

INSPECTION REPORT

MANOR INFANT SCHOOL

PORTSMOUTH

LEA area: Portsmouth

Unique reference number: 116226

Headteacher: Mrs Janet Christie

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Gosling
22453

Dates of inspection: 25-28 February 2002

Inspection number: 194574

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Inverness Road Buckland Portsmouth Hampshire
Postcode:	PO1 5QR
Telephone number:	023 9282 0548
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Margaret Todd
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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22453	Brian Gosling Registered inspector	Mathematics Physical education Equal opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
1165	Peter Dannheisser Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
26820	Carolyn Maddox Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
24528	Garth Muton Team inspector	English Music Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language	
13307	Ian Hancock Team inspector	Geography History Information and Communication technology	How well is the school led and managed?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Manor Infant School is a large infant school that was built in 1984 and is situated close to the centre of the city of Portsmouth. There are 211 pupils: 98 boys and 113 girls. A few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and five have English as an additional language, speaking Bengali, Spanish and Tagalog. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is well above average and two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is below average. Children start school with low attainment in all areas of learning, but particularly in language and social skills.

All teachers, except the deputy headteacher, have joined the school since the last inspection. Most significantly, the headteacher arrived in January 2001, since when many changes have been brought about to improve the school's educational provision. The decoration of the building and the facilities available at the school have been improved significantly in the last year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Manor Infant School is an effective and improving school. Pupils start school with very low attainment and poor personal and social skills. Through good teaching and caring attention to the pupils' personal needs, they develop good attitudes to school and achieve well. Many pupils achieve very well by the time they move to their next school. The headteacher's very good leadership and management of the school are currently ensuring rapid improvement. All members of staff support each other well through a strong sense of teamwork and there is a clear commitment to improve the school further. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Although standards are not high, most pupils make good progress and many make very good progress. They attain well in art and design, and music.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and they enjoy very good relationships.
- The quality of teaching is good and there is some very good teaching in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are supported well.
- Pupils' personal and social skills are developed very well by the school's caring attention to their needs, and the provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good.
- The school is very well led and managed, with the headteacher providing a clear direction for all members of staff, who share a strong commitment to succeed.
- The school takes every opportunity to encourage parents to become involved in all areas of their children's education.

What could be improved

- Standards are not high enough, particularly in writing, and there are not enough planned opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Teaching does not focus sufficiently clearly on what pupils have learned and need to learn next.
- Curriculum planning does not identify the progressive way in which pupils learn sufficiently clearly.

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 May 1997 and improvement has been good. However, the school experienced difficulties after the last inspection and in December 2000 the local education authority placed the school in the category for schools giving cause for concern. Since the arrival of the new headteacher, the school has made rapid improvement and, in January 2002, the local education authority placed it in the category for schools that are showing signs of improvement as it is no longer causing concern. Indeed, the school has shown very good improvement in the last year.

The school has recently addressed the areas for development in the last inspection report with enthusiasm and commitment. The curriculum is now planned more carefully and the quality of teaching has improved. The management structure of the school is much improved and this has led to continuing improvement. Furthermore, the facilities have been greatly improved to provide an interesting and stimulating learning environment for the pupils, and many good opportunities are provided for parents to become involved in their children's education. The support of parents for the way the school cares for and educates their children is now much higher than it was at the time of the last inspection. These recent improvements are having a significant effect on raising standards and the school shows very good capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2, based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
Reading	D	D	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	E	E	E	E	
Mathematics	D	D	D	B	

The school's results did not improve noticeably in 2001 although the trend in the school's results in each of the tests shows steady improvement. This is because the recent improvements introduced by the new headteacher had not had sufficient time to fully affect standards. Compared to those in similar schools, however, the school's results were satisfactory in reading and good in mathematics. Teacher assessments show that standards in science were well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. Although standards are below the national average, most pupils achieve well and a significant number achieve very well. This is because they arrive at the school with low standards of attainment and a high proportion of pupils has special educational needs. Standards in writing, however, remain low and this is an important area for development. Nevertheless, the evidence of the inspection shows that standards are improving under the committed leadership of the new headteacher.

