning and classroom practice, particularly in the teaching of mental number skills. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils and this allows them to be clear about their own learning. Relationships are good and teachers value pupils' responses, so creating a secure learning environment in which they feel confident to ask questions and have a go at predicting answers. Classroom management is effective and allows teachers to work with pupils in attainment related groups. Good use is made of resources, including information communication technology, to produce graphs as part of work on data handling. Close liaison with teaching assistants ensures they provide support to pupils, which is well tailored to their needs. Pupils are tested regularly and attainment is recorded and used when planning future lessons. The needs of the higher attaining pupils are suitably met, through the provision of extended work, whilst pupils with special education needs are generally supported by teaching assistants. Homework effectively supports work done in school. Pupils enjoy mathematics and behave well in lessons.

86. The mathematics scheme is securely rooted in the National Numeracy strategy, which ensures pupils receive a balanced coverage that fully meets National Curriculum requirements. The strategy has been implemented well and has a positive impact upon pupils' learning. The management of the subject is shared between two teachers who provide good support to their colleagues and play an active part in promoting the subject. They have attended further training, which is shared with staff during staff meetings. They monitor standards through analysing the results of tests taken and sharing these with staff. In the previous inspection it was reported that insufficient attention was paid to monitoring of lessons. All teachers are now monitored once a term and the results used to improve provision. Effective use is made of 'booster' classes' which are organised to raise standards further.

SCIENCE

87. At the end of Key Stage 1 the results of the Year 2000 teacher assessments are very high in comparison with national standards and similar schools. The number of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was well above the national average. The school has maintained the high standards noted in the previous inspection.

88. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in national tests was broadly in line with the national average but below the standards gained by similar schools. This represents a significant drop over the previous three years and a slight decline since the previous inspection. Taking account of performance over the past three years there has been no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. During the inspection, evidence was sought to explain the drop in Key Stage 2 standards this year. Discussion with the co-ordinator and a scrutiny of pupils' work showed that the drop in results is partly accounted for by the fact that a higher proportion than is usual for the school were on the register of special education needs. Several pupils predicted to attain high standards in science left the school for private education mid way through Key Stage 2. The targets set by the school for the current year are suitably high and, if achieved, will bring results in science back to high levels of the past.

89. The findings of this inspection are that standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. This is explained by the fact that pupils receive insufficient opportunities to work on their own initiative when conducting scientific experiments and are not given help in organising and recording the results of such experiments. Work from the past year in pupils' books show that pupils are often given the

same work so that the needs of the higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently well met, although this is beginning to be addressed in the lessons seen.

90. At Key Stage 1 pupils are able to find information from texts. They are able to name external and some internal parts of the body, such as the pelvis and are aware of basic life processes and make effective links to the need for a healthy diet. Pupils are able to classify foods and animals into different types. They have a good understanding of the properties of materials and are able to describe these. They are able to undertake fair tests, involving comparing the strengths of different kinds of paper. They understand that some changes, such as melting ice are reversible whilst others are not. They are able to make electrical circuits and record them diagrammatically using correct symbols.

91. At Key Stage 2 pupils are able to record the results of experiments, such as dissolving, although many of their predictions and explanations are almost identical showing over-reliance on the teacher. They are able to tabulate the results of experiments such as testing the hardness of rocks. Pupils are able to use instruments such as thermometers when working on the insulation properties of materials. They are able to explain simple phenomena such as how shadows are formed. They undertake more sophisticated work in electrical circuits and show an understanding of the solar system. Some use is made of information communication technology to produce results graphically.

92. Pupils throughout the school are interested in science. They are keen to gain new knowledge and work well collaboratively when asked to plan and carry out an investigation, such as making a study of various habitats around the school grounds. They respond well to the trust the teacher places in them when working away from direct supervision. These good attitudes enable pupils to learn effectively.

93. No teaching was observed in Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2 the teaching is satisfactory with one lesson being good. The subject manager teaches science across the school. She has a secure knowledge of the subject although the use of the same worksheets for some work limits opportunities for pupils to think for themselves. In a good lesson seen with Year 6, discussion and lively questioning techniques were used to focus pupils' attention on what they needed to do when planning an investigation. Good attention was paid to reminding pupils that they needed to provide evidence to support their conclusions. Pupils were encouraged to base their conclusions on their previous scientific knowledge. Pupils with special education needs were effectively supported by the teaching assistant ensuring they were fully included in the activity.

94. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. There is a scheme of work that ensures that all aspects are covered on a two-year cycle. There remains a need to introduce a format for ensuring that pupils approach experiments in a structured way which becomes increasingly sophisticated as they get older. Assessment is completed at the end of each topic and the outcomes used when planning future work. The subject manager is suitably qualified and has attended further training on her role. Teaching is regularly monitored and the designated governor has also monitored alongside the subject manager and given informal feedback on this to other governors.

ART AND DESIGN

95. The standards achieved at the end of both key stages are above national expectations and all pupils make good progress. Since the last inspection the school has maintained standards in Key Stage 2 and improved upon them in Key Stage 1. There are

examples of high quality artwork displayed around the school as well as evidence in photographs. Younger pupils have made realistic puppets and flower pots, using papier-mache, and a collage depicting the story of the three little pigs utilising printing, straw, lolly sticks and a variety of papers. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 have produced a collage linked to musical work on 'Peter and the Wolf' which shows more sophisticated use of materials and techniques to represent their ideas. In Key Stage 2 there are examples of detailed drawings using crayon and pencil sketches using a variety of shading techniques. Some use is made of sketch books. A display of water colour seascapes, based on a study of Turner, capture the sense of movement and vitality of the sea.

96. The quality of teaching is good overall because there are high expectations of what pupils can do. Teachers have a suitable knowledge of art so they are able to teach techniques effectively. They provide clear instructions and explain the objectives of the lesson. Basic techniques, such as sketching and the use of watercolour, are taught effectively. In a lesson on weaving Year 2 pupils had sorted materials by colour and the teacher enriched their vocabulary by the correct use of terms such as 'texture'. Classes are well managed, with an appropriate balance maintained between instruction and practical activity. A brief demonstration of weaving technique was followed with rapt attention by pupils who then eagerly set to work to produce their best efforts using the high quality resources available. In a lesson with the older pupils, where they made close observational drawings of a bicycle, the teacher gave good advice to the whole class on producing a quick sketch followed by detailed individual advice as pupils worked. Pupils are well supported by staff and volunteer parents to ensure they do not become frustrated and produce the best work of which they are capable.

97. Pupils' learning in art is very good. Pupils enjoy art and are able to reflect upon their work critically. They behave and concentrate well, sustain interest and take great pride in what they produce. In the lessons seen pupils explore ideas creatively and are able to compare their work with others and suggest ways to improve upon it contributing to their social development. As a result of the good teaching pupils are confident and keen to experiment using materials in an imaginative way and acquire good skills which are then well applied in practice.

98. There is a scheme of work that ensures progression in how pupils acquire skills and knowledge. For example in the Year 2 weaving lesson the skills used were built upon work done in the previous year, where pupils had done simple weaving using paper. The scheme ensures that pupils experience the full range of two and three dimensional work during their time at school. Regular assessments are made of how pupils' skills are developing, although reports to parents over-emphasise pupils' attitudes to the subject rather than their achievements. The care taken by adults in displaying pupils' art work contributes to the bright, cheerful environment in which pupils work. The subject manager provides good informal support to her colleagues such as when she gave advice of the correct terminology to be used when younger pupils were colour mixing.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Standards are above expectation at the end of both key stages and have improved since the previous inspection. No lessons were timetabled during the inspection. Nonetheless, there is a wealth of other evidence to show how well pupils achieve in this subject in both key stages, but particularly in the infant classes where progress is very good. Previous gaps in provision in food technology have been addressed. Boys and girls of all levels of prior attainment are acquiring a secure balance of skills, knowledge and

understanding that enable them to make a range of products, using different materials. They generally apply their numeracy, information communication technology and literacy skills well. Whatever their age, they talk with enthusiasm about their lessons. They very much enjoy practical activities, and have responsible attitudes to their work. Pupils clearly use time and resources very effectively.

100. In Key Stage 1, pupils use resistant and non-resistant materials with equal confidence. They have worked with fabric using their cutting, weaving, and sewing skills, first practised in reception, to make simple purses. They have improved the accuracy of their cutting and joining skills, through the experience of cutting and joining cardboard boxes and sections of wood. They are deservedly proud of the high quality of their working models of wheeled vehicles. Pupils readily explain how they designed and made them, and how they were able to secure the axles to ensure the wheels could rotate properly. They have written simple evaluations of their products, and the more able clearly identify how they could be improved by, for example, attaching windscreen wipers. Infants can solve problems by evaluating their playground environment. They each made their separate decisions about how it could be improved by adding to its range of adventure play equipment. Their computer generated designs, labelled sketches, and wooden models of roundabouts and climbing frames, show their capacity to persevere to produce their best work in special tasks planned by the teacher. Photographs of models, made with construction kits, reflect more free choice in directing their own making tasks.

101. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to refine and extend their range of skills and practise them in the context of other subjects such as science, history and geography. Their progress is sound. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils have also made vehicles. They made axles in different ways from the younger pupils so that wheels could be easily detached and changed. They have tested wheels of different sizes to find out which will help their models travel farthest. They have established that using different sized wheels on either side of the chassis will make their model veer to the left or right rather than move straight ahead. Their written work shows they have tested simple recipes. The culmination of a project of work on Greece was to buy and test Greek food. They participated in testing the products in an appropriate way; enjoying a class picnic! They wrote short accounts about the experience, identifying the items they enjoyed most and had tasted for the first time. In Years 5 and 6, older juniors have made attractive picture frames. They have thought carefully about aesthetics and durability in the context of constraints in the materials to be used. They have made masks and puppets, going beyond the paper crunching techniques used by infants, to make good use of papier-mâché and more advanced decoration techniques. They are about to embark upon making models of Tudor buildings that will require them to measure accurately, and consider how to represent their distinctive shape and character. There is not as much evidence as one might expect of junior pupils extending their ability to write instructions, or critically evaluate their work. This is a potential weakness and reinforces the need for the school to monitor its provision to ensure it provides full range of opportunities for pupils to write across the curriculum.

102. Whilst no direct teaching was seen, the pupils' work indicates that the subject is well taught. The tasks are stimulating and well planned. They cover the Programmes of Study, and facilitate the use of knowledge and skills in many different contexts. Pupils have been taught to select appropriate tools and to use them with care. They treat equipment with respect and there is no sign of wastage. Resources are organised very well and easily accessible. Space is restricted, but this is not allowed to disadvantage pupils. Progress is assessed at the end of each unit of work, and difficulties and aptitudes are noted, ready to inform the next unit of work. These could be developed further, by making observation notes more precise. The comments could, for example, distinguish between difficulties

related to making or evaluating skills, or describe the extent to which pupils have applied effort, and achieved at their individual best.

103. The subject is led and managed effectively. The team approach is used to very good effect, with classroom support staff as much involved in promoting the subject as teaching colleagues. Professional development opportunities have reaped rewards. The way in which all members of staff encourage and praise pupils exemplifies the school's aims and ethos very well.

GEOGRAPHY

104. Standards have been sustained since the previous inspection. They remain well matched to national expectations at the end of both key stages. Despite lessons not being observed in Key Stage 1, sufficient evidence was seen of good progress made by pupils of all prior levels of attainment. They find out, through practical experience, about the special characteristics of people and places, through the study of homes and other buildings, occupations, and the diversity of lifestyles around the world. They are very knowledgeable about Steep, and its physical and human characteristics. They can name, and locate on a map, towns further afield from Petersfield, and identify the separate countries that make up the United Kingdom. They make maps to represent their routes from home to school. They make good use of numeracy skills to produce pictorial graphs that depict how they travel to school. They know how to locate Nepal in an Atlas, due to the exchange of news, by email, with one child's father who was part of a recent expedition to Mount Everest.

105. Junior pupils have a broad-based understanding of the subject's key elements. They have a good knowledge of the world map and how to locate countries in and outside Europe. They make good use of numeracy and information communication technology skills to interpret scales and symbols on Ordnance maps and maps on the Internet. They describe and record different climatic conditions and how they affect people's daily lives. They gather and enter information from local surveys using information communication technology. Pupils have a secure understanding of the social and moral issues stemming from environmental change, and of sustainable development through work in topics such as 'transport' and 'water'. They are articulate, and make good use of geographical terms about points of the compass. Year 3 and 4 pupils, for example, discussed the direction they will take and what they will see at a nearby railway station and transport museum. When given sufficient time for writing, pupils make sound use of their reading reference skills and knowledge of report writing.

106. Not enough teaching was observed to make a reliable overall judgement about its quality and learning outcomes. However, the evidence from teachers' plans and records, and the work on display, is sufficient to know that it is satisfactory, with some good features. Very good use is made of the local environment, photographs, postcards, newspaper cuttings and information technology. During inspection week, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were given the stimulating opportunity to extend their knowledge of the railway network through an educational journey on the local Watercress Line. Pupils had been well prepared, by observation and discussion of photographs of railway and train construction. They looked forward to their outing with eager anticipation. The prospect of the experience clearly motivated all pupils, but particularly those who had never had the experience before. Fieldwork is also encouraged and fostered through an overnight camping expedition for Year 5 and a visit to an environmental study centre when pupils are in Year 6. Teachers are particularly skilled in identifying cross-curricular links with history, design and technology, mathematics and English. They are only too aware that time for

extended writing and following up independent lines of enquiry is very limited. This inhibits the extent to which all pupils are able to make the best possible use of their skills in writing. Views and conclusions about relevant moral issues, such as pollution and global expansion, though expressed verbally, are rarely communicated through writing in depth.

107. Pupils' attitudes and interest in the subject are very good throughout the school, and the subject contributes strongly to pupils' personal development. Pupils are very pleased to tell adults about experiences they have shared, and look forward to. They receive equitable and good curriculum provision. Parental involvement, links with the community, and good use of the school's immediate and surrounding environment, add particularly good value to learning experiences.

108. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject manager has a good overview of standards achieved even though samples of work are not selected and annotated as an evidence base. The school is aware of improvements that could be made to make the best of older pupils' literacy skills. It would help governors' understanding of the curriculum, and pupils' achievement, if a forecast of planning could be circulated each term. The school would assist parents if annual reports were more focused about progress over the year. It would also help if a precise action plan for the future development of the subject were to be produced. This would enable governors to evaluate objectively the use of financial resources in geography.

HISTORY

109. At the last inspection standards were found to be in line with national expectations. Standards have now improved so that they are above national expectations by the end of both key stages. Evidence from the lessons seen, work on display, discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their books shows that all groups of pupils make good progress in developing their historical knowledge and understanding of the past.

110. In the previous year pupils in Key Stage 1 have studied many famous people, such as Guy Fawkes and George Stevenson, and events. The current topic gives opportunities for pupils to compare washing equipment from the past with modern day appliances. In Key Stage 2 the younger pupils have studied the Greeks and Romans and made links to the present day with the Olympic games and the origin of place names. The older pupils use historical conventions, such as family trees and timelines, to organise their understanding of sequences of events in Tudor times. They are encouraged to link cause and effect, such as the reasons for Cardinal Wolsey's downfall, and to imagine themselves into the role of others, such as a seaman on the Mary Rose as it sank. In one lesson pupils examined a series of portraits of Henry VIII and were able to consider how these were intended to influence people who had not seen him.

111. Teaching is always at least good and occasionally very good as teachers enjoy the subject and have a very good knowledge of it. This high quality teaching contributes to the standards achieved by motivating the pupils to achieve the best they are capable of. This was illustrated in a Year 2 lesson where pupils focussed on careful observation of artefacts related to washday in the past. A lively account of Victorian washday followed by a well-managed oral discussion drew pupils' attention to the key features of how the artefacts were used. Demonstration and the use of appropriate vocabulary extended pupils' understanding and they were encouraged to deduce how washing tongs were used. Pupils were interested in this activity because of the teachers enthusiasm, which was infectious. Good attention is paid to developing pupils' understanding of chronology

112. This good teaching which captures pupils' interest ensures that they develop historical skills whilst enjoying the subject. They are curious and are keen to find out more, and this assists their learning. They are able to interpret the past imaginatively, through the consideration of secondary sources, and are able to collaborate well in groups when discussing what they show. One child in Year 6 suggested that Henry VIII would have worn gold chains 'so that people would know he was rich and important'. Teachers provide good support to pupils with special education needs to ensure they are able to take part in activities as well as extending the learning of higher attaining pupils by skilled questioning. Activities such as a Greek picnic help pupils to empathise with people from the past by allowing them to experience events at first hand. There are high expectations that the pupils will discover historical facts for themselves. Their cultural development is helped by consideration of other cultures from the past.

113. The subject is well led. The subject managers provide a good role model in their own teaching and give good informal advice to other staff. There is a planned scheme of work and regular assessments are made of pupils' knowledge and skills. Good use is made of visits to places of historical interest, to support work in class, making links between subjects, such as the visit to the local Watercress Line. The Internet is being used to support investigative work on Tudor clothing.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114. Improvement in provision since the time of the previous inspection has been good. The action taken by the school has resulted in sound standards being sustained in word-processing skills at the end of both key stages, and raised standards in the elements of the programmes of study criticised in 1997 such as data handling. Overall standards are now average at the end of both key stages. Pupils use the language of information communication technology confidently. They are well able to explain and evaluate its potential. They understand and use an appropriate range of information gathering and recording skills in the setting of their normal daily lessons in English, mathematics, science and foundation subjects. As a result, infants are better at using computer programmes, to communicate in tabular and picture forms, than they were four years ago. For example, the youngest children have made pictures to illustrate their booklets about the different things they do at various times of the day. They have recently generated designs for improvements to playground apparatus and set out the results of a traffic survey in columns. They know how to send and receive electronic mail, having benefited from receiving e-mails from a father who recently went on an expedition to Nepal.

115. Junior pupils have regular opportunities to make satisfactory or better progress in relation to their interests, aptitudes and needs. A pupil with special educational needs, whose hand-control is poor for the age group, makes good use of a specially adapted computer for desktop publishing. Work is produced at reasonable speed, and the results are pleasing. For example, dictionary definition work, and the first draft of a poem, was purposefully managed. Year 5 and 6 pupils were observed using the Internet to support investigative work about costume design in Tudor times. Their pace of progress during the activity would have been greater if the operating speed of the hardware had been better. However, this shortcoming was beyond the school's control. Others were quicker at creating a file to set out work to be made into a dictionary of English and American words and phrases. They were beginning to use both hands, and a few can touch-type a few words.

116. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. They are happy to use computers, and operate other devices such as the overhead projector, a 'Roamer', and a digital camera. They treat equipment with respect and take responsibility for looking after their own disks that store their work. In these respects the contribution to their personal development is good.

117. Though direct instruction of information technology was observed, teaching and learning of sound quality was systematically organised and managed. Effective use is made of support staff to remind pupils of applications they may have temporarily forgotten. These adults also demonstrate skills, and make sure pupils use time constructively. All teachers keep a checklist to record when pupils practise, and whether they are gaining competence in specific skills. In a busy classroom, with a variety of tasks going on, teachers do not, however, always find time for monitoring progress rigorously, and involving children in evaluating how they are learning. There is insufficient emphasis on pupils looking to reflect and add to a personal information base from time to time, by for example, doing written evaluations of their progress in work on science, using clearly agreed criteria.

118. The development of the subject has been soundly managed. Governors have ensured that they have provided financial resources to address the key issues from 1997 successfully. The use of financial resources and special grants has been particularly effective in raising teachers' own levels of expertise. Schemes of work have been based upon recent national guidance and ensure the balanced coverage of subject requirements.

119. The production of a concise and easily manageable subject development plan would now help teachers and their support colleagues. They need to record the significant improvements made, but continue to focus on the needs of different groups, such as the more able, to be sure that all pupils make as much progress as possible.

MUSIC

120. The school has maintained the standards seen at the last inspection and they remain above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. There was insufficient evidence upon which to base a secure judgement at Key Stage 1. All pupils listen attentively to music and are able to describe how musical elements are used to create different moods and effects. The younger pupils in Key Stage 2 use percussion instruments, as part of a class group, to improvise rhythmic phrases when interpreting the actions of various characters in 'Peter and the Wolf'. They are able to maintain a beat in simple accompaniments and when asked, are able to evaluate their own performance such as when a pupil stated that 'we were getting faster and faster'. They are able to improvise repeated patterns, perform them on a variety of percussion instruments and combine them in a performance.

121. Older pupils understand musical terms such as 'ostinato' and are beginning to understand musical notation and technical terms such as 'texture' which helps their understanding and enhances progress. They are able to maintain a beat in two parts and demonstrate a secure understanding of syncopation. When composing various rhythms, using percussion instruments, they are able to listen well, maintain and increase the tempo and keep together when playing different parts. They listen to a variety of music ranging from Glenn Miller to Tudor lullabies. They are able to contrast different types of music as seen when discussing a modern rap and 'Greensleeves' and have a good understanding of music from different times and cultures. Pupils who play the recorder accompany hymn singing effectively during the acts of collective worship. During these assemblies pupils

sing tunefully and enthusiastically. Pupils with a particular interest in music are able to participate in local performances.

122. The teaching of music in Key Stage 2 is done by the subject manager which ensures progression in the acquisition of skills and knowledge. This teaching is of a consistently good standard. She has a secure understanding of music and has high expectations of what pupils will achieve and this enthusiasm is effectively communicated to the pupils as seen when moving to 'rap' music. Pupils enjoy music and listen attentively to a range of music and identify the instruments playing. Pupils are managed effectively, good use is made of musical instruments and pupils are encouraged to devise imaginative ways of using these. Brief assessments are made of pupils developing skills and knowledge although the reports to parents contain limited identification of these. As a result of this good teaching pupils learning is good.

123. There is a scheme of work for music that clearly lays out how the National Curriculum will be covered so that all pupils get their full entitlement. Good links are made with other subjects such as history in a study of Tudor music. A range of tuned and untuned instruments are kept in good condition. The school regularly performs to wider audiences, often combining with other schools in events such as the Petersfield Music festival and the local area infants music afternoon. Space is cramped when the whole school meets together in one classroom for worship and pupils who play recorders do not have sufficient room to spread themselves.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. During the inspection, there was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about standards achieved by the end of either key stage, or progress since the last inspection. Only two lessons took place. These were in games and athletics. The standard of throwing and catching in Years 3 and 4, and in distance running and sprinting in Years 5 and 6, met expectations. Pupils achieved at satisfactory levels, according to their different aptitudes. A small minority of the girls and boys in the class of younger junior had a very good technique. They could throw tennis balls over-arm with a high degree of skill. The remainder of the class group could throw and catch with a partner with reasonable accuracy from a distance of approximately ten metres. The older junior pupils were developing the control, stamina and agility necessary to run circuits of the common adjacent to the school. The large majority could complete the distance. There was no significant difference between the performances of either gender group. Almost all pupils with special educational needs were able to match the performance of their peer group. The small minority with physical disability could not run at speed. Nonetheless, the dogged effort made more than made up for lack of agility. Achievement was better than that of many of the more physically advantaged pupils.

125. By the end of the final junior year standards in swimming are above expectation. Pupils' achievement is good in both key stages. They make good progress due to the early start they make in learning to swim, and the opportunities they receive for regular practise and tuition. Virtually all pupils swim a distance greater than the 25 metres needed to achieve the minimum recommended standard. A significant minority has reached the stage where they are embarking on training for the personal survival certificate.

126. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is sound. The specialist teacher has good qualifications in the subject, and a good level of personal skill and dexterity. Warm-up sessions take place at the start of lessons. Pupils' personal development is very well

supported through the custom of taking turns to be the group leader. This volunteer makes up the exercise routine that others copy. The teacher checks that actions are sensible and safe. She rarely intervenes at this stage however, to focus on how to ensure that every child is trying hard.

127. The best and very good feature of teaching is the strong emphasis placed upon instruction and demonstration of the main learning objectives of lessons. Account is taken of the needs of left-handed as well as right-handed children. To progress from underarm to throwing overarm, for example, pupils are encouraged, to note how a sideways stance, and a good follow-through action to release the ball at shoulder level, can improve the distance the ball can travel. The teacher ensures that pupils persevere and practise sufficient times to improve the relevant techniques steadily. Similarly, good behaviour management results in pupils working sensibly together so that they enjoy lessons. Pupils respond readily to suggestions from the teacher about with whom they should work. They are keen to show off their skills and are happy when they do well. There are no arguments and they exhibit no undue rivalry, just healthy competition. The attitudes and relationships of boys and girls are good. The pace of the lesson sometimes deteriorates when pupils have to wait for turns to run or throw. There is also an imbalance in the times when the teacher evaluates the outcomes of pupils' performance, and the opportunities they receive to judge how well they are improving. Lessons conclude with a perfunctory, rather than carefully planned, warm-down.

128. The curriculum is of sound quality and satisfactorily meets statutory requirements. This is due to the school's determination to offer an appropriate range of opportunities despite a lack of its own hall or sports field. Facilities for dance, gymnastics and indoor games are inadequate. However, the school has, thus far, managed to overcome severe disadvantage through ingenious planning and high quality relationships with those who manage other local amenities. It uses the adjacent village common for outdoor games, and a hall and swimming pool belonging to a close-by independent school. Younger pupils have also visited an inner city school in Portsmouth to try out their gymnastics facilities. Junior pupils are given a wide variety of extra-curricular opportunities at different times of the year. These enrich their learning in athletics, swimming, football, netball, rounders, and Kwik Cricket. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils enter a cross-country event and swimming galas at the local pool. Such opportunities also contribute to pupils' social and cultural development in a meaningful way.

129. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. Planning and record keeping are thorough, and the aspirations for improvement are highly relevant, but costly. The school wants to be independent in its facilities and the subject does not yet have a precise action plan to show its risk assessments, and strategic planning, in precise detail.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

130. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the new rigorous requirements of the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus for religious education. The achievement of the more able and average pupils is sound, and that of the below average is good. Standards are higher in Key Stage, 1 where many pupils in the final infant year are achieving above the standard expected of the age group. All infants' achievement is good in relation to their capabilities. In both key stages, pupils show a good level of knowledge and awareness of Christian traditions and beliefs. They also understand that, in addition to Christianity, there are other significant world religions. They are aware that religious faith and customs influence the manner in which many people live their lives. In these respects, the good standards

reported at the time of the previous inspection in 1997 have been sustained. In the context of a very different syllabus now than then, improvement has been satisfactory.

131. In Key Stage 1, pupils, including those with special educational needs, understand the idea of special people, places, books and stories, events and artefacts. For example, between Years 1 and 2, they make good progress in learning about bible stories and celebrations. Their early writing about Moses in the bulrushes, and what makes Christmas and birthdays special, develops into more detailed descriptions of other celebrations, such as festivals of light or thanksgiving. They all write well, using appropriate vocabulary, for example, to explain what people do to make special effects with candles and lamps. The more able children go further, to convey a deeper understanding of how such customs as Hanukkah, originated. Pupils are knowledgeable about the local church, and describe the purpose of its font and alter. The least able may not all spell with accuracy or write at length. However, their captions and drawings show they have grasped as much as the more proficient writers and spellers key features that make the church a special place to the community. Orally, they are confident and serious in their explanation of why the church matters to them.

132. The oldest juniors have studied Christianity, Sikhism, Judaism, and the Hindu faith in reasonable depth, drawing, for example, comparisons between the customs and practices associated with water. They have considered the symbolic significance of baptism to Christians, ritual washing to Jews and Sikhs, and bathing in the river Ganges to Hindus. When asked, they recall factual detail well, and have used their reading skills to do some fact-finding for themselves. They are thoughtful and respectful in the way they convey their knowledge of faith. However, junior pupils' writing in religious education is factual rather than reflective. This is because they frequently all use the same photocopied worksheet to record their learning. These provide inadequate scope for individual interpretation, or personal research. Often, the content of the writing is almost identical, in direct contrast to the work of infants whose work is predominantly very much a reflection of individual effort. Junior pupils discuss relevant ideas and events thoughtfully and are clearly capable of writing to communicate views about religious values. For example, they touched on the reasons for England changing in Tudor times from a catholic to a protestant country, but not in any depth. Overall, juniors are capable of using their good literacy skills to even better effect, to describe their perspectives of the impact of religion upon society, past and present.

133. Judging from the lesson observed in Years 5 and 6, and from talking to pupils from both key stages about their work, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers throughout the school make very good use of the local church, pictures, posters and videos, to deepen their knowledge and understanding of difficult concepts. They promote pupils' interest in religious education in a variety of ways, making, for example, imaginative use of homework to pose and begin to answer questions about the deeper meaning of proverbs, such as 'a new broom sweeps clean'. Pupils prove to be highly motivated to discuss and share ideas, and they participate readily in discussion. All their views are sought, and they listen carefully to each other irrespective of whether they are very articulate, or find expressing themselves quite difficult. All try hard to contribute constructively. The knowledge and understanding of the teacher who is responsible for much of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. She has already familiarised herself with the new syllabus and its very different requirements from the old scheme of work.

134. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities are sound but better in Key Stage 1 than the higher key stage. Provision for pupils of different prior attainment is satisfactory. However, teaching is having more of an impact at the lower end of the school.

This is because more time is created to develop the subject through an integrated topic approach, rather than through discreet subject teaching in junior classes. The contribution of religious education to pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good, and could be even better if more opportunities were planned for cross-curricular reading and writing using these as a stimulus.

135. The leadership of the subject is good and the vision for future improvement is consequently good. There is much potential to develop a realistic but rigorous plan of action that can gradually put into place all the ideas that have stemmed from the subject manager's very effective induction and professional development programme. The reflection of the school's aims and values in the work pupils' do is already good because of the personal commitment and enthusiasm of both subject manager and the headteacher. More opportunities for reflective writing can only enhance this contribution, and should quickly raise standards of achievement.