

INSPECTION REPORT

MEDSTEAD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Medstead

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116300

Acting headteacher: Mrs C Roberts

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Rowe
1695

Dates of inspection: 21 – 24 May 2001

Inspection number: 193844

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Roedowns Road Medstead Alton Hants
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Jurd
Date of previous inspection:	15 April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Brian Rowe 1695	Registered inspector	Mathematics History Geography Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? (results and achievements) How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Sarah McDermott 9173	Lay inspector		How high are standards? (attitudes, behaviour and personal development) How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Susan Metcalfe 20003	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Foundation stage	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Kathleen Robertson 22178	Team inspector	English Art Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Medstead CE Primary School is situated in the village of Medstead, in the county of Hampshire. It takes pupils aged 4 to 11 years, mostly from the village and surrounding area. There are 170 pupils on roll, 90 boys and 80 girls, who are grouped in six classes. The school is a smaller than average sized primary school. In addition, the school has a unit for five hearing-impaired children, who are fully integrated into the school. Virtually all the pupils are from a white UK heritage and none speaks English as an additional language. The pupils in the unit are profoundly deaf and use sign language. There are 32 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs; this is below the national average. There are six pupils, five from the hearing impairment unit, with Statements of Special Educational Need and this is higher than average. No pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is well below the national average. Children enter school with standards which are just above average for the local education authority.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Pupils make very good progress and, by the time they leave school, they achieve standards that are well above the national average. Standards in English, mathematics and science compared with those in similar schools are well above average. Teaching is very good with some excellent features. In the Reception and Year 1 classes, 38 per cent of teaching is excellent. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those in the hearing-impaired unit, play a full part in the life of the school; relationships and the pupils' personal development are excellent. The management of the school is very good and until recently has been led by an inspirational headteacher. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the age of 11, pupils achieve standards that are well above the national average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and ensures that pupils make very good progress.
- The provision for and teaching in the Reception and Year 1 classes is outstanding.
- The outstanding leadership and management ensure that the school continually improves.
- The range of learning opportunities and the assessment procedures support pupils' learning.
- The very good provision for the care, welfare and personal development of pupils leads to them developing very positive attitudes to their work and very high standards of behaviour.

What could be improved

- The standards of writing, speaking and listening of the hearing-impaired pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997. Since then it has made very good improvements. The previous key issues have been fully addressed. In addition, the school has achieved considerable developments in other important aspects. For example, it has successfully introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and has improved the systems for reviewing and monitoring the quality of teaching and pupils' work. The standard of pupils' attainment has risen in several subjects and the quality of teaching and learning has improved. The resources for information and communication technology have been greatly enhanced. The school has introduced several curriculum initiatives and improved the systems for assessment. Substantial work to the school site and buildings has improved the environment. The amount of adult support in the classroom has been increased.

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*	A
Mathematics	A	A	A	B
Science	A	A*	A*	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

By the end of Key Stage 2 inspection findings judge that standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average and reflect the trend of improvement shown in the last four years. The school is improving at a faster rate than the national trend. Pupils achieve very well, taking into consideration their standards when they start school. Pupils with special educational needs and those in the hearing impaired unit make good progress in their learning. In music, standards meet national expectations. In information and communication technology, religious education, design and technology, geography and history standards are above expectations. In art and design and physical education standards are well above average. More-able pupils are frequently challenged to achieve the highest possible standards.

By the age of seven, standards are well above average in reading, writing, and art and design. They are above average in mathematics and science. In design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education, pupils' standards are above the level expected for their age. Standards meet national expectations in music.

By the end of the Foundation Stage, children achieve well above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals¹ in their personal and social development, communication, language, literacy and mathematics. In their creative and physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world, children are achieving above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.

Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 1 and make good progress. At Key Stage 2 their achievement is high and they make very good improvement. The school sets itself challenging academic targets and is successful at meeting them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. The pupils have exemplary attitudes to work and school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. The excellent behaviour is a major factor in the very high standards in the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good overall, with excellent relationships

¹ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

Attendance	Satisfactory, despite the school being rigorous in making sure that parents complete request forms and only allowing fewer than 10 days holiday in the year, there is inevitably some disruption to teaching and learning.
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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	very 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.

During the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching was good in 47 per cent of lessons observed, very good in 29 per cent and excellent in 17 per cent. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good and a strength of the school. The improvement in the quality of teaching has contributed to the raising of standards in the school since the last inspection. In addition, teaching has a positive impact on the excellent attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.

In literacy, the quality of teaching is very good at Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy. They plan extremely thoroughly and have very high expectations. The quality of teaching in numeracy was very good throughout the school. Good and very good teaching is linked to teachers' understanding of and effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and their high expectations.

Teaching in the Reception and Year 1 is outstanding, with 33 per cent of lessons being very good and 38 per cent being excellent. This is a significant strength of the school and contributes to the very good start and progress made by children.

Teaching of pupils with high attainment, special educational needs and those in the hearing impaired unit is good. Teachers regularly plan work to meet the needs of all abilities. Teachers and learning support staff work very effectively to support their learning and pupils respond positively to the high expectations required of them.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Pupils are provided with a rich curriculum, which includes good provision for personal, social and health education and extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and assistants support pupils effectively. Individual education plans are good.
Provision for pupils with hearing impairment	Good. Teachers and communicators collaborate well and work hard to ensure that pupils are involved in lessons and have full access to life in the school.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. Spiritual and cultural developments are very good; moral and social development is excellent and has a positive impact on the very positive attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good, with excellent provision for the promotion of behaviour

The school works hard to involve parents in supporting the school and in their children's learning. The quality of information sent to parents is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The school has benefited from inspirational leadership by a headteacher who has recently left. She was supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher. Developments have been ensured by very effective teamwork amongst all the staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities; they show a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has a rigorous system of monitoring in place, which allows it to identify its strengths and weaknesses. The school meets its targets.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Particularly good use of support staff. Very good use of specific funding, including those for pupils with special educational needs and the hearing-impaired unit.

The school has good staffing levels to meet the learning needs of all pupils. Although accommodation is adequate in terms of the number of classrooms and other facilities, the shape and size of some classrooms limit the arrangements for grouping pupils in lessons. The school applies the principles of best value very effectively in all purchases.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Seventeen parents attended a meeting with the registered inspector prior to the inspection. Of the 170 questionnaires distributed to parents, 84 (50 per cent) were returned.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Children make good progress • The teaching is good • Children behave well • The school has high expectations of the pupils • They feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems • The school is well managed and led • The school helps children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • More information about how well their children are doing • The school working more closely with parents • The number of extra-curricular activities

The team definitely endorses the positive views of the parents. The concerns about homework are not entirely supported. Most teachers set homework regularly each week and ensure that it is returned and marked, although there are sometimes changes in the expected day of return. Parents receive a very good amount of general information and the school is open and welcoming. However, the reports, although they give a real feel for each individual pupil, are not consistent in giving a clear message across all the subjects of the progress the pupil has made over the year or the attainment level they have achieved in comparison with national trends. The inspection team judges that the school works closely with parents. It does not agree that extra-curricular clubs are insufficient. For a small primary school there is a very wide range of activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Foundation Stage

1. Many children enter the Reception class with standards that are just above the expectation for their age in most areas of learning. They respond positively to the provision in the Reception class and make very good progress. The vast majority are likely to achieve and even surpass the skills they need to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals² in their personal, social and emotional skills, communication, literacy and language and their mathematical development. All children make very good progress in their personal and social development. Most children make good progress in the development of their creative skills, physical development and understanding of the world. As a consequence of this very good progress, children's levels of attainment as they start on the National Curriculum at the age of five are above the expectation for most children of this age.

Key Stage 1

2. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum assessments for pupils in Year 2 were above the national average in reading and mathematics, but in line for writing. In comparison with those in similar schools nationally³, the results were average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. In the teacher assessments for science, results were above the national average for all schools and also above average in comparison with those in similar schools. The school's results in 2000 reflect the trend of the previous four years, where standards were above the national average. There is no significant variation in the standards achieved by boys and girls.
3. Inspection findings show that standards are now well above average in reading and above average in writing, mathematics and science. Standards have risen as a result of the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, improvements in the quality of teaching and a focus on raising the standards of the higher attaining pupils.
4. Standards of reading in Key Stage 1 are well above expectations. Pupils know the mechanics of reading, and many can talk knowledgeably about a range of books. The quality of expression in pupils' writing is improving due to a focus on developing writing skills and good standards in spelling. The range of vocabulary used in speaking and listening and in pupils' written work is well above expectations.
5. In numeracy, pupils read, write and order numbers to 100 and the more able to 1,000. They know their 2, 5 and 10 times tables. They show a good knowledge of two-dimensional shapes and tell time accurately to the half-hour and quarter-hour. In mental arithmetic, they are confident in subtracting, for example, 20p from 45p. In science, pupils discuss their work and use simple but appropriate scientific terms to describe their experiences. They learn to use simple equipment to make investigations and how to observe carefully and then record their results in a variety of simple ways.

² QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

³ Schools with up to 8 per cent of pupils entitled to free school-meals.

6. In religious education, standards surpass the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In information and communication technology, design and technology, geography, history and physical education, standards are above expectations for pupils of this age. In art and design they are well above average. Standards in music meet national expectations.

Key Stage 2

7. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum assessments for pupils in Year 6 were very high (top 5 per cent nationally) in English and science and well above average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4⁴ and above was very high in English and science and well above average in mathematics. The proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was also very high in English and science, but above average in mathematics. In comparison with those in similar schools nationally, results were very high in English and science and well above average in mathematics. In English, mathematics and science, the school has improved its results year-on-year at a faster rate than the national trend.
8. Inspection findings judge that standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and confirm the year-on-year improving trend in the school. Standards are rising as the result of significant improvement in the quality of teaching, the increased level of adult support in classes and a focus on the higher attaining pupils. In addition, teachers are effectively implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
9. In English, pupils' enjoyment and pleasure in books increase with age and pupils in Years 5 and 6 eagerly talk about a range of books and authors. They have positive attitudes to reading and many belong to a local library. Most pupils have good library skills and there are frequent opportunities for them to find information for themselves. In writing, pupils understand the significance of words and they have a wide vocabulary. They show a love of language, which is reflected in the quality of their written work.
10. In mathematics, pupils understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Mental arithmetic skills and the use and application of times tables are good. Pupils record results of science experiments on carefully drawn graphs. Information and communication technology skills are used effectively in creating databases and spreadsheets. Progress in using and applying mathematics in problem solving and investigations is very good.
11. In science, pupils demonstrate a wide range of accurate knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas. They know appropriate scientific vocabulary that they use correctly in explaining and describing their various science activities. They interpret data from experiments or from information, including that recorded as tables, graphs or charts, and draw conclusions based on their interpretations of the evidence.
12. Standards in music meet national expectations. In information and communication technology and religious education, standards meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and many pupils attain at a higher level than expected. Standards in art and design and in physical education are very good and far exceed expectations for pupils of this age. In design and technology, history and geography, standards are above expectations for pupils of this age.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the well-constructed individual plans and support from the special needs co-ordinator, teachers and classroom assistants. They participate in the curriculum fully. Special educational needs support assistants give firm direction to pupils' learning within the classroom. The

⁴ It is the national expectation that pupils should achieve Level 4 by the age of [eleven/11 years](#).

special needs co-ordinator uses data well to target performance of pupils and accurately assesses the needs of individuals. Expectations of what they can achieve are high and pupils respond accordingly. Pupils with a hearing impairment also make good progress; teachers, communicators and teaching assistants provide them with very good support in lessons.

14. The school has demonstrated that it can meet its targets and this is reflected in the year-on-year improvement in Key Stage 2. Inspection findings confirm that the school has teaching and management systems in place that will allow it to meet its future targets.
15. Progress since the last inspection has been very good, particularly in raising standards in writing at Key Stage 1 and generally for the higher-attaining pupils throughout the school. This is a direct result of a significant improvement in the quality of teaching, more rigorous monitoring systems, improved curriculum and lesson planning and the additional adult support now available in classrooms.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. The attendance of pupils is satisfactory. It is broadly in line with that in most schools and mirrors the overall improvement in attendance rates nationally. The level of unauthorised absence is extremely low because parents are very conscientious in notifying the school of the reason why their children are absent. The main reasons for authorised absence are illness and a substantial amount of holidays taken in term time. In most classes there have been over nine instances of holidays since the beginning of the academic year and in some up to 14. Despite the school being rigorous in making sure parents complete request forms and in only allowing fewer than 10 days in the year, there is inevitably some disruption to teaching and learning.
17. Registration is completed efficiently and promptly at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Often the teachers make an effective link between calling the register and the lesson about to begin. For example, in a Key Stage 2 design and technology lesson each pupil was asked to give a word connected with design when their name was called and in the Reception class the pupils lined up once they had heard their own address. The satisfactory attendance of the pupils is a positive benefit to their achievement.
18. The pupils have exemplary attitudes to work and school life. They have a real zest for learning and make the most of their time in lessons. In nearly two thirds of the lessons seen during the inspection, the attitude of the pupils was judged to be very good or excellent. Of particular note is the consistently very good or excellent response of the Year 1 pupils. All pupils know the routines well and get down to work quickly and sensibly. Many are very keen to answer questions and offer their opinions in discussion times. In a Years 3 and 4 lesson on putting different sides of an argument, the pupils' enthusiasm in giving their views on television viewing and football in the playground set the scene for a lively debate. The sheer delight and enthusiasm of the Reception pupils going on their bear hunt around the grounds during a geography lesson were a joy to experience. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work. They work well with their peers and are proud of the improvements they have made.
19. A large number of pupils participate enthusiastically in the very good range of extra-curricular clubs and sports. The front entrance area displays an impressive number of photographs of pupils representing the school in such activities as swimming, skiing, football and outward bound. Pupils are proud of their jobs around the school. The pupils selected for the Young Governors can explain in great detail what is expected of them. The Year 6 pupils who are library monitors take on their tasks of tidying the books and setting the computer up each day methodically and maturely.

20. The behaviour of the pupils is outstanding. There has been even more improvement since the last inspection. The high levels of parental satisfaction with behaviour are definitely supported in the inspection evidence. Disruptive behaviour in lessons is hardly ever seen. The Reception pupils behaved impeccably when out on the exciting, open playground during a physical education lesson. They listened sensibly, followed instructions carefully and really enjoyed their hoop activities. All pupils are very clear about the 'Golden Rules' and the expectations in their classrooms and around the school. Pupils get ready for lunch quietly and are very quick off the mark to line up at the end of break times when they hear the bell. In assemblies you can hear a pin drop as the pupils file in and out. Pupils are responding extremely well to the very effective management strategies and high expectations in the school. Their excellent behaviour is a major factor in the very high standards in the school.
21. The school is a harmonious and friendly community. Relationships are excellent. There is no evidence of bullying or other oppressive behaviour. The pupils with hearing impairment are very well included in activities by their peers. For example, in a Year 2 music lesson, pupils gently prompted their deaf friend when she missed her cue. Also, some Year 5 pupils have inaugurated a signing club at lunchtime so they can help and understand their hearing-impaired peers. In paired reading a more able 'mentor' was happy to help a less able reader to tackle his book. Boys and girls get on well together, both when collaborating in lessons and playing outside at break. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy. They are proud to show visitors around their neat and tidy school.
22. Pupils show very good levels of initiative and personal responsibility. The pupils in Year 6 very ably undertake some of the responsibilities around the school. They fill in job applications to be library monitors, organise the minutes for the Young Governors' meetings and take charge of the music system in assemblies. Independent learning skills are well developed. In a Years 3 and 4 design and technology lesson the pupils were all competent at thinking out and testing their plans for stabilising their photo frames. Their learning was reinforced because the designs were all their own ideas. All pupils have their own bar-coded library card, so that they can be independent in logging out library books for reading or research. In many lessons the pupils respond very well to encouragement to develop independence and not to rely always on the teacher. In an excellent Year 1 lesson on writing a class book about pets, the pupils used information books, referred to their word mats and collaborated very well to produce all their own work on rabbits, dogs and cats.
23. Across the school pupils have a very well developed ability to respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others. In personal health and social education lessons, pupils are extremely thoughtful and sensitive when listening and responding to the ideas of their peers. In a Year 1 'circle time' the pupils knew that they had to listen and speak clearly to get the most out of the lesson. They could all articulate the qualities of their neighbours and gave examples such as doing handstands, helping their parents or looking after the rabbits. In the assemblies on the theme of 'inclusion' pupils listened attentively to the speakers, including a vicar for the deaf, and gave perceptive comments about the differences in people and their beliefs and talents. Times for quiet prayers, reflection and saying grace are followed respectfully. Pupils have a clear understanding of the impact of their actions on others. In a Key Stage 2 personal and social education lesson pupils gave honest examples of actions which they later regretted and were able to differentiate between accidents and deliberate acts.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school. During the inspection the quality of teaching was good in 47 per cent of lessons, very good in 29 per cent, excellent in 17 per cent and satisfactory in the remaining four lessons. Consequently, there was no unsatisfactory teaching and this represents a very good profile of teaching. The quality of teaching is a significant strength of the school and has contributed to the raising of standards in the school since the last inspection. In addition, the very good teaching has a positive impact on the excellent attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection.
25. The previous inspection report judged the quality of teaching to be satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of the lessons and good or better in 70 per cent. Unsatisfactory teaching was closely linked to weaknesses identified in teachers' subject knowledge in science, art, music and design and technology. This resulted in a key issue to improve the quality of teaching in these subjects. Current inspection findings show that the school has addressed the key issue successfully and that the quality of teaching has improved significantly in these subjects.
26. Examples of excellent teaching were seen at Year 6 in music and physical education and in the Reception and Year 1 classes for a range of subjects. Examples of very good and good teaching were seen in most subjects at both key stages. Teaching in the Reception and Year 1 classes is outstanding, with 75 per cent of lessons being very good or excellent. This is a significant strength of the school and contributes to the very good start and progress made by children in the Foundation Stage.
27. The quality of teaching for the children under five is consistently very good. This consistently high quality of teaching reflects the level of progress in learning that children make in their early years at school. The teachers and members of the support staff work very closely together to promote learning. They have a clear understanding of the needs of young children and realistically high expectations of achievement and behaviour. They give children challenging and interesting tasks to consolidate and develop their knowledge and understanding. All members of staff use language carefully to develop children's speaking skills. They encourage pupils to work independently and make choices. The quality of teaching is an improvement since the previous inspection.
28. In literacy, the quality of teaching is very good at Key Stages 1 and 2. Four excellent lessons were seen in the Reception and Year 1 classes. All teachers have secure knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy. They plan thoroughly, identifying clearly how expectations for different abilities are to be covered. Teachers plan effectively for support staff and they give good support to individuals and groups of pupils. Teachers recognise the primary importance of literacy and create effective links between English and its application to other subjects. There are some weaknesses in teaching literacy to pupils with a hearing impairment and these are discussed in detail later in this report.
29. The quality of teaching in numeracy was very good or excellent in nearly 70 per cent of lessons, with the remaining lessons being good. This very good teaching is linked to teachers' understanding of and effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers share the purpose of the lesson with pupils and evaluate carefully to see what pupils have learnt. Teachers give clear explanations and set clear targets for the work to be done. Planning is very good and pupils are often grouped in ability sets in order to match work precisely to their learning needs. In addition, as the result of teachers' high expectations, the quality of pupils' presentation of work is of a very high standard.

30. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and they make good progress. Class teachers make a strong contribution to the progress pupils make. Clear, precise explanations and carefully targeted questioning ensure that levels of understanding are high and potential learning difficulties are minimised. Teaching assistants are suitably briefed and trained, provide good support and play a significant part in this provision. This is especially apparent in set ability groups where the teaching assistant is an active supporter for both pupils and teacher, providing positive encouragement for groups. Provision of appropriate resources enables the pupils to concentrate on their tasks without becoming distracted.
31. In the best lessons, teachers show good subject knowledge, which is passed on to pupils with interest and enthusiasm. The purpose of the lesson is shared with pupils and contributes well to their understanding of their own learning. Planning is very good, matching the scheme of work and ability of the pupils. Teachers use demonstration and explanation skills well to put across key teaching points. For example, in Year 6 during an excellent physical education lesson, pupils made significant progress as a result of the teacher showing them the technique for hitting and catching a rounders ball. Lesson introductions are challenging and require pupils to think and give answers to teachers' questions, for example in numeracy, where they are expected to explain how they find answers to mental arithmetic problems.
32. A significant strength of teaching is the successful management of pupils' behaviour. This is a result of high expectations and pupils knowing exactly what is expected of them. In particular, pupils take great care and pride in their work. Teachers' effective planning means that work is matched successfully to pupils' learning needs and pupils are challenged in their learning. Relationships are excellent, with pupils being confident and secure with their teachers and support staff.
33. Teachers use resources well to support pupils' learning. Teaching assistants are used effectively in lessons to support individuals or small groups of pupils; this is a strength in the group work session within literacy and numeracy. The information and communication suite is used well to teach pupils information and communication technology skills and the application of those skills in other subjects.
34. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly and guide pupils in their future learning through constructive and helpful comments. Teachers use the results of marking to plan future lessons as well as the assessments they make of pupils' learning. Homework is used well to support the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

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

35. The curriculum opportunities provided for pupils throughout the school are very good. The curriculum covers the Foundation Stage⁵ for children in their early years and the revised National Curriculum in full for pupils over the age of five. A very good programme of personal, social and health education is in place and provides for drugs awareness and sex education. All statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum and religious education are fully met.
36. The curriculum is well planned and this ensures that the appropriate amount of time is spent on each subject. Lessons generally start promptly and finish on time. Good policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. This is an improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection. These enable the progressive and

⁵ The **Foundation Stage** curriculum is made up of six areas – personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. Standards are measured by the **Early Learning Goals** – what children are expected to know, understand and be able to do in the six areas by the age of five.

systematic development of knowledge and skills in each area of the curriculum. Teachers provide pupils with a good range of activities that are planned to be enjoyed, add to knowledge and skills and challenge pupils to learn. The acting headteacher has a very good overview of the whole curriculum. Each subject area has a co-ordinator who monitors the provision across the school from the scheme of work. They attend courses and share information with their colleagues. Co-ordinators work with teachers as they introduce new topics and support the work in classes. The school makes very good use of specialist tutors for information and communication technology and for music for older pupils.

37. Cross-curricular links are actively made; for instance, younger children are studying 'Teddies'. They use teddy texts in their literacy work and make close observational drawings of teddies, including fur texture. Children design moving vehicles for teddies in their physical and creative activities. Children consider the history of the teddy bear and the age of the teddies within the class in their work in knowledge and understanding of the world. Teddies are weighed and measured in mathematics and a teddybear hunt in the school grounds supports geographical and orienteering skills development. Older pupils, as part of their history topic, look at World War 2 and link life in Britain at that time to the music, food and literature of the period. During the inspection two actors visited the school in costume to enable pupils to see and hear about life in the 1940s. Experiments in science are recorded in charts and graphs using information and communication technology and mathematical skills. Science is carefully matched to work in design and technology when, for instance, pupils disassemble a bicycle and consider the effects of gears and cogs on speed and the forces needed to move the cycle over different surfaces. Food technology is likewise carefully matched to science and physical education with pupils thinking about healthy diets and keeping the body fit and the personal, social and health education work within the school. Although there is no monitoring of lessons matched to lesson plans by subject co-ordinators, they do keep track of plans and match these to the scheme of work. The overall curriculum planning is regularly reviewed and updated.
38. Educational visits, including residential opportunities such as the skiing trip to Austria, are well established and contribute to curriculum knowledge and understanding as well as the development of pupils' social skills and independence. There is a full range of sports and arts activities extra to the curriculum, ranging from brass ensemble playing to chess; swimming, tennis and football to needlecraft; recorder and guitar to gymnastics club. These take place at lunchtimes and after school most days. The school sports teams play in area and local leagues, with skill and interest being the key elements rather than gender, while musicians take part in locally arranged concerts, festivals and displays. The gymnastics club is specifically for younger pupils, while recorder club is open to all. The majority of pupils who stay to a club after school are over seven.
39. The quality of the curriculum for pupils in their early years, the Foundation Stage, is very good. Curriculum opportunities are planned to move children across into national curriculum work by the time they are five. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are thus implemented in full by the beginning of the summer term, occurring in an abbreviated form during the autumn and spring terms. The curriculum to implement the National Literacy Strategy is very effective and supports all the work within the school. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are systematically well developed through discussion, debate, circle time and drama. Pupils read a range of stories, poems and information texts and produce their own work in the same style. Pupils write for a range of purposes, including reports from history, book reviews, stories, poems, instructions and letters. Numeracy also has a high priority and number skills are used in geography, science and design technology appropriately. Information and communication technology is used across the curriculum, not just as a discrete subject but also to support problem solving in

mathematics and design technology. The digital camera and publishing programmes support literacy work well.

40. The school ensures a very good provision for pupils of different gender, ethnicity and ability. It works hard to ensure that all pupils, including those with a hearing impairment, have full access to the curriculum and are fully involved in school life.
41. The school gives a high priority to pupils with special educational needs and the curricular provision for these pupils is good overall. They are well supported by the co-ordinator and teaching assistants who work closely and effectively with class teachers to plan suitable work, either in class or by withdrawing pupils from lessons. The special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers identify targets for individual education plans (IEP), which are usually specific and regularly updated. The co-ordinator monitors these plans well.
42. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons ensuring equality of access to all subjects. Annual reviews for those with statements of special educational needs are carried out appropriately. Provision for these pupils is very good and fully in accordance with the national recommendations.
43. The arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education are very good. A well-planned and structured scheme develops pupils' understanding that they can help support and resolve problems and conflicts. A regular 'circle time' session within each class enables pupils to share concerns and contribute to a feeling of being a member of a community. Sex education and the development of an awareness of the misuse of drugs and medicines prepare pupils well for future life; this work is reinforced under the science policy. The system of each class electing two pupils to become 'young governors' and their meeting together regularly help pupils see that adults value their role in contributing to the life of the school and they take their responsibilities seriously.
44. The school has good relationships with nearby schools and very good relationships with the pre-school playgroup on the same site. Nearly all the children from the playgroup come to the school and the group is invited to school events as well as to share some facilities, especially those within the Reception class. The school meets others nearby for sporting fixtures and staff join for meetings and courses as appropriate. Records of pupils' progress and achievements are shared with the local high schools and these ensure a smooth transfer for pupils when they are 11 years old.
45. There is a very good contribution by the community to pupils' learning. The local clergy, police and fire brigade and workers from local and national charities regularly visit the school. The local medical services come to the school to undertake health checks and contribute to personal development programmes as necessary. The friends association raises money for specific projects and supports social events, as well as providing parental support to accompany pupils on visits and with sporting and other community events.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

46. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is excellent overall. Since the last inspection the school has made a concerted effort to enhance the provision for spiritual education and this element is now very good. Acts of collective worship contain an element of personal and shared reflection. The presence of the small group of hearing impaired pupils acts as a stimulus to thinking about the needs of different groups and all pupils learn to sign some prayers. For instance, pupils sign grace before lunch and 'God loves you' to their neighbour and then to everyone during assemblies. The school has a strong and positive ethos, which places high value on human rights and the worth of the individual. In lessons teachers foster the development of spiritual awareness. For

example, pupils in Year 1 respond well when talking about the use of symbols to convey meaning during a religious education lesson on Buddhism, appreciating how they are used to convey ideas. In the Reception class, pupils show amazement when handling newly born chicks. Further opportunities for spiritual development occur through study of beliefs in religious education, poetry in English, experimentation in science and appreciation of art and artists.

47. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent. The positive relationships between all members of the school community enable pupils to grow into mature individuals. Teachers and assistants make good role models, promoting the school's values of honesty and fairness. Throughout the school pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. Codes of conduct are in evidence throughout the school. Pupils work well together. For instance during a Year 2 English lesson, a pupil signs 'well done' to a hearing impaired child when she has made a contribution to the lesson. Personal and social education has an appropriately high priority. Time is regularly set aside for discussion and reflection on issues. This provides effective opportunities for social development and for consideration of moral questions at a level appropriate to the age and experiences of the pupils. For instance, when Year 6 pupils interview the local vicar they question his Christian beliefs and listen thoughtfully to his answers. Pupils are taught effectively to listen to and value the ideas, thoughts and feelings of others, whilst not being afraid to express their own.
48. Teachers create very good opportunities for pupils to show initiative and exercise responsibility. Pupils take responsibility in lessons for resources, they work as monitors, older pupils help younger pupils and they organise resources for assembly. Pupils help those less fortunate than themselves through a variety of charitable activities. For instance, they raise money to support a Tibetan child. The school also hosts the 'Luke Frost Games' set up in the name of a child who died from cancer. The relatively new version of a school council, the 'Young Governor' initiative, gives both its members and the pupils they represent a greater sense of responsibility and pride in their school. This group have had input into issues such as the provision of drinking fountains and the development of the school grounds. Class assemblies and school productions offer pupils further opportunities to work together and to perform to a wider audience.
49. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Through the good quality and range of extra-curricular activities, such as chess club, music, drama, football, netball and gym, pupils learn how to respond to each other in different settings. Pupils' multi-cultural experience has been enhanced by projects in art using Indian Classical dancers as a stimulus to artwork. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to consider their own cultural traditions. The pupils study the works of a good range of artists such as Gainsborough, Vincent Van Gogh and Claude Monet. They listen to a variety of music during assembly. Pupils gain a good understanding of the inequalities of human life in different cultures through looking at religions such as Buddhism and Sikhism in terms of key features of worship and its impact in Britain. In geography, pupils carry out studies of life in other countries, for instance Benin. Pupils in Year 6 also write to pupils in Kenya. Pupils at the school take part in a wide range of activities and experiences, which enhance the school curriculum and help to foster pupils' co-operation, team spirit and sense of fair play. The very good displays around the school, which feature artefacts and pictures, reinforce the work in assemblies and class.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. The school looks after each pupil very well. The staff are aware of every pupil's individual needs and consequently every pupil feels special. The school is small and there is a very good ratio of adults to pupils, so often pupils are given attention in small groups.

Procedures to track pupils' personal and academic progress are securely established and used very well to include each individual in a very worthwhile education.

51. The procedures for health and safety are very good. The school site is thoroughly checked each day by the conscientious caretaker and there are regular assessments of potential risks. Any hazards are dealt with very swiftly and effectively. Since the last inspection the ponds have been securely fenced. Welfare and first aid procedures are very effective. Accidents are accurately recorded and parents kept well informed if their children feel ill or have had a bump or graze. The school secretary looks after pupils feeling under the weather very well in the reassuring surroundings of her office. There are satisfactory systems for child protection. In practice, all the staff know what to do should there be suspicions of abuse. However, there has not been sufficient recent formal training of the whole staff in recent child protection procedures.
52. The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Registration is swift and effective at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are neat, tidy and maintained accurately. If the school does not know the reason a pupil is absent, the school secretary follows up immediately with a telephone call or a letter. The systems for monitoring and checking attendance have improved in rigour since the last inspection. The school is resigned to the high number of holidays that families take in the term time, but does require a formal request and exact date of return to be given.
53. The management and promotion of good behaviour is excellent. The school motto 'Treat others as you would wish to be treated' is evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils are successfully encouraged to develop a keen sense that good behaviour benefits their learning and the standing of the school in the local community. Very clear documentation underpins the effective systems. The school and class rules are simple and easy for the pupils to follow and for the staff to monitor. Pupils really appreciate winning merit marks for their house ('Austen', 'Dickens' or 'White') and take part enthusiastically in the variety of class reward systems. The few pupils with comparatively challenging behaviour are patiently and positively helped to improve. Strategies are devised to suit the pupil, whether it is a star chart in the classroom or a written behaviour plan. The support and high expectations of the parents play a major part in the promotion of good behaviour. The effectiveness of the school's procedures to promote good behaviour is demonstrated in the resulting exemplary behaviour of the pupils.
54. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. The pupils respond very well to the strong sense of harmony in the school. If there are any isolated incidences of bullying the school acts swiftly and effectively to stop it. Pupils have access to 'talk boxes' if they wish to report any incident confidentially. However, there is no specific anti-bullying policy or mention in the behaviour policy to formalise the school's procedures in dealing with potential bullying. The school ensures that the pupils with hearing impairment are included well in all aspects of school life, including outings, assemblies and music lessons.
55. Procedures for monitoring and supporting the personal development of pupils are very good. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is established well across the school. Each class has a weekly slot to develop their awareness of health and social issues. Many classes have very effective 'circle times' when pupils have a chance to discuss and respond to sensitive issues. Each half term there is also a team building session to develop the ability of pupils to work together effectively. The Reception pupils are extremely well settled into school life, often aided by the close links with the adjacent playgroup. Very soon these young pupils are confident and coping admirably with school life. The older pupils are prepared well for life beyond school, not only through sex education and lessons on the use and misuse of drugs, but also by developing their

maturity and responsibility as they progress up the school. Annual reports give a very perceptive record of progress in personal development.

56. The school follows a staged approach and fully meets the Code of Practice⁶. Close liaison between the school and outside agencies is maintained and the educational psychologist, speech and language therapist and educational welfare officer make regular visits to the school. The special needs co-ordinator maintains detailed and thorough records which are monitored regularly.
57. The use made of individual education plans is productive and has a good impact on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Current statements within the school provide additional staffing in the form of teaching and learning support staff. Early assessments are used to identify learning difficulties in the Reception class. The co-ordinator and classroom assistants work closely and effectively together to support teachers. All staff know the pupils well and are always encouraging and supportive.
58. The school has very good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and makes sure that they are used very effectively to adapt teaching to class and individual need. This aspect has improved well since the last inspection. The assessment policy is leading to systematic and effective monitoring. Formal assessment is based on the national tests at Years 2 and 6 and regular tests in reading, spelling and mathematics that are interspersed throughout each academic year. Each class teacher keeps very comprehensive records of pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The computerised library system allows the English co-ordinator to check what each pupil is reading and to spot trends in reading between different groups of pupils. Monitoring and tracking of achievement in the other subjects is effective. The records maintained by the physical education co-ordinator are particularly impressive and chart individual progress via well annotated photographs. Pupils arriving in the Reception class are very thoroughly assessed. From the information gleaned the teachers are able to give an accurate prediction of achievement later in the school and to identify those pupils who will need special help with their education. All pupils in Reception are given the added bonus of being screened for dyslexia. The marking of pupils' work is very effective. The results make up part of the pupils' assessment records and constructive comments challenge the pupils to do even better.
59. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good. Pupil and teacher regularly refer to individual targets in English, mathematics and science to ensure learning is on course. Targets are reported to parents each year so they can share in their children's support. The staff have regular meetings to assess class, group and individual progress and to make sure that teaching plans are suited to the needs of the pupils for the next term or year. Every lesson is also planned meticulously using prior assessment information, so that each pupil is appropriately challenged and learns effectively. Reports at the end of the year are good, although they do not sufficiently give parents the detailed information on the levels of attainment that the school has collected. Pupils who are gifted and talented are well supported. The school has a specific policy and a co-ordinator to ensure the able pupils are achieving their full potential through accurate assessment and tailored teaching. The hearing impaired and other pupils with special educational needs are also well supported. The wealth of information gathered and used for each pupil's benefit leads to impressive achievement.

⁶ Code of Practice: This gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. The parents are good supporters of the school. They are very appreciative of the thorough and effective education that their children receive. They are very interested in what goes on in the school and are not hesitant to approach the school with concerns. There was a good response to the pre-inspection questionnaires with over half the parents returning forms. From the questionnaires and meeting, it is clear that parents particularly like the high standards and expectations, the good behaviour of the pupils, the approachability of the school, the strong leadership and the help given to their children to become mature and responsible. Some parents have concerns about the setting and marking of homework, the information they receive on the progress of their children, how closely the school works with them and the range of activities outside the lessons.
61. The inspection team definitely endorses the positive views of the parents. The concerns about homework are not entirely supported. Homework is mostly appropriate. Most teachers set homework regularly and ensure it is marked. However, there are sometimes confusing changes in the expected day of return. Parents receive a very good amount of general information and the school is open and welcoming. However, the reports, although giving a real feel for each individual pupil, are not consistent in relaying a clear message across all subjects on the attainment levels achieved in comparison with national trends. The inspection team judges that the school works closely with parents. It does not agree that extra-curricular clubs are insufficient. For a small primary school there is a wide range of activities appropriately targeted at the older pupils. Overall, the parents' high expectations of the school are well met.
62. The school provides a good amount of information to parents. Parents are given regular and informative newsletters and are included in many celebrations and events. Whenever they have a question or concern the school is very responsive. The school secretary is extremely welcoming and knowledgeable as the first point of contact – nothing is too much trouble. The school provides a very useful, blue date card that keeps parents concisely informed on management issues by giving the main priorities in the school development plan. The bulk of management information is provided in the model report from governors, recently praised by the County Governor Services. There have been meetings to explain the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, but parents do not receive regular overviews of what their children are going to be taught in the coming term. Parents have a formal opportunity to meet their children's teachers in the autumn and spring terms. In the summer term parents have an opportunity to celebrate their children's work at an open evening. There is not a scheduled consultation evening to discuss the annual report, but parents may make a special appointment with the teacher if they wish.
63. Parents are very well involved in their children's learning at school and home and make a very strong impact on the work of the school. They are given many opportunities to share their views with the school, whether by meeting the teachers at home time, completing survey questionnaires or attending open meetings. Information collected from parents is used well to inform management decisions. Recently, parents were well consulted by being asked for their opinions on changing the length of the afternoon session. The Friends of Medstead are a very active and resourceful association, which raise prodigious funds for the school. Many parents help in the classroom, accompany trips and support the school in assemblies. The parent governors play a very important part on the governing body and are a very effective channel for parents' questions and concerns. Strong parental support is providing a very firm foundation to their children's achievement.
64. Parents of children with special educational needs are encouraged to be involved in every stage of their child's progress. They are encouraged to participate in their child's

development and are well informed about their children's progress. Full records of contacts with parents are kept.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The quality of leadership and management is very good. At the time of the inspection the school was being managed by an acting headteacher. The previous headteacher provided very positive, strong and inspirational leadership, which was committed to raising standards and ensuring continual improvements to the school. This has ensured a clear educational direction to the work of the school. Both the current acting headteacher and the former headteacher receive very good support from an able team of teachers. A regular pattern of meetings has been established which involve key personnel in various capacities. Through these meetings, the headteacher and governors are kept well aware of issues impacting on the effective functioning of the school in all its aspects.
66. Clear aims and high expectations are established and there is a strong sense of shared purpose to the work of the school. The quality of working relationships is very good and staff work well together at all levels to contribute towards achieving the declared aims. As a result, the school provides a supportive and effective learning environment appropriate to the needs of all its pupils.
67. There are clear systems to delegate responsibilities for monitoring teaching and the curriculum to the relevant post holders and senior staff. Subsequently, the former headteacher and current acting headteacher have had a significant role in monitoring the performance of teachers and the standards achieved by the pupils. Procedures for monitoring are well developed and highly structured. They involve sharing the aspects of work to be monitored, with identified targets, and include formal feedback with the recording of outcomes. In addition to using the strengths and expertise of senior staff to best advantage for the school, the good delegation encourages the development of good management experience for the individual staff involved.
68. The school has responded positively to national initiatives. A significant curriculum review has been undertaken and policies and schemes of work have been revised. Core subject⁷ co-ordinators have specific time allocation for regular monitoring of the curriculum and of teaching and learning. School performance data has been analysed and the results drawn together to provide considerable information. Good use of the information is made to inform target-setting procedures and the tracking of the performance of various cohorts or individual pupils. The school has used the interpretation of the analysis to focus on improving short-term lesson objectives. Co-ordinators in foundation subjects⁸ also monitor through a review of teachers' plans and a scrutiny of pupils' work.
69. The school has extensive and effective procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' long-term progress and attainment. Teachers collect information and maintain detailed and comprehensive records. The assessment information is regularly used to good effect to inform lesson planning. As a result, most learning activities are well matched to the varying abilities of groups of pupils so that all are challenged and extended.
70. The school has a very good development plan that clearly identifies relevant priorities. The plan is created by an effective process of audit and consultation, which results in an action plan for each area of focus. Targets are established and the success criteria are declared and progress towards completion is monitored by the headteacher and governors. In addition, supplementary monitoring occurs as committees hold regular meetings and report progress to the governing body. Budget proposals and staff

⁷ English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education

⁸ Art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education

development initiatives are closely linked to the school development plan. Monitoring for the impact of expenditure on standards is managed very effectively.

71. School governors are diligent and conscientious in support of the school. They work hard to make sure that the school can function as effectively as possible, particularly with regard to improvement of the premises and environment. The chair of governors meets regularly with the headteacher and together they share a vision for the school that is firmly based on high expectations of pupil performance. The governing body is properly constituted and roles and responsibilities are clear. Meetings, which are properly managed and minuted, are regularly held. Minutes are available for external scrutiny. A variety of sub-committees oversee different aspects of the school's work. These committees ensure that the main governing body is kept informed of their work through regular reporting arrangements. Individual governors undertake responsibility for specific aspects of the school's work. They visit the school regularly and provide reports for the main governing body, based on their valuable first-hand observation of the school at work.
72. Governors have a good understanding of the overall strengths and weaknesses of the school. They independently undertake their own analysis the school's performance. As a result, governors' ability to present a robust challenge, for example with regard to holding the school to account for the setting of realistic standards, is well developed. In addition to information and insight from sub-committees and individuals, the governing body is kept well informed by the good quality reports from the headteacher and other senior staff members. As a result, governors can contribute to the making of school policy. The school development plan is a joint endeavour that is agreed following governor scrutiny of the school's draft proposals.
73. Financial planning and budget controls are very good. School decisions are supported through careful financial management, with budgets delegated to subject co-ordinators in accordance with agreed priorities. The headteacher and chair of finance create a budget profile, which is submitted for scrutiny before being approval by the governing body. Subsequently, the financial sub-committee monitors the budget on a regular basis with very good support from the headteacher and school administrative staff.
74. The friendly, helpful office staff manage the arrangements for the daily administration and organisation of the school smoothly and extremely efficiently. Good use of technology supports the school arrangements and ensures that accurate information and sound budget advice are easily available via electronic links with the local education authority. Procedures for the management of the budget and other funds, which are very clearly set out in a financial memorandum, are effective and secure. An efficient system ensures that the procurement of goods or services is properly completed and recorded. Best value is sought by a careful scrutiny of suppliers and a tendering process where appropriate. The finance sub-committee keeps contract arrangements under review. Financial activities are subject to regular external audit and action to address the auditor's recommendations is initiated promptly. Non-public funds are managed with the same rigour as official funds and are maintained and audited regularly in line with the official requirements. The high degree of effectiveness of the administrative arrangements releases the headteacher and others to focus attention on the educational priorities for the school.
75. The school ensures that all specific grants, such as those for pupils with special educational needs and those with a hearing impairment, are used appropriately to support the intended provision. The funds are related directly to improving pupils' learning.

76. The senior management team and the governing body support the positive and knowledgeable leadership provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) by ensuring that this very important aspect of the work of the school is well organised and effectively monitored. Regular meetings are held between the co-ordinator and senior management team to discuss developments and update the special educational needs register. The co-ordinator frequently reviews procedures to clarify issues and expedite the transfer of information.
77. Detailed, purposeful records of progress are maintained, reviewed and monitored on a regular basis. Pupils' special educational needs are recognised as early as possible and strategies are tried and reviewed. The special needs co-ordinator provides support and advice whenever required. Regular liaison between feeder schools is effective in ensuring continuity and progression at the age of transfer. Resources are generally good, accessible and effectively support pupils on the special educational needs register.

Staffing

78. The school is very well staffed by appropriately qualified teachers. There is a good balance of age, experience and service within the school. Currently there are no male teachers to act as positive role models. Teachers are effectively deployed to meet the needs of pupils and the curriculum. In addition, the school employs well-qualified support staff who are used very effectively to give extra help to pupils in a variety of learning situations.
79. Performance management arrangements are in line with statutory requirements. The policy is a development of the good arrangements for staff review previously managed by the headteacher. Review of the headteacher's performance is complete. Staff development is closely linked to the school development plan, but individual staff also have access to development opportunities identified as part of their personal professional training needs. Arrangements for the induction of new members of staff are good. There is a clear policy and a member of staff has this specific responsibility. The school successfully supports the continued development training of teachers new to the school and is a contributor to initial teacher training.

Accommodation

80. The school has good accommodation. It is clean, bright and well maintained throughout. A very good range of display makes the school stimulating and interesting. The classrooms are an adequate size for most classes, but are cramped for the two classes with 35 pupils. The school has a small, but well-appointed library that is used effectively to support the English curriculum. Assemblies, physical education, 'circle times' for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and dinners take place in the central hall. However, people walking through the hall to reach adjacent classrooms sometimes disrupt the quieter moments in PSHE lessons. The outside areas are excellent and are very well used to extend the curriculum. There are extensive grass and hard play areas, with wooden adventure climbing equipment, two ponds and plenty of places to sit. During the inspection pupils were using the outside for physical education lessons, to test friction, measure angles and have a 'bear hunt'. Although the Reception pupils have their own fenced playground, they are more often than not seen playing confidently on the main field. The accommodation is a great asset to learning.

Resources

81. There is a good amount of resources for most subjects that are used well to support learning. Resources are very well organised by the subject co-ordinators and volunteer parents, so that they are accessible both to staff and pupils. The increase in resources resulting from the National Literacy Strategy has emphasised the need for more storage,

but with careful and neat management equipment is being stored effectively. Much thought has gone into positioning the stand-alone computers and the small suites around the school to benefit the different ages of pupil. However, currently only eight computers are on a network, so some aspects of learning for information and communication technology are limited. There is a good range of books in the library and in all classrooms. Overall, the good resources contribute well to learning.

82. Taking into account:

- the progress made by pupils and high standards achieved;
- the improvements, including teaching, since the previous inspection;
- the excellent arrangements for personal development;
- the excellent behaviour and attitudes of the pupils; and
- the very good leadership and management

the school is judged to give very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

83. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) raise the standards in writing, speaking and listening of the hearing impaired pupils by:
 - monitoring the impact of the additional support recently provided for speaking and listening by developing clear success criteria in terms of standards of achievement and progress;
 - ensuring all teachers are taking full responsibility for the learning of pupils with hearing impairment in lessons by monitoring and evaluating teachers' planning;
 - ensuring all teachers and communicators have a better awareness of the total communication approach and higher expectations of what hearing impaired pupils can do in terms of speaking and listening;
 - ensuring all staff have competent signing skills and speak when signing wherever possible;
 - ensuring hearing aids are checked more than once a day;
 - ensuring targets within individual educational plans relate to priority needs identified in statements;
 - ensuring all pupils with hearing impairment have opportunities to write for a full range of purposes and audiences.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

Governors may consider including the following less important issues in their action plan:

- improve attendance
- produce a written policy and guidance on anti-bullying strategies
- provide all staff with training on child protection issues

HEARING IMPAIRED UNIT

84. The five pupils who have hearing impairment and who are supported by the hearing-impaired unit make good progress. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in reading and most areas of numeracy in relation to their prior attainment. They make satisfactory progress in writing. Achievements in handwriting are in line with their peers. However, there is a weakness in the grammatical structure of their writing because British Sign Language is used as their main mode of communication. Pupils do not always have the same opportunities as their peers to write in a range of forms, particularly when undertaking literacy tasks in the unit. Pupils make very good progress in signing, especially in their early years at school. However, not all communicators or teachers have sufficient knowledge of higher-level signing vocabulary to suit the needs of older pupils.
85. All pupils show good progress in developing their relationships with the communicators who support them and their fellow pupils. They also make good progress in relation to specific targets identified in their individual educational plans. Although their progress in speaking and listening is satisfactory overall, this is an area where further improvement is needed. The best progress is seen in lessons where the communicators speak clearly as they sign and insist that pupils reply orally as well as in sign language. The school has already identified the progress of pupils in speaking and listening as an area of development. The school has provided additional funds to increase speech and language provision for pupils in the unit. It has employed an advisory teacher of the hearing impaired to raise staff awareness of these issues and to provide additional support to individuals. However, this provision is very new and has not yet had an impact on the progress of pupils.
86. The teaching of pupils with hearing impairment is good overall. Teachers and communicators collaborate well and work hard to ensure that pupils are involved in lessons and have access to the key information. Some communicators are skilled in adapting planning to meet the very specific vocabulary needs of pupils. However, modifications are not always identified in lesson planning and teachers could take more responsibility for this area of their planning. Teachers give very clear explanations and often offer practical activities that suit the hearing-impaired pupils' needs. Communicators ensure that instructions and explanations are understood by the pupils by signing alongside the teacher or explaining further during group work. In this way the oldest pupil learns to measure angles accurately and to calculate angles on a straight line, and younger pupils learn the parts of a bicycle and how they move, for example. Communicators give sensitive support that enables pupils with hearing impairment to relate well to their hearing peers and to work independently when necessary.
87. The teacher of the deaf plans with teachers and skilfully supports the learning of key concepts for mathematics and the learning of reading and grammar in the unit. Good opportunities are given in the unit for pupils to read aloud and to sign and speak with expression. This also extends their fluency and understanding of grammatical structure. Formal work often focuses on specific technical language or gaps in understanding and is testimony to the good use made of assessment. Although the youngest pupils are encouraged to use picture clues and to make sense of texts, there is less emphasis on phonic strategies for reading new words. Pupils rarely use this approach to reading new words in the unit. The teacher gives good opportunities for pupils to learn independently about alphabetical order using the computer. In her long-term plan for the unit, she has identified further useful programmes to extend their independent learning.
88. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils with hearing impairment are very good and often excellent. The older pupils have an excellent attitude to the work, in mathematical lessons in class and in focused reading and grammar lessons in the unit. They work hard

to keep up with the rest of the pupils and work co-operatively with their hearing peers. They are confident, have a keen sense of humour and appreciate the one-to-one attention in the unit as well as the support they receive from the communicators in the classroom. All are pleased with their successes, take criticism well and try hard to improve.

89. Leadership of the unit is sound. The teacher of the deaf is sensitive to pupils' needs and is monitoring the progress of individual pupils well enough. She observes their learning and gathers information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses. She uses this information to inform her choice of specific and measurable targets for pupils within the individual educational plans. Work set in the unit builds steadily on previous learning. However, not all targets within these plans relate directly to the needs identified in their Statement of Special Educational Need. This makes them less useful for monitoring the progress over time. For example, few pupils have specific targets for communication or for personal and social development. She is aware of changes that need to be made to improve the provision and is working closely with the advisory teacher for the hearing impaired and the speech therapist. However, the action plan for this area of development does not have a sharp enough focus. Clearer success criteria, related to the progress pupils make, could ensure that the school is getting best value for the money spent. Although great care is given to ensuring that pupils' hearing aids are regularly checked each morning, there is no other check in the day.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
17	29	47	7	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	170
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	32

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	12	13	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	24	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (95)	96 (90)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	11
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	23	25	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (95)	100 (100)	96 (100)
	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	12	9	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	12
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	21	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (96)	95 (92)	100 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	12
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	21	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (96)	95 (96)	100 (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	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	151
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.7
Average class size	28.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	202

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	395,803
Total expenditure	403,063
Expenditure per pupil	2,652
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,823
Balance carried forward to next year	8,563

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 49.4%

Number of questionnaires sent out	170
Number of questionnaires returned	84

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	35	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	45	5	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	53	2	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	45	23	0	2
The teaching is good.	60	33	5	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	43	12	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	21	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	49	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	40	47	13	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	67	27	5	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	42	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	46	13	4	5

Other issues raised by parents

- There is not an early warning system for concerns about children's progress
- Identification of pupils with special educational needs
- The large size of classes and the implication for a growing school
- Some children have had the same teacher for three years running
- The length of the lunch hour (45minutes) for juniors is too short and may have an impact on learning in the afternoon

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

90. The arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage of their education are very good and a strength of the school. High standards have been achieved in all the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage⁹ curriculum with standards in communication, language and literacy; mathematics and personal, social and emotional development being very good. The quality of learning from the frequently excellent teaching is very good and the children have very positive attitudes to their work and the school.
91. The majority of children enter the school in the September after they are four years old on a staggered entry, with the oldest first. By the half term in October, all but a very few attend full time. Those who still have an emotional or social need are given more time to settle and attend part-time until it is felt that they are able to cope with a full day. The majority of the children coming into the school have had pre-school playgroup experience in the on-site pre-school playgroup. Others have usually had some nursery or pre-school playgroup experience. Attainment upon entry to the school as shown in tests undertaken by children in their first few weeks in Reception is just above the local authority average for most areas of the Foundation curriculum. Targets for each child are drawn from the results of these tests and are shared with parents. These tests are undertaken again after Christmas and at Easter to ensure children are making progress and their targets adjusted appropriately after parental consultation. The curriculum provided is very good and children make very good progress and achieve very well in their learning. By the end of the year most attain the standards expected for this age group, with many achieving beyond this. This is an improvement on the judgements made at the last inspection. Since 1997 a policy has been developed for the under fives supporting the good practice identified in the previous inspection and linked to the recently published Foundation Stage guidelines.
92. The quality of teaching for Reception children is at least very good and excellent teaching is seen in half of the lessons. This provides children with a very secure foundation on which future learning can be based. The teacher and supporting adults know the children very well and plan a curriculum that gives them the opportunity to develop fully. The adults have very good knowledge of the expectations and curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 and ensure that all the activities planned for Reception children will support and give a good foundation for future work. Teaching is focused upon the children acquiring a full range of basic skills, especially language and social skills, to enhance learning. Children are monitored through their activities and information gained from looking carefully at their work. This is used to plan future lessons. The teacher and supporting adults hold very high expectations that children will behave well, think and listen as well as work hard at all they are given to do. Adults ensure that the children enjoy their tasks, concentrate and persevere. The management of children is very good. Children are encouraged to be independent while given support to build confidence to be so. The high ratio of adults to children is particularly effective, especially the use of hearing impaired communicators, to ensure that all are fully included in all activities. The Reception class also has the support of a learning support assistant. During the inspection one of the two class teachers was full-time while the other, returning from a period of illness, was supporting part-time while becoming familiar with the children and class routines. Not a minute is wasted as the adults circulate and support children in their work.

⁹ The **Foundation Stage** curriculum is made up of six areas – personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development. Standards are measured by the **Early Learning Goals** – what children are expected to know, understand and be able to do in the six areas by the age of five.

93. The school day is well organised to support and develop basic skills. Each morning children undertake two activities linked to the National Literacy Strategy and two to the National Numeracy Project. One of each of these is adult directed and supported, the other gives children the opportunity to work at their own pace and develop independent study skills. Most afternoons give children the opportunity for structured play, including role-play in the garage. Creative art and design and music sessions also occur. Physical activities, including the opportunity to ride bikes and trikes, use sand and water, cut, stick, manipulate malleable materials and use small word construction equipment, also occur.

Personal, social and emotional development

94. Staff place great emphasis on the children's personal, social and emotional development. Teaching is very good and the children make good progress. As a result by the end of the Foundation Stage the children surpass the levels expected for five-year-olds nationally. Teaching and support staff create an environment where respect, understanding and the recognition and appreciation that we are all different underpins all the work. This helps the children to settle quickly into class routines and develops a sense of belonging to the school community. This is especially important considering the inclusion of hearing-impaired children in the Reception class. All staff provide good role models and as a result children develop a positive self-image and recognise that everyone has something special to offer. Children clearly enjoy their work and co-operate happily with each other and adults. Staff constantly reinforce good habits such as putting up hands to answer questions or make a comment and make sure that they tidy up after activities. Children are also encouraged to select activities thoughtfully and work with care of and with consideration to others. Independence is encouraged as children change themselves for physical activities and collect coats, bags and books at home time.

Communication, language and literacy

95. The development of communication, language and literacy is very good. Due to excellent teaching most children make very good progress. As a result, by the end of the Foundation Stage all are likely to reach standards well above that expected for children of this age and be well into transition into Key Stage 1 work. Children know that pictures and print convey meaning, that books have an order and that text can be a story, a poem or give information. There are no 'none readers' in the Reception class. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy well to meet the developing needs of these young readers and this effectively enhances their listening, speaking and reading skills. The formal teaching of phonics with the 'robot' sounding of the phonemes, the identification of graphs and digraphs and the match of developing handwriting skills to their phonic work, encourages children to consolidate and develop their early writing skills. All staff use precise and clear diction to assist children's speech and encourage them to reply in clear sentences, a skill which children take over into their writing as nearly half attempt to start a sentence with a capital and end with a full stop.

Mathematical development

96. Children's mathematical development is very good. All children are on line at least to meet the goals set at the end of the Foundation Stage and be well on into transition into Key Stage 1. They are consolidating and developing their number skills through very effective teaching. The use of the National Numeracy Project is supported by number reinforcement across the curriculum. Children count the number of pupils in registration and into groups for activities. When moving round the school children use positional order, for instance '..is first...', '....lead the class...', 'finally.....'. Not only are all children able to count back from 5, but two thirds can do so from 10, a quarter from 20 and four children can count back fully from 50. Over half of the children can identify a number

position in a number line by the shape of the number but all can find a missing number by counting up to that position. Children are aware of number operations such as adding and subtracting in ones, with higher attaining pupils doing so in twos. Children name shapes such as squares, circles, rectangles and triangles as well as cubes and cones. They are able to use them to make patterns and pictures and know which can fill a space and which cannot fit together in a tessellating pattern.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

97. The school provides very well for children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Most children are on line to meet or exceed the goals set for the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching is good and adults provide many exciting activities to promote this area of development. The children have many opportunities to explore the natural and man-made world in the development of their scientific skills. For example, to experience the difference in texture, feel and use of wet and dry sand, or have the opportunity to recognise and name a range of animals, especially those that live on land and in the sea. They develop their design and making skills well through building, for instance, vehicles for moving teddies using blocks, interlocking plastic bricks and other construction toys. They use the computer with confidence and independence and handle the mouse with increasing dexterity to select items on the screen. They know the way round the school and the local environment as seen in the 'teddy bear hunt' and by observations of a range of bears are able to identify the differences between 'old' and 'young'. Children know about relationships within their families, knowing that grandparents are older than their mother or father. They know that to keep healthy they must clean their teeth, wash their hands after visits to the toilet and before meals and brush their hair. In role-play within the hospital area they learn of the importance of sleep and the correct use of medicine to help recover from an accident, especially for teddies who fall off their bikes!

Physical development

98. Children's physical development is good and most will reach, or exceed, the goals set for this area of learning. They have access to and use proficiently a wide range of tools such as pencils, crayons, scissors and glue to write, make picture and models. Children are able to manipulate a range of drawing pencils to make a close observational drawing of a teddy and give the effects of fur. They develop their physical skills indoors as well as during outdoor activities and are well co-ordinated and agile. They are able to use a range of constructive equipment, fitting blocks together to make a teddy vehicle out of 'Lego' and other construction equipment. They move round the classroom carefully and without bumping or knocking things over. In the outdoor area they are able to play imaginatively on the bikes and trikes, cycling round the track obeying the road signs, stopping to have the tyres blown up at the garage area and avoiding running pedestrians over. In the playground they climb and balance on the equipment safely.

Creative development

99. Children's creative development is good. They have the opportunity to experience a range of creative experiences: to sing; play a range of percussion instruments; draw, paint and crayon; cut and stick; and make models and collage both big and small. Most children are likely to achieve or exceed the expectations for this area of learning by the time they begin Year 1. Children hold brushes correctly and apply paint to paper with confidence, accuracy and good awareness of shape, pattern and colour. They are able to mix a range of colours and different tints and hues within a common colour using black and white to make such darker or lighter. Children use a range of drawing pencils to reproduce a teddy, being aware of the difference between 'landscape' and 'portrait' paper shape. Collage and puppets are made using a range of papers, cards and plastics, and different joins such as glues, staples, tapes and pins. In the role play area they imagined

that they were garage mechanics, using a foot pump to blow up a tyre, check the oil and book their wheeled toys in for a service or an MOT. Children sing a range of songs from memory, especially during assemblies, and can accompany themselves on a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments.

ENGLISH

100. Attainment in English is well above average by the end of Key Stage 2. The developments made in English since the last inspection show that high standards have been maintained and are improving in all aspects of this subject. In the 2000 national tests, the school's results for 11-year olds were well above the national average for similar schools. Standards in speaking, listening and reading are very high. Attainment in writing is above average and is improving.
101. In the 2000 national tests, taken at 7 years, in both reading and writing the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above in the national tests was high in comparison with the national average. The trends over the last three years show that pupils' standards in reading and writing are rising. When compared with the attainment of pupils attending similar schools, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above in reading was close to the average, but was below average in writing. Inspection evidence indicates that the current Year 2 pupils are achieving at a level that is now well above average. This is explained by the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy that has established a more consistent approach to planning across the school and has strengthened the curriculum and quality of teaching. This is having a beneficial effect on standards and ensures that all aspects of the English curriculum are being taught. In addition, during the last year the school has made the development of writing a priority and has been successful at raising standards. There is a good range of opportunities for learning and the different elements of the subject are appropriately balanced.
102. Pupils at Medstead make good progress from the time they enter school. Pupils with special educational needs and those with Statements of Special Educational Need make good progress through the school and are given good support both in and out of the classroom. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily in literacy lessons and there is sufficient development of literacy skills in other subjects.
103. Throughout the school, pupils attain high standards in speaking and listening. They fluently and precisely communicate their ideas and opinions when they are encouraged to do so. Pupils with special educational needs are constantly challenged to use their speaking and listening skills. Higher-attaining pupils respond clearly and audibly to challenging questions on a range of texts. They contribute to lessons confidently and show awareness of the needs of the listener. Teachers encourage pupils to use appropriate, specialist vocabulary. This has a positive effect on their ability to express themselves accurately and to use language effectively to explain, enquire and compare. For instance, a Year 1 group talk about the symbolism behind the Buddhist use of the lotus flower and compare it to Christian symbols.
104. Year 6 pupils, including those with special educational needs, examine Walter de la Mare's treatment of mystery in 'The Listeners'. They note that the poem 'is subtle' and 'leaves questions in your head'. Low attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, show increased confidence in reading texts and can converse with easy confidence to visitors. Pupils also have the opportunity to express their ideas through the 'Young Governors' initiative. By the end of Key Stage 2 they articulate in most situations and listen well to complex instructions. Most pupils are confident orally and have broad vocabularies. Effective work in drama enhances the provision. For instance, there are whole-school productions each year. There are also opportunities for pupils to watch live performances by visiting groups, such as puppeteers.

105. Overall standards in reading are very good. Pupils throughout the school read both fiction and non-fiction fluently and with enjoyment. When reading aloud they display knowledge of punctuation and the need for appropriate pausing, emphasis and inflection. They know about the structure of books and are able to talk about characters and plot and express preferences. Most pupils are familiar with and able to use skimming and scanning to find information. Pupils are familiar with the Internet and are able to locate information using the CD-ROMs. Project work in history and geography shows that they are able to research and collate information from a wide range of reference material. The library is used well and provides a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books. It is a well-organised and attractive space, which helps instil in pupils a real enthusiasm for reading. Older pupils know that fiction is classified alphabetically, understand the features of non-fiction texts and explain the purpose of contents, index and glossary accurately. Many of the pupils interviewed belong to the local library.
106. More-able readers in Year 6 read a wide variety of texts and refer to text when explaining the story. The best readers can predict outcomes in their stories and discuss genre with understanding. For instance, most Year 6 pupils interviewed could differentiate between science fiction, fantasy and adventure stories. Pupils are able to use a variety of skills to read unknown words, including phonics, initial letter and context clues.
107. Younger pupils read accurately from published reading schemes of progressively more difficult texts and consolidate their skills by reading books at similar levels of difficulty. They recognise a good number of words by sight and use their knowledge of sounds and the illustrations to help them read, and their reading is mostly accurate. By the age of seven, higher-attaining pupils read accurately, fluently and with good expression from a greater range of books. They learn to segment words into syllables, identify little words within big words and use the structure of the sentence to determine the type of word needed to make sense. As they become more confident, they self-correct, read on and re-read to clarify meaning. By the time they leave the school, most pupils read accurately, fluently and with good expression.
108. Lower attaining pupils use phonic and context clues to read new words and are developing a range of reading strategies. They express preferences for different authors. They make good progress, showing a growing knowledge of high frequency words and developing reading strategies.
109. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they read and the stories that are read to them. Younger pupils identify patterns of rhyme, rhythm and sound in poetry and older pupils recognise the use and effect of figurative language. Pupils retell stories well, predict events and identify and describe the characters. They are familiar with a good range of authors. Younger pupils talk enthusiastically about books by Roald Dahl and Jeremy Strong. Older pupils enjoy the 'Harry Potter' books by J K Rowling, poems and stories by Roald Dahl. Many pupils name Anne Fine and Dick King-Smith as their favourite writers and they express their preferences clearly. Very thorough reading records show that parents give valuable support by reading regularly with their children and this has a positive impact upon standards.
110. Pupils' attainment in writing is good and they make good progress. They write for a range of purposes; for example, in the Reception class pupils learn to write a letter, inviting teddy to a picnic. In Year 1, pupils learn about the language and features of non-fiction texts. They write a book about pets, using extended captions for their pictures. When writing about snow they use thoughtfully expressive sentences such as 'It was strange that it snowed in March'. There are some good examples of pupils developing their writing skills in other subjects. For instance, in Year 1 in religious education pupils retell the Prince Siddhata story, showing a growing awareness of sequence and use of

vocabulary. Pupils in Year 2 write imaginatively about jungles, using sentences such as 'The trees are like emeralds protecting their secrets', and 'I struggled through the gloomy strange kingdom'. They review and evaluate books by Anne Fine, using words such as 'brilliant' and 'exciting'. Average and lower-attaining pupils extend their ideas logically and organise their writing appropriately. Their ideas are usually developed in sentences, demarcated by capital letters and full stops.

111. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils build upon their early writing skills and, in Year 4, pupils' writing becomes more varied and interesting. They respond creatively to stories, sustaining their ideas well and using more complex vocabulary. Handwriting is well formed, clearly shaped and usually well orientated. They transfer these skills to other written work. Pupils in Year 4 develop their use of punctuation, and improved spelling and handwriting skills enhance the fluency and clarity of their work. Using their knowledge of rhythm and rhyme, they write performance poetry in the form of a farewell rap for the headteacher. They understand what adjectives are and use this knowledge when building suspense in story writing. Using Greek myths as a stimulus, Year 5 pupils write their own versions using imaginative, appropriate language. They analyse advertisements and produce their own storyboards, scenes and posters for the genre. During the course of their work pupils are encouraged to try out spellings for themselves and learn how to identify common spelling patterns, recognising words-within-words and learning spelling rules.
112. By the time they are 11, pupils' range of writing is varied and they have a good understanding of purpose and audience. They write reports, newspaper articles, poetry, letters and chronological accounts in history, and take notes using the correct format with increasing expertise. For instance, in Year 6 pupils take notes whilst interviewing the school's link vicar about Christianity. They use adjectives, adverbs and similes imaginatively to write descriptions. For instance, they use similes such as 'climbing up walls like a gecko' when writing animal poems. Pupils demonstrate that they have understood the characteristic structures and language of non-fiction texts when they write their own autobiographies and describe the rain cycle. They learn to present balanced arguments on a variety of issues such as 'Should children go to bed early?' Pupils learn to redraft their work, improving both content and style, in addition to correcting spellings and improving presentation. By the time they leave the school pupils know how to use paragraphs to organise their writing, their spelling and punctuation are generally accurate and most pupils write in a good, fluent style. Handwriting and presentation are of a very high standard throughout the school.
113. Writing skills are adequately employed within other areas of the curriculum. For instance, in Year 1 pupils interview various groups about safety in the school car park and record their views. In a Year 3 history lesson pupils write a letter home from the point of view of an evacuee. Pupils in Year 5 design a variety of information leaflets about the rainforest using information technology to enhance their work. In Year 6 they write about a 'Trip to Benin', describing what they would expect to see. Throughout the school, pupils make purposeful use of information and communication technology to support a range of work in literacy. For example, they use a word-processing package to modify their writing.
114. Pupils' attitudes to work and their behaviour are very good overall and frequently excellent. Pupils with special educational needs show good attitudes to work, including those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The majority of pupils enjoy sharing texts and join in reading with sustained interest. Pupils with special educational needs show improving levels of concentration and take pride in emerging reading skills. Pupils usually respond to questions with enthusiasm. They generally have very good relationships with each other and are respectful and polite towards adults. They work hard and can sustain concentration for long periods. They know what to do when they

meet a problem and when they have completed their work. Pupils take responsibility for clearing up at the end of lessons.

115. Overall the quality of teaching is very good. During the inspection it was never less than satisfactory and was frequently very good or excellent. During the course of the inspection pupils made consistently good, and sometimes very good, progress because of the high quality of teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and has been greatly enhanced by literacy training, which has enabled them to plan appropriately for the literacy hour. In the best lessons teaching is lively, challenging and fast paced, with effective use of visual aids. Good use is made of structured, open questioning to motivate and as a check to understanding, and pupils are encouraged to give extended reasoned answers where appropriate. The best teachers have a very good balance between teacher talk and child talk and pupils know exactly what they have to learn. Support staff are used very effectively during lessons. Work is linked to individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs and their progress is carefully monitored. The best planning has clear objectives, with explicit targets for individual needs, and lesson activities are appropriate and targeted to meet the needs of individuals. Big books and enlarged texts are used appropriately and group work is matched to pupils' differing levels of ability. The review time at the end of lessons is used effectively in helping pupils to consolidate and extend their learning and this makes a positive contribution to their achievements. Teachers' expectations are very high and they manage their pupils very well. Behaviour management is very good overall; teachers rarely raise their voices and use praise appropriately to motivate all pupils.
116. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. All pupils participate fully in the literacy programme. Booster classes for pupils have also been used to improve attainment. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the close, consistent support they receive each day.
117. Assessment in English is very good. The school uses national test results extensively to track the attainment of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. As a result of this, writing has been targeted as an area for improvement. Training and moderating exercises have had a positive impact on assessment. Non-statutory end-of-year tests are used to confirm teachers' assessments and inform planning. Teacher assessment is consistent, identifies strengths and weaknesses and gives a clear picture of progression to the next stage of learning. The co-ordinator collects samples of work, which are annotated and enable teachers to assess pupils' work more accurately. Pupils have their own personal targets, which they understand and actively work towards. Marking of pupils' work is consistent; it is constructive, indicates areas for improvement and informs day-to-day planning.
118. The two English co-ordinators make a very good contribution to the development of this subject and provide excellent leadership. They are highly committed, dedicated and have a clear vision for the development of English. The senior management team and governing body ensure that this aspect of the school's work is organised effectively. The good leadership of the co-ordinators supports the teachers very well. They have recently reviewed the policy and scheme of work to meet the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. Staff have received appropriate literacy training and regular meetings are held to disseminate information and discuss developmental issues. Effective monitoring of the literacy hour has had a positive impact on teaching and learning. Good liaison between the school and feeder schools ensures a smooth transition at the end of Year 6.
119. Resources have been reviewed and enhanced by the addition of books to support literacy. Project book boxes from the school library service also support the curriculum. The library area with its collection of non-fiction books provides a valuable resource for research and independent learning. There are fiction collections, group-reading

resources and textbooks available in each classroom or in accessible areas around the school. The use of information and communication technology is used appropriately to support learning.

MATHEMATICS

120. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum assessments in mathematics for pupils in Year 2 were above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, standards were average. The trend from 1996 to date shows standards to be above average with improvements keeping pace with the national trend. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was close to the national average. Inspection findings show that standards have improved and are now above average with a much higher proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades. This is as a result of good teaching linked to the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and a clear focus on extending the higher attaining pupils. Consequently, the more-able pupils are achieving well due to a sufficient challenge in teaching and the careful grouping in ability sets.
121. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum assessments for pupils in Year 6 were well above average in comparison with all schools and above the national average in comparison with similar schools. The number achieving the expected Level 4 and above was well above average and those reaching the higher grades was above average. These results confirm the trend of year-on-year improvement since 1996 that has been at a faster rate than the national trend. Inspection findings are that standards are well above average. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well and make at least good progress. There has been a recent focus on the more-able pupils in order that they achieve as well as they should. Teachers' planning is very thorough and ensures that this group of pupils fully develop their mathematical understanding and skills. Standards have improved since the last inspection as a result of the effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and an increase in very effective adult support in the classrooms.
122. Pupils with special educational needs and those with a hearing impairment make good progress and achieve well. Teachers, communicators and teaching assistants support them effectively. The expectations of these groups of pupils are high. Planning is very good and resources are used well to support their learning. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls in either key stage.
123. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology and literacy skills, particularly in reading and understanding mathematical problems. The strong emphasis by teachers on pupils explaining how they find answers to mental problems contributes successfully to the development of speaking skills and the pupils' use of correct technical vocabulary. Numeracy skills are used well by pupils in other subjects, especially in design and technology and science where, for example, accurate and well-constructed graphs are used to show the results of science experiments.
124. Progress in using and applying mathematics in problem solving and investigations is very good, especially in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2. In lessons, teachers expect pupils to explain how they find answers to mental arithmetic problems and this develops their mathematical understanding. By Year 2, pupils have a very good understanding of odd and even numbers and investigate missing numbers successfully, for example using symbols to represent addition, subtraction and multiplication. By the age of seven most have a sound knowledge of the place value of 100 and the more able can solve problems to 1,000. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were successfully solving problems on direction using compass points and giving clear explanations for their decisions. In another Year 2 lesson pupils soon learnt to use a new computer program to move through a complicated maze. By Year 4, pupils answer problems accurately involving direction, using degrees and eight compass bearing. They were also able to

sequence simple instructions to control mechanical devices. In Year 6, pupils solve problems using decimals and percentages. They used a computer to explore angles of a polygon and a protractor to measure angles accurately to within one degree.

125. Mental arithmetic skills are good as a result of effective teaching in the mental arithmetic session of the numeracy hour. Questions are asked at a quick pace and all pupils are expected to answer questions, not just those who put their hands up. Pupils are confident in explaining how they find their answers. Knowledge and application of times tables are good. By Year 2, pupils read, write and order numbers to 100 and they multiply accurately in the two times and ten times tables. The higher attaining pupils could 'add on' successfully in threes, fours and fives. By Year 4, pupils write and can order numbers in thousands. Skills in the four rules of number are accurate. By Year 6, pupils understand the relationship between decimals, fractions and percentages.
126. In work on shape, space and measures, progress is good. By Year 2, most pupils tell the time accurately to the hour, half-hour and quarter past/to. They name and recognise common two-dimensional shapes. By Year 4, pupils show good knowledge of standard units of measurement, including centimetres, metres and kilometres, and they apply this knowledge well in solving problems. By Year 6, pupils know the correct geometrical terms to define two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. They can measure angles and recreate two-dimensional shapes using the computer.
127. Pupils' data handling skills are developed successfully through links to other subjects, particularly science, design and technology and geography. Good use is made of information and communication technology to record data on spreadsheets, particularly in Years 4/5 and 6. Pupils draw accurate, well-labelled graphs to show the results of science experiments and geographical research, and they interpret their findings well.
128. During the inspection the quality of teaching was good in 30 per cent of lessons, very good in 50 per cent and excellent in 20 per cent. This represents a very good profile of teaching. The excellent and very good teaching are linked to teachers' detailed planning, very high expectations and their understanding of and effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The result of this highly effective teaching is that pupils make good progress in their learning. The mental arithmetic session of the numeracy hour is taught well, with pace and challenge. For example, in Year 6 pupils were expected to estimate the size of angles and use the correct terminology to explain their answer. Teachers share the purpose of the lesson with pupils and use a good range of resources such as overhead projectors or individual white boards to make the tasks more interesting. Teachers give clear explanations and set appropriate targets for the work to be completed. For example, in a Years 4/5 class good use was made of tasks that were timed. This resulted in pupils working hard and showing concentration and perseverance in completing their work. In addition, as the result of teachers' high expectations, the quality of pupils' presentation of work is usually of a very high standard.
129. In lessons, teachers assess pupils' understanding accurately. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher drew the class together when she recognised that some were having a problem in completing the task. Plenary sessions are used effectively to consolidate pupils' understanding. For example, in Years 3/4 lesson on direction, the teacher asked the pupils searching questions to consolidate their learning and check how much they understood about compass bearings.
130. The subject was managed effectively by the previous headteacher and is now supported by the current acting headteacher. She monitors teaching and learning in the subject efficiently and has a thorough understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the subject. Pupils are assessed accurately and realistic and achievable targets are set. Resources to support pupils' learning are good. The school now makes good use of

information and communication technology. There have been considerable improvements made since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

131. Standards are above average at age 7 and well above average at 11 years. Standards have risen significantly over the last five years and since the previous inspection. This is due to the high quality of teaching, improved planning to support teachers' subject knowledge and the use of regular checks on pupils' progress, indicating clearly what needs to be taught next.
132. In the 2000 assessments for 7-year-olds, 96 per cent of pupils attained the expected level. This was above the national average. Of these, 32 per cent of pupils achieved at a higher level, again above the national average. Results are also above the average for similar schools. Inspection evidence from the work seen in lessons and an analysis of that in pupils' books and on display, plus the data from this year's assessments, suggest that all pupils will attain the expected level with a high percentage attaining the higher level; thus standards are above average overall.
133. In the 2000 tests and assessments for 11-year-olds, all pupils attained the expected level. This was very high in comparison with the national average. In addition, 71 per cent of pupils achieved at a higher level; again, very high in comparison with the national average and that of similar schools. Inspection evidence from the work seen in lessons and an analysis of that in pupils' books and in displays, plus the data from this year's assessments, suggest that most pupils will attain the expected level with a high percentage attaining the higher level; thus standards are well above average overall. Although boys outscored girls, the scores for both boys and girls are at least a year ahead of the national average for their ages.
134. By the age of 7 pupils are able to make suggestions about how to find out information and carry out tests, explaining whether they consider them to be fair. They are able to adjust their tests to improve the chance of getting an accurate result, using standard measures such as grams, kilos and centimetres in their work. Younger pupils are able to identify parts of the body, while Year 2 pupils have investigated healthy food, completed an analysis of a lunch box, identified different food groups and planned a balanced meal. While Year 1 pupils have investigated materials and their properties looking at rigidity and breakability, Year 2 pupils have considered natural against man made materials, classifying them and investigating what they would be fit for. Considering physical properties, Year 1 pupils have investigated light sources and day and night, while Year 2 pupils are investigating the effects of different materials and forces upon a wheeled toy on a ramp.
135. By the age of 11 pupils have a good grasp of scientific vocabulary and a secure base of knowledge. They make well-informed predictions, carry out fair tests and base conclusions on a sound understanding of scientific processes. They investigate whether certain substances are soluble or not and make suggestions for experiments to discover which changes of state are irreversible. They investigate micro-organisms with one pupil sacrificing part of his packed lunch for long-term observational study of the breakdown of the food! Their knowledge of forces is good. Pupils can identify the effects of forces such as wind, up-thrust and gravity on moving objects, considering friction, push and pull as well as gravity. Their work on electricity has gone beyond making simple circuits to considering and making switches, using parallel and sequence batteries and bulbs and timers. Year 5 pupils have spent some time investigating space, the movements of the earth, moon and other planets in relation to the sun and the effects of gravity upon the earth. Pupils recall many facts about the human body, a healthy lifestyle and the need for exercise. During the inspection Years 3 and 4 pupils were considering the effects of exercise on the heart, learning how to take their pulse and set up a fair test, seeing how long it took their heartbeat to return to normal after each activity.

136. A strength of science is the amount of time that is planned to give pupils the opportunity to observe, investigate and experiment for themselves. During the inspection, for instance, Year 2 pupils spent a whole session discussing the fair testing of three vehicles travelling down a ramp. They were guided to consider the forces that would act upon each vehicle. An analysis of the materials of each, the shape, size, measure point, even the smoothness and size of the tyres took place. Pupils refined the testing process before recording exactly what they wanted to find out, what they would do, how they would measure the distance and the conclusions that could be drawn from their experiment. The experiment itself is to be done in the next session! The progressive development of recording systems, the clear development of prediction matched to the use of result to draw conclusions that can be repeated are common to work in all areas of the science curriculum. Work recorded in samples shows a good use of graphs and charts to record data. While writing up experiments pupils make good use of correct scientific vocabulary and these technical terms occur in pupils' literacy work.
137. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers extend pupils' understanding well with the use of an appropriate curriculum drawn from the scheme of work for each age group. Good questions, instructions and explanations and the use of scientific terms encourage pupils to explain and clarify their thinking. This provides motivation and tests pupils' understanding so that teachers know what pupils understand. These opinions and assessments are recorded to build up an ongoing picture of pupils' learning developments. In the most successful lessons planning focuses on refining and improving the key skills of measuring and observing and teachers hold high expectations of what pupils can achieve and understand. Marking effectively guides pupils in how to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs and those from the hearing impaired unit are well supported and fully integrated into science lessons; they make good progress and are sensitively and effectively supported. Teachers make very good use of well-briefed teaching assistants. They are involved with planned activities and know exactly how to help with small group activities and make a good contribution to pupils' progress. In lessons teachers manage time and resources well. Good organisation ensures that pupils are kept busy and focused upon the tasks they are asked to perform. Pupils across the school show at least good and often very good attitudes towards their work. They are enthusiastic, co-operate and concentrate with high levels of motivation on their tasks. Pupils' written work is well presented, neat and easy to read. Diagrams are well drawn and clearly labelled. This ensures that, when pupils look back at what they have achieved over a period of time, they can see their development as a scientist clearly for themselves.
138. The subject co-ordinator has effectively worked to raise standards since the previous inspection. She has a clear picture of what pupils need to develop in science and what the school needs to do to get there. The scheme of work is carefully matched to the school's practice. Teachers' plans are monitored, as are samples of work. Resources are purchased and directed to implement the units of work appropriately. Test results are analysed carefully and trends identified and staff training has taken place to ensure that all pupils have access to a full and challenging curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

139. During the course of the inspection three art lessons were observed. Judgements are made additionally from discussions with pupils and staff, scrutiny of pupils' past and present work, displays and teachers' planning. Pupils currently in Year 2 and the top age group for the school are achieving standards that are well above those expected for their age. Around the school, pupils' carefully mounted displays show a good range of two- and three-dimensional work.

140. At the end of Year 6, pupils are familiar with a wide range of materials, tools and techniques used in art, craft and design. They also experience planned opportunities to learn about and appreciate the work of other artists. Younger pupils mix greens and pinks to capture the impressionistic style of Monet. Year 1 pupils experiment with mixing colours to make primary and secondary colours. Building on prior learning, they produce a clay tile, impressing a pattern into the clay. They evaluate their work, commenting thoughtfully on the outcomes. Using a variety of colours, Year 2 pupils use tie dye techniques to dye fabric samples. They study the work of Andy Warhol and, using a photo, paint a series of repeating portraits. Years 3 and 4 use tints to imitate the colours of Turner. Using the sketches of Henry Moore as a stimulus, older pupils draw trainers using different grades of pencil to produce some very effective shading. For example, using the pencil to draw fine and thick lines and smudging some to give a solid effect. They develop this technique in a follow-up lesson, drawing pieces of rubbish with the aid of a magnifying glass. Year 6 pupils study African art and experiment enthusiastically with batik, creating a range of varied patterns. Sketchbooks are usually used very effectively throughout the school to support pupils' learning.
141. Throughout the school, pupils learn and apply new skills successfully. They use a wide range of media, including chalk, oil pastels, pencils and paint. They make three-dimensional shapes in clay and print in a variety of ways. Pupils' learning in art makes a valuable contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, their growing appreciation of the beauty around them supports their spiritual development. Similarly, their interpretation of the work of artists and craftspeople promotes cultural and multi-cultural development. A visiting Indian Classical dance troupe stimulated some excellent artwork on an Indian theme throughout the school. All pupils contributed a fabric self-portrait to make a celebratory wall hanging to mark the Millennium. The curriculum is further enhanced by opportunities for pupils to work on a regular basis with a local artist. The school exhibits work annually at the Alton Arts Festival and examples of pupils' work are used in the County Art publication as exemplars of good practice.
142. Teaching overall is judged to be very good. From the three lessons observed and from a scrutiny of teachers' planning, lessons are planned with very clear learning objectives. Skills to be taught are identified clearly, enabling pupils to build on previous knowledge and understanding. Introductions to lessons are clear and pupils are highly motivated to complete the tasks. All pupils behave very well and respect the opinions of others. They work together very well, sharing resources without any fuss. Pupils show a great sense of responsibility by using resources carefully and returning equipment to the appropriate place at the end of the lesson.
143. The co-ordinator provides excellent leadership. All the issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed. Documentation is thorough and planning for art is very good. Monitoring and evaluation is well managed and makes a very good contribution to both teaching and learning. Assessment is a particular strength. Portfolios of work provide evidence of the different levels and standards of work achieved. An appropriate range of resources is available and readily accessible. There are links with other areas of the curriculum. For instance, drawing and painting computer packages are used appropriately to support the curriculum. Artwork is also displayed on the school's website. The careful and colourful displays of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school clearly demonstrate that the subject is valued. Such respect makes a substantial contribution to the overall ethos of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

144. By the end of each key stage the standard of pupils' work is above average for their age. At the time of the previous inspection standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were below

expected levels. Since then the subject co-ordinator has put some considerable efforts into planning an appropriate curriculum, writing a policy, selecting a suitable scheme of work, raising teachers' confidence, knowledge and understanding and acquiring an appropriate range of resources. These efforts are bearing fruit as now standards are judged to be good overall. Pupils designing and making skills are good. Their skills of evaluating products to improve or alter and the concept of 'fit for purpose' are now firmly established, taking the subject away from 'craft'.

145. Pupils respond positively to design and technology work as a result of the good and often very good teaching supporting their learning. Teachers prepare well, choose appropriate resources and structure tasks to enable pupils to use a range of previously taught skills in new situations. Thus during the inspection pupils in Year 2 were disassembling a bicycle, establishing the parts and why parts move. They investigated the effects of cogs and gears, matching cog size to wheel size, drew and labelled the parts and considered different designs to achieve the same effect. Because of the thoroughness of the teacher's preparation, the effectiveness of the questions and organisation, pupils were interested, worked hard, took care with the quality of the work they produced and concentrated for some considerable time. Likewise in Year 6, the teacher had planned with the co-ordinator for information and communication technology for pupils to design and create a working model of a fairground ride that would be computer-controlled and put on display. She had models of ride movements involving pulleys and cams for pupils to consider. She expected pupils to produce realistic plans of their designs, labelling sketches for movement, materials, sizes and shapes as well as being aware of possible constraints such as caused by control mechanisms. Pupils responded well to these high expectations. They worked carefully and thoughtfully, starting to consider the range of variables, possibilities and the possible problems of their designs. These included 'How do people get onto the ride?', 'Does the ride just go round or is there secondary movement, perhaps operated on an off-set cam?', 'Fairgrounds need to be easy to pack away and assemble, how can this be built into the ride so as to meet health and safety requirements?' and 'What materials are best for the different parts of the ride?'
146. Pupils have an ongoing design and technology journal. This goes through the school with them and reminds them of the skills already developed and the artefacts already created. These samples give evidence of pupils' work. For example: in food technology with pupils baking and evaluating a range of breads; balanced diets and foods suitable for people's different occupations; a design for and evaluation of a stand for a photo frame; textiles with a consideration of different stitches and materials and the range of construction techniques used in their work.
147. The co-ordinator does not monitor teaching, but tries to ensure that for part of her time she is able to support teachers and pupils within class and keep up to date with development in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

148. During the week of the inspection two lessons of geography were observed. One was in the Reception class and the other in the Years 4/5 class. Discussions with the teachers and pupils and an analysis of pupils' work provided additional evidence of the standards being achieved. Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are above those expected for their age and an improvement on the standards reported in the previous inspection. At the time of the last inspection standards throughout the school were satisfactory and now they are good. This is mostly due to the high expectations that the teachers have of what can be achieved, the quality of their planning, the level of support provided by the teaching assistants, the ability of the pupils to work independently and pupils' well developed literacy skills. The pupils with a hearing impairment are given good support and are able to access the learning and make good progress.

149. At Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to understand the relationship between distance and time taken to travel to school, the differing journeys they have and the features they observe. They begin to develop maps of their journeys and describe characteristics of the area. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 show understanding of features in a range of environments and compare local climate, vegetation and buildings with those in other locations such as the seaside. Pupils' attainment is related to their acquisition of skills in literacy and their ability to work independently. The higher-attaining and average groups make good progress and, by the end of the key stage, their skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening help them to achieve at levels above expectations for their age. Their presentation of work is satisfactory. Lower-attaining groups, including those with special educational needs, progress well in relation to earlier attainment, but their recording of work is far less detailed. All pupils, including those of lower attainment and those with special educational needs, understand geographical concepts, for example 'near and far' and 'hot and cold'. Efficient use of teaching assistants and communicators in supporting lower-attaining pupils and those who have a hearing impairment helps to reduce the difference between the highest and lowest levels of attainment at the end of the key stage.
150. At Key Stage 2, effective teaching is a significant factor in the positive effects there are on pupils' learning and achievements. Pupils quickly learn new skills, develop new ideas and, with the use of associated technical language, improve their understanding and increase their knowledge. Teachers remind pupils of their language and literacy targets when completing work in geography books, improving presentation and clarity of written work. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read maps correctly with an understanding of scale and compare and contrast their environment with a tropical location such as St Lucia. They have a good knowledge of countries and communities in Europe and other parts of the world and show an understanding of natural physical processes such as flooding and volcanoes. They show a growing awareness of the influence of human beings on the environment and understand that people have different points of view on environmental issues. In the Years 4 and 5 class pupils compared and contrasted a local wooded area to that of a tropical rain forest. They effectively used their high level of literacy skills to research independently information from a wide range of sources. Most had acquired a good understanding of environmental issues and had developed firm opinions about what could be done to improve the decline of rain forests. At Key Stage 2, links are made between geography and other subjects such as history and science. Good quality classroom displays of geography and related work give useful evidence of progress in learning and standards achieved by pupils of different levels of attainment. The standard of presentation of work carried out by the majority of pupils is good,
151. At both key stages the quality of teaching is good. The teachers' care with planning for the learning of all pupils, the provision of relevant and meaningful practical activities, and development of pupils' contributions to discussions in lessons are significant factors in the progress made. High expectations, sensitive management of pupils and the development of basic skills are additional strengths of the teaching. Marking of geography books is good, particularly in the upper Key Stage 2 classes. Helpful comments indicate to pupils how they can improve their work and focus on literacy issues as well as content.
152. The management and co-ordination of geography is in a transitional stage as the co-ordinator is relatively new in post. Already she has worked with an external adviser and this has helped to refine the planning and given teachers confidence with geography. A good range of resources is available and has been well organised into topic packs by the co-ordinator, who also monitors teachers' planning. The policy and schemes of work for geography are continually being refined. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, the use of

information and communication technology is an area for further development in geography.

HISTORY

153. Standards in history are good in both key stages and are above those expected for pupils of this age. This represents an improvement in standards at Key Stage 1, which was judged to be satisfactory at the previous inspection. The standards at Key Stage 2 have remained above those expected for pupils of this age. The improvement in attainment results from the fact that planning has improved through the support given from outside agencies and teachers are now more confident of what has to be covered and achieved. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with a hearing impairment, make sound progress as they build on their understanding of time passing and the significance of a range of historical occurrences and events. The progress of the older and more-able younger pupils is particularly enhanced by their good literacy skills and the opportunities provided for them to research information independently.
154. The high standards have been maintained despite a slight reduction of time now given to this subject due to the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. At times teachers effectively use the literacy and numeracy hours to reinforce work covered in the history topics.
155. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the life of Florence Nightingale and are able to make simple comparisons between people of that period and their own experiences. They show a good awareness of change and progress and can offer straightforward explanations of how and why things are not the same as they used to be. They record factual evidence about medicines and hospital life at the time of the Crimean War. They showed understanding and empathy for the plight of wounded soldiers when they were invited to pose questions to Florence Nightingale when she visited the classroom, wearing a period costume. Learning is recorded in a variety of ways after studying information from pictures, photographs and a good range of reference books.
156. By the end of the key stage, pupils have simple but sound factual knowledge about the lives of people in earlier times. They understand the concept of the passage of time and know that life in the past was different from life today.
157. Pupils at Key Stage 2 build on their previous knowledge as they study the past in a variety of contexts. They learn about Roman and Egyptian civilisations and, in doing so, they develop increased understanding of some of the reasons why these societies were different and why the people conducted their affairs in particular ways. They also study developments in Great Britain over time. For example, pupils in a Years 3/4 class learn about life in World War Two. They know about how the war affected the lives of different members of a family, how children were evacuated, the activities of the Home Front and the use made of posters for propaganda. As part of their studies, the class was visited by three local historians dressed in period costumes and bringing real artefacts from the period. In addition to viewing clothing and artefacts of the time, they enjoy the excitement of involvement in role-play and dramatic reconstruction of the period. The subsequent follow-up work, which incorporates the use of word-processing skills, is a strong reinforcement to their historical knowledge and understanding.
158. History makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy development when they read about the circumstances, people and events in other times. Pupils learn about the social and cultural issues pertinent to different times. Their awareness of issues such as the use of slavery in Egypt and the importance of myths and legends to the belief systems of the ancient Greeks extends their understanding and offers insight into some relevant issues of today, such as the importance of equality of opportunity.

159. Boys and girls have good attitudes towards history; they enjoy learning about the subject and are confident to discuss their learning. In all classes, there is evidence of work that shows neat handwriting and careful illustration.
160. The quality of teaching was good and very good in the two lessons of history observed during the inspection. Other inspection evidence is consistent with the quality of teaching being good overall. Lessons are planned carefully to meet the clear objectives of the scheme of work. Teachers maintain adequate records, but the assessment and recording of attainment and progress are not well developed or related to National Curriculum levels. The quality of planning was very good and teachers prepared separate work for pupils of different ability. The range of learning tasks and extension work was sufficient to challenge the abilities of all pupils. Written work is marked conscientiously and the best examples, as well as being supportive and encouraging, include specific comments drawing attention to future learning goals.
161. The subject co-ordinator is new in her role. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum for history has been reviewed in accordance with national initiatives. A scheme of work, which is suitably broad and balanced, is evolving. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning with the purpose of ensuring that learning extends pupils' knowledge and understanding incrementally year-on-year. Detailed lesson plans have been devised and are implemented.
162. Resources for the subject are good and have been improved since the previous inspection with the addition of artefacts and alternative sources of reference. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to enhance the provision of suitable reference material for research and investigation using information and communication technology, as funds become available.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

163. Pupils' attainment at the age of 7 and 11 is above national expectations. There are no differences in pupils' achievement caused by gender or by pupils' prior attainment. All pupils make good progress in their learning. At the time of the previous inspection standards achieved were higher than expected nationally. Expectations of the subject have changed since the previous inspection and demands on pupils are now greater. Thus standards have steadily risen in line with raised expectations. The use of information and communication technology as a tool in other subjects is well developed throughout the school.
164. The quality of teaching is good overall. As a result pupils develop a secure skills base. They are given plenty of experiences upon which to build confidence. Teachers understand well the programs that they choose to use. They match these carefully to support work in subjects such as design and technology, literacy and numeracy. Teachers directly teach computer skills, encouraging pupils to have a go and experiment so that they solve problems. They have high expectations of pupils' independence with the equipment; pupils enjoy this and the result is an improving understanding of their work. Teachers' planning is comprehensive; they share their own expertise and knowledge and make ongoing assessments to guide learning further.
165. All pupils are able to load programs from a floppy disk or the computer hard drive. Older pupils are able to load directly from the Internet. Pupils control a mouse to move the cursor round the screen, click to enter different parts of programs and older pupils use the keyboard with dexterity. At the end of lessons pupils save their work and exit programs efficiently, closing down the machine correctly. Throughout the school pupils develop and practise word processing skills, regularly drafting a piece of written work onto the word processor. Most pupils can change the print style, size and colour and print out their

work. Year 3 pupils, for example, use desktop publishing to create 'World War Two' posters, combining text and graphics to present a piece of persuasive writing. Year 2 pupils support their work in numeracy with the 'Crystal Rainforest' programme, navigating a character through a pyramid by using direction and movement keys. Year 6 pupils use 'Robolab' software to control a fairground ride under construction in design technology, feeding computer instructions to a model using an infrared connector.

166. As they move through the school pupils build up a good skills base across a wide range of communication equipment. Pupils can use an overhead projector in lessons and for assemblies, tape recorders, compact disk players, digital cameras and a programmable robot round a track. The school has a good range of software to support learning in most curriculum areas and pupils are learning how to use these well when researching into and editing information for subjects such as history, geography and science.
167. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, keen and enthusiastic. She shares her expertise generously with her colleagues, supporting those who are less confident with the equipment. Teacher expertise has developed well since the previous inspection and the co-ordinator directs this carefully, ensuring staff training needs are addressed appropriately. The policy for information and communication technology and the scheme of work have just been reviewed and the co-ordinator is monitoring teachers' long and medium term plans to ensure pupils' skills are progressing appropriately. Resources are good. The school has an information and communication technology suite in which a class can learn in pairs and gain much practical expertise. A further group of computers are located near the Key Stage 1 classes to facilitate learning. Children in Reception and pupils in Year 1 have two computers to each of their classrooms. This gives teachers the opportunity for greater flexibility when younger pupils need a short time but more instant access.

MUSIC

168. Standards across the school are satisfactory overall and attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection where standards were judged to be satisfactory. Then some aspects in Key Stage 2 were under-developed, notably assembly singing lacking confidence and composition and a broad understanding of the history of music and composers being less well emphasised. These latter elements have started to be addressed by the appointment of a skilled music specialist as co-ordinator.
169. The co-ordinator delivers the music lessons for each class in Key Stage 2, giving teachers ongoing professional development. A scheme of work to address the school's specific needs has been devised. Pupils' playing skills are developing through opportunities to use a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments as well as some pupils having peripatetic brass instrumental lessons. In singing, pupils learn about pitch, tempo and timbre as well as developing their skills of working with others in a group setting. Lessons themselves enable pupils to practise their listening skills and compose their own music in a range of styles such as Tudor Pavaues and the 5 and 7 beat rhythms of Dave Brubeck. Extra-curricular activities such as the brass ensemble and the opportunity to learn the recorder or guitar are introducing pupils to a wide range of music, composers and musical styles. Younger pupils are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Pupils know the sounds of a range of percussion instruments and use these appropriately to compose the accompaniment to the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, devising ways of recording these onto a 'score'. Pupils across the school are developing the technical vocabulary of music, being able to explain terms such as 'pulse', 'tempo', 'rhythm', 'rondo' (a recurring theme) and older pupils 'ostinato' (a repeated phrase).

170. The quality of teaching for younger pupils is satisfactory while that for older pupils is good, with some excellent teaching seen. In the better lessons the teachers' planning is well matched to the quality of the resources. A good pace is established and lessons proceed well, the teacher having very good relationships with the pupils. Good structures and management skills ensure that pupils' knowledge and skills develop as the lesson progresses. As a result pupils are keen and interested and no time is wasted dealing with disciplinary matters.
171. The school has an appropriate range of resources to support a full curriculum. As well as a good range of tuned and untuned percussion and keyboards, the school has taped music for use in lessons and assemblies to assist in the setting of a spiritual atmosphere. The school has a choir that does not meet regularly, but pupils join together for weekly key stage singing practice with a parent pianist supporting. Last year the musical 'The Pied Piper' was produced and all the pupils were involved. The co-ordinator hopes to develop this further as pupils and teachers become more musically skilled and confident.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

172. Standards in physical education at Key Stage 1 are above expectations. At Key Stage 2 standards are well above what is expected for pupils of this age. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress throughout both key stages in their acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding. Because of the school's termly planning programme and the inspection timetable no gymnastic lessons were seen and only two lessons were observed during the course of the inspection. Findings are therefore based largely upon scrutiny of planning, discussion with staff and pupils, school documentation and photographic evidence.
173. The subject has a clear policy and scheme of work, based on the QCA schemes of work. Overall, medium and short term planning is good with lesson objectives clearly stated and good opportunities for the consolidation and development of skills. Assessment is mainly informal, through observations of pupils in lessons, clubs and matches.
174. Pupils enjoy the subject and take pleasure in improving their skills and performance levels. Reception pupils learn to use hoops in different ways. They show a high degree of co-operation and enthusiasm. In Year 6, pupils were observed developing their skills in striking and fielding. They demonstrated skills well above expectations for their age. They showed a good understanding of rules and basic tactics and worked together co-operatively.
175. The quality of teaching is very good and is sometimes excellent. Teachers are skilled at planning work. Expectations are high and lessons conducted at a lively pace. The organisation of lessons ensures good progress in learning and teachers are particularly skilled at building pupils' confidence, using example and enabling pupils to evaluate their performance. Expectations are high and lessons are conducted at a lively pace. Lessons have objectives, which focus on developing skills then using them to secure improvement. Learning is effective, because good attention is given to warm-up activities, safety issues are raised and extended questioning is used to develop pupils' thinking. Very good relationships between the teacher and pupils are also a positive feature of lessons.
176. An appropriate emphasis is placed upon swimming and pupils benefit from this programme. Most can swim 25 metres by the time they are 11 years old. There is regular provision for floor work and use of large gymnastics apparatus, team and competitive games, swimming and dance. The school has the benefit of a large playing field and resources are good overall.

177. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities, including gymnastics, football, netball, rounders, cricket and athletics. These are very popular and are offered to all pupils of an appropriate age. There are also very good opportunities available for pupils to play against other schools and to take part in local tournaments. The sports and team activities allow a high proportion of pupils to be actively involved. Overall, provision for the subject has improved since the previous inspection.
178. Physical education has a prominent place in the life of the school and this contributes positively to the standards achieved. It promotes the idea of fitness for life and that all can participate, as well as endorsing excellence through sporting achievement. The school benefits from a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who is well supported by other colleagues. Patterns of training are well established in the school and this too has a positive effect on standards and teacher confidence. Swimming is encouraged through additional training and the school has competed successfully at national level. Visits and visitors to the school enhance standards. For instance, older pupils undertake outdoor and adventure activities, such as water sports and the skiing. The school makes good use of the extensive grounds that are available.
179. The quality of leadership and management is very good. The subject leader has excellent subject knowledge and regularly delivers in-service training to teachers both in her own and other schools. The arrangements for the monitoring of teaching and learning are good. Assessment is facilitated through defined learning objectives with the scheme of work and liaison with class teachers. The subject's curriculum is broad and balanced and physical education contributes well to the pupils' personal development as it promotes self-esteem and teamwork. Pupils show very good sportsmanship. This is particularly evident in inter-school tournaments. Accommodation and resources are good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

180. By the ends of both key stages, standards of attainment are above those expected by the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils make good progress. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were broadly in line with requirements. Both religious education lessons and assemblies contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral and social education. Good work has been achieved in further developing the policy and scheme of work. The subject is sensitively linked to other areas of the curriculum and provides a clear sequence to learning for all.
181. Younger pupils develop awareness and appreciation of objects and people who are special to them in their own lives and transfer these attitudes towards artefacts related to religion. In Year 1, pupils reflect on the meaning of the lotus flower to Buddhists and compare it with Christian symbols such as the crucifix and fish. They consider living in harmony and working together as a team and write their own sets of rules to live by. In raising their awareness of the need to live and work together in peace and harmony, pupils explain how to make the world a better place in which to live. All pupils, regardless of their cultural background, celebrate and enjoy the stories about Buddha. Sound literacy links are made when pupils discuss and write about them. They predict what might happen next and extend their vocabulary. Good use is made of pupils' literacy skills through the many opportunities for pupils to share views and beliefs not only of their own religion but also those of others and through varied opportunities to present their work in written form.
182. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress overall. Year 4 pupils write about the events of the Holy Week from the point of view of a disciple: 'I followed him eagerly trying to please him'. They know that the Bible contains many good stories that can teach Christians lessons in life. The study of Sikhism in Year 5 fosters reflection upon what

might constitute a perfect world, for instance 'In a perfect world love would flood every heart'. They also consider prayer and compose their own, recognising that prayer can be 'sharing thoughts with God'. Year 6 pupils extend their ability to ask relevant questions when investigating Christianity. They interview the local vicar, asking some searching questions on the beliefs and lifestyle of a Christian. Pupils build on their knowledge of Christianity. Very good progress is made in developing a questioning and thoughtful approach. In general, pupils listen carefully to one another and combine good speaking skills with a command of appropriate religious vocabulary. They progress well, deepening their own knowledge and comprehension of spiritual matters. They take the work seriously and work well with each other.

183. Pupils make good progress across the school, including pupils with special educational needs. Work is covered through a good balance of discussion and written work which enables all pupils to take an active part, irrespective of their literacy skills. Behaviour and attitudes are very good in lessons. Assembly themes are well linked to classroom teaching and often give pupils further opportunities to learn about living together in peace and harmony. Pupils are encouraged to demonstrate their talents in assemblies, thereby building their confidence and self-esteem.
184. The quality of teaching is good overall and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Planning of lessons is good and is related appropriately to the locally agreed syllabus. In the best lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and create interest in the topic to be covered. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and all pupils are questioned well. Searching questions are asked to help to raise the standard of pupils' answers. Generally the pace of lessons is good and time is used effectively. Teachers' expectations when setting written work are high. Their expectations of the level of pupils' knowledge and understanding and their ability to put themselves in other people's shoes are also high. Teachers are also good at getting pupils to make the connection between their own experiences and new information so as to reinforce the learning. Teachers are aware of the need to present faiths such as Sikhism and Buddhism not only historically, related to the areas of origin, but also in the context of Britain today.
185. Religious education is carefully managed by the co-ordinator. She has introduced a more systematic approach to the subject through the provision of clear guidelines following the locally agreed syllabus and the new guidance from the government's curriculum authority (QCA). There is now a comprehensive overall scheme which gives effective guidance to help teachers to plan efficiently. Procedures for assessment have been improved and are continuing to be developed. Assessment opportunities are highlighted on planning and work samples have been collected from each year group. This monitoring element is an improvement since the previous inspection. Visits to places of worship are included in the planning.