The school sets clear and specific targets for individuals and groups of pupils and these are ensuring that they make steady and secure progress. Targets have been set for a high

proportion of pupils to attain the nationally expected Level 2 in English and mathematics in 2002 and 2003. These seem ambitious in the light of the progress this anticipates they will make and the challenges they face in developing their writing skills sufficiently by the time they leave the school. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in art and design, and music.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic and interested in their learning activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in the classroom and around the school. They respond well to the high expectations of teachers.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with teachers and other pupils and they carry out well the duties they are given.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is similar to the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching in the reception classes is satisfactory. However, almost a third of the lessons seen in these classes were good or better. In Years 1 and 2, most of the lessons seen were good or better and many were very good or better. English, mathematics and art and design are taught well and the teaching of music is never less than good and often excellent.

Teachers plan lessons well and they have high expectations of the pupils, encouraging them to do their best. The school teaches the higher attaining pupils separately for English and mathematics and the success of this practice is shown in the high standards these pupils attain. The needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are well catered for. However, tasks do not always focus as clearly as they could on the particular learning needs of some lower attaining pupils. Nevertheless, stimulating activities and the very good management of pupils by teachers ensure that lessons are happy occasions and pupils are encouraged to do their best. Many pupils have difficulty maintaining concentration for more than a short time and this limits their rate of learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school makes good links across the curriculum to enhance pupils' learning, and it has acknowledged the need to adapt its schemes of work to fully reflect the needs of its pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils receive very good support and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils are supported well and their progress is monitored regularly. The school establishes effective links with their parents.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school's provision is very good for spiritual and social development. It is good for pupils' moral and cultural development. The provision for pupils' personal development is a strong feature and it permeates all aspects of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides a pleasing and caring environment where pupils are happy and valued.

The school works well in partnership with parents and it takes every opportunity to involve them in all aspects of their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very strong and inspirational leadership with a very clear and focused direction for school development. She has established an effective management structure through which all staff with management responsibilities, particularly the year-group leaders, are developing their roles effectively. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a shared commitment to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body is well led by the chair of governors, who enjoys a good partnership with the headteacher, and governors are developing their roles well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has carefully identified its strengths and weaknesses and has taken effective action to improve all aspects of its provision for its pupils.

The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school has successfully applied for a number of grants, which it uses very well. Members of staff are deployed effectively and the school has been developed as a stimulating and attractive learning environment for the pupils. The school applies the principles of best value well.
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There are a good number of teachers and learning support assistants. The accommodation is used well to provide a bright and stimulating learning environment. Resources for learning are good, particularly for music.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
Parents are very pleased with almost all aspects of the school's work. In particular, every parent who expressed an opinion agreed that: teaching is good; they are comfortable in approaching the school with concerns; their children achieve well and become mature and responsible and the leadership and management of the school are good. They are clearly very pleased with what the school is currently providing for their children.	There are no areas of significant concern for parents.

Inspectors generally agree with parents that the school is currently providing a good, and improving, quality of education for their children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school assesses children's attainment shortly after they start. These detailed assessments show that children begin school with low attainment in all areas of learning. Although many children attend local playgroups, the facilities are limited. For example, the three playgroups that predominantly provide pre-school education for the children who start at the school have no outside play area. Consequently, children have restricted opportunities to develop their physical skills. There is a commitment at the school to improve the early learning experiences of pupils, and effective relationships are being established with parents. However, there is no nursery at the school and the influence that the school has on preparing children for school life is limited.
2. There has been a certain amount of disruption in the reception classes due to long-term absence and the improvements that have been made in the rest of the school in the last year have yet to be established as securely in all of the reception classes. Nevertheless, children receive a suitable curriculum that is matched to their learning needs and they make satisfactory, secure and steady progress in developing their learning skills. As a result of their attainment when they start school, which is well below the local authority's average, few children attain the Early Learning Goals¹ expected of children of their age and no child attains the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning.
3. The school's results² in the national tests in 2001 at the end of Year 2 were below the national average in reading and mathematics, and well below the national average in writing. These results were better when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds; mathematics was above the average and reading was close to the average, although writing was well below average. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science in 2001 show that the proportion of pupils who attained the nationally expected Level 2³ was well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. The reason for these low results is that not enough pupils attained the nationally expected Level 2. However, more than half of the pupils at the

¹ On Early Learning Goals: QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the time they start the National Curriculum in Year 1 in six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development; and personal social and emotional development. The Foundation Stage continues until pupils enter Year 1, when they begin Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

² On the school's results: An average points score provides schools with a single statistic with which to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in other schools. At Key Stage 1, the National Curriculum levels of attainment are given a score. For example, in mathematics Level 1=9 points and Level 2=15 points, and so on. The average test score achieved by a school is calculated by adding up all the scores achieved by the pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. These comparisons are the ones used in the figures printed in the summary of the report. When the percentage of pupils attaining a particular level is compared to that in other schools, this is stated clearly in the text.

³ On Levels: The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels.

school have been identified as having special educational needs and approximately three quarters of the pupils make good or very good progress to attain Level 2 in all of the national tests in 2001. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher Level 3 was better than the national average and indicates that these pupils receive suitably challenging tasks. For example, almost a third of the pupils attained Level 3 in reading and mathematics, and almost a fifth attained this standard in science. No pupil attained Level 3 in writing in 2001, however, and this restricts learning opportunities in other subjects.

4. Girls do better than boys in the national tests. This is not entirely surprising and reflects the slower rate by which most boys develop the learning skills necessary to achieve the nationally expected standards. Nevertheless, the school is considering the content of reading books to increase their interest for boys. The school is committed to raising standards and set very challenging targets for pupils' attainment in 2001, but these targets were not met and those set for 2002 were even higher. The targets for 2002 have recently been revised but, along with targets for 2003, aim to attain higher than the current national average in reading and writing. This is certainly ambitious and probably unrealistic in English, considering the children's attainment on entry to the school and the lack of nursery provision that restricts the ability of the school to develop children's learning skills suitably before they begin work on the National Curriculum in Year 1. Targets are more realistic in mathematics and appear to be achievable.
5. The trend in the school's results is rising above the national trend in all three subjects since 1997, despite a drop in 1999. There are clear signs of improvement since the arrival of the new headteacher, who has brought a determination and commitment to raising standards. There has been a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and the developing role of subject leaders provides for a more careful monitoring of standards. Test results are analysed and pupils' work is scrutinised to establish strengths and weaknesses in the different subjects, and pupils' work is now more closely matched to what they need to learn next. This is having a significant impact on raising standards.
6. The school demonstrates a clear commitment to the principles of inclusion. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well provided for and they make good progress, attaining the targets set for them. The school has identified some gifted and talented pupils and considers the best provision for them. Furthermore, in Year 1 and Year 2 higher attaining pupils are taught together in a single class for English and mathematics and this is helping them attain high standards. The school tracks pupils' progress as they move through the school in literacy and numeracy. This is recorded clearly and includes targets for all pupils. These procedures are having a significant effect on raising pupils' attainment. The particular challenge for the school, however, is the low attainment of children when they start school and the slower rate at which they learn. Significant improvements have been made in matching tasks to the particular learning needs of the pupils and the school is aware of the need to continue this development.
7. The evidence of the inspection shows that standards in literacy and numeracy have improved but remain below average due to the group of pupils who do not attain the nationally expected standard. In particular, the speaking, listening and writing skills of these pupils are not good enough to enable them to do as well as they otherwise might in all subjects. In mathematics, many pupils are slow to learn addition and subtraction facts to ten. This slows the rate at which they are able to work and restricts the amount of challenge that teachers can provide for them.

8. Considering the pupils' low attainment when they start school, it is impressive that standards when they leave the school are in line with national expectations in science, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. The school is determined to maintain a broad curriculum with cultural and creative activities prominent in the school. This not only makes it an attractive, lively and happy place but also enables pupils to attain standards that exceed national expectations in art and design, and music as well as in aspects of physical education, such as dance.
9. It is clear, then, that pupils enter the school with low attainment and achieve well in all subjects by the time they leave and their achievement is high in art and design, and music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils are keen to learn and children in the reception classes establish good relationships, although they are reluctant to engage in conversation. Pupils generally apply themselves enthusiastically and work hard in lessons. Many, however, do not have well-developed listening skills and they have difficulty maintaining concentration for more than a short time. The result is that, in lessons where they are asked to sit still and listen or concentrate for prolonged periods, their attention wanders and this has a negative effect on their learning. It is due to their good attitudes that their behaviour is never less than satisfactory and they apply themselves to the task again when reminded to do so.
11. Pupils take pride in being careful and thorough. During the inspection, attitudes to work were mostly good or very good. This was especially obvious when pupils were engrossed in practical activities. For example, their behaviour is often exemplary during music lessons. The pace, variety and clarity of tasks form a well-planned sequence that is challenging and interesting for the pupils. They pay attention well during a demonstration of computer skills and they work very well in small groups to make components for puppets that they have designed.
12. Behaviour is good at all times, including play times. All classes have their own class rules that have been established with the pupils playing an active part. These are prominently displayed in each classroom. Pupils work well together in lessons and, despite their difficulties in maintaining concentration, squabbles and disagreements are rare. On occasions, pupils become over-excited, but they respond quickly to teachers' requests, and high expectations of their behaviour exist throughout the school. During assemblies, behaviour is very good and pupils participate with genuine sincerity. There is a marked absence of oppressive behaviour, including bullying, racism and sexism. There have been no exclusions. Pupils use the well-equipped playground happily and adults obviously enjoy being with them. Pupils show a considerable ability to co-operate in games and they are friendly, considerate and helpful to visitors.
13. Relationships are good. Lunchtimes are pleasant occasions because pupils relate well to one another, although their social skills and their ability to express themselves verbally are more limited than usual for pupils of their age. During rainy lunchtimes, pupils play together happily in their classrooms and enjoy a variety of activities that are supervised well by the lunchtime assistants. They respect one another and this helps them to establish good relationships. Pupils are proud of their drawings, for

example, and it is heartening to see how they enjoy sharing books. The school develops pupils' understanding of taking responsibility for their own efforts through a reward system that culminates in the award of certificates for good work and for other achievements both at school and elsewhere. They carry out sensibly the duties they are given. These include acting as weekly monitors that are appointed to take the registers to the office, distribute fruit around the classrooms at morning break, and take out and bring in the play equipment at playtimes, and cloakroom monitors who keep these areas tidy.

14. Attendance remains close to the national average and punctuality is good. Registers are completed twice a day and meet legal requirements. Pupils are polite and attentive during registration and the time is sometimes used well to reinforce learning. For example, pupils work out the number present each day, what the date is and how to describe the weather.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory in the reception classes and good in Years 1 and 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In the reception classes, almost one third of the lessons were good or better. In Years 1 and 2, more than two thirds of the lessons seen were good or better, and almost one sixth of the lessons were very good or better. Some excellent teaching was observed in music. The quality of teaching in the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. There has been some disruption to the improvements in the provision for the children in the reception classes, who have been taught by temporary teachers due to long-term absence.
16. The school has engaged in a programme of initiatives to raise the quality of teaching in the last year. There has been a planned programme of professional development that has included demonstration lessons and visits to other schools. The headteacher and representatives of the local education authority have monitored teaching in the school, and the deputy headteacher and subject leaders monitor teachers' planning. Improvement has focused on increasing teachers' expectations of pupils, a brisker pace to lessons and clear learning objectives to set tasks for pupils that meet their different learning needs. These initiatives are raising the quality of teaching and, consequently, standards are improving in most subjects. During the inspection, good teaching was seen in almost all subjects.
17. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they continue to improve their understanding of the National Curriculum through compiling portfolios of pupils' work that are annotated with specific levels of attainment. They use the information they gain from regular assessments when planning what they will teach, and the organisation of teachers under the guidance of year-group leaders ensures that expertise is shared well with colleagues. Lessons are planned well and teachers are very clear about what they intend pupils to learn. This helps pupils to understand what they are expected to do in the lesson. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been implemented well and the teaching of basic skills is good. Consequently, pupils make good progress in English and mathematics.
18. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' efforts and behaviour, and their very good management of pupils results in happy lessons where pupils are interested and keen to do well. They remind pupils what is expected of them whenever their attention lapses or they begin to chatter unproductively. They do this in a very

pleasant and positive manner. For example, they reprimand pupils only as a last resort preferring to encourage them or draw attention to those who are working well, as an example to the rest of the class. A variety of teaching methods are used to help pupils learn, and teachers use resources well to make activities interesting. Learning support assistants are well trained and provide good support for both teachers and pupils. They understand clearly the purpose of the lesson and show a lot of understanding when working with pupils. For example, they gently reinforce the teacher's instructions and help pupils find ways to complete their tasks.

19. Children arrive at the school with low levels of personal and social skills. Their learning skills are undeveloped and this presents significantly difficult challenges for teachers. In particular, pupils have difficulty sustaining concentration for more than short periods and their pace of working is erratic. Teachers have developed their strategies well to overcome these problems. They insist that pupils listen attentively and they repeat instructions to ensure that they understand. They use a variety of teaching methods, such as class sessions and group work, and they provide lessons with good pace. However, the limited concentration span of most pupils requires even shorter and more specific tasks to get them to produce a sufficient amount of work during a lesson. For example, many pupils produce most of their work in the first ten minutes of a task, after which some lose concentration, although, noticeably, they rarely become disruptive. The different learning rates of these pupils means that they need a greater variety of difficulty in the tasks set than is usually the case. Teachers are developing their strategies well to provide tasks with different levels of difficulty. However, at present, there is insufficient account taken of what individual pupils already know, understand and can do, and of their individual targets, when planning tasks to move them on to the next stage of their learning, which limits how well they achieve.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. In the best lessons, teachers plan work according to the abilities of their pupils, addressing aspects identified within the pupils' individual education plans. However, teachers do not always plan sufficiently different activities for these pupils. Sometimes they are given the same work as other pupils in the class and the tasks are not broken down into sufficiently small steps to allow them to improve as well as they otherwise might. Learning support assistants make a significant impact on the learning of these pupils. They are well trained and employed effectively to assist pupils to concentrate and succeed in class. The quality of support for pupils with English as an additional language is good. The specialist support assistants work collaboratively with the school and parents. A strong feature of this support is preparing the pupils for a lesson by reading the literacy texts with them beforehand and explaining technical vocabulary to make it easier for them to develop their understanding of English in different subjects.
21. The school has provided many opportunities to encourage parents to become more involved in their children's education. Homework is sent home regularly and it is returned increasingly as parents become more familiar with the practice. For example, about three quarters of the pupils in Year 2 now complete and return their homework, whereas the completion rate is less in Year 1 when parents are less familiar. A homework record is kept and both pupils and parents are encouraged to make comments, such as whether the pupil enjoyed the work or not and how difficult they found it. This is having an important effect both on improving pupils' learning and involving parents.

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

22. The quality and range of curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils are satisfactory and meet the requirements for the Foundation Stage, the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There is a strong commitment within the school to continually improve the quality and range of learning experiences provided for its pupils. The curriculum is particularly good for music, and art and design. Good improvements have been made in the links that are established between different subjects of the curriculum. Some examples of this include the making of three-dimensional maps in design and technology to link with work in geography, and a puppet theme that linked art and design, design and technology and music. New technology is being used to good effect and the school is also enriching the learning experiences it provides by inviting into school theatre groups, storytellers, authors and dance groups. There are lunchtime music clubs for the pupils and an after-school book club. The whole curriculum is equally accessible to all pupils regardless of gender, ability and ethnicity.
23. The school has adopted the schemes of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for all subjects other than English, mathematics and religious education (which is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus). However, curriculum plans do not sufficiently support teachers in their planning by identifying the progressive way in which pupils learn. At the time of the last inspection, there was no scheme of work for English. Provision for English has now improved and, over the last year, the school has been concentrating on improving learning in English and mathematics, using the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy to guide planning and inform teaching methods. These methods are proving effective in raising standards, although insufficient emphasis is given to the importance of planning opportunities for speaking, listening and writing in subjects other than English. Music is a model of good practice within the school and provides good opportunities for the pupils to develop their language skills. It is also planned on the basis of what the pupils already know and what they need to learn next.
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual educational plans are recorded well and appropriate targets are set for these pupils. There is very good communication with parents and the provision for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is very good. The school works well with outside agencies, and the co-ordinator for special educational needs has introduced several new and effective initiatives to the school, such as emotional literacy and 'circle of friends' sessions that help pupils to socialise better and make friends easier. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice⁴ for special educational needs and is currently in the early stages of applying the principles of the new Code of Practice.
25. There is a suitable programme for personal, social and health education. This is an improvement since the last inspection. It is taught through lessons in 'citizenship', which underlines the important status it has within the school curriculum. The school is using the 'Getting it Right' programme for drugs education, which is appropriate for very young pupils. The governors have agreed a policy that sex education should be taught within citizenship sessions. There is a programme of themes for collective

⁴ On SEN 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.

worship each term that takes place daily when pupils either gather in the school hall or pause for a time of reflection and prayer in classrooms.

26. Links with the local community are good and there is a particularly strong link with the senior citizens. For example, grandparents of pupils at the school are invited to the harvest service and some of them retell their experiences to help the children in their history lessons. The local community police officer visits the school to help with the 'Getting it Right' programme. There are good links with the church. The pupils visit the church and the vicar leads assemblies at the school. Other visitors include the Salvation Army, the fire service, the school nurse and 'Guide Dogs for the Blind'. Links with partner institutions are very good. There is a strong link with the local pre-school playgroups and funding has been acquired for some joint projects. Portsmouth College has helped with a family literacy project, and links with the local junior school have been improved. There are regular meetings between headteachers and other staff of nearby infant schools.
27. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is very good. The interesting building and grounds have been thoughtfully enhanced in the last year. Parents and pupils know that the school places enormous value on less tangible but important aspects of school life. For example, imaginative, colourful, and joyous displays and painted murals contribute to the feeling of spirituality throughout the school. Pupils play an active part in this. For example, they plant bulbs in the grounds and enjoy the blossoms that result. The school's close relations with the church give meaning and relevance to much of the school's work, and the lighting of a candle in assembly helps pupils focus their thoughts. On their birthdays, pupils are given a special bear for the day and the school celebrates major Christian festivals as well as those of other faiths. The developing citizenship programme focuses on the importance of caring and supportive relationships and of celebrating beauty and creativity. This is reinforced across the curriculum, but especially in music, and art and design.
28. The school provides well for pupils' moral development and very well for their social development. Pupils are aware of the classes' codes of conduct and are therefore very clear about the consequences of breaking or following these codes. They understand clearly the system of rewards and sanctions. The few pupils who have difficulty behaving as expected are supported actively. This is done in co-operation with parents, who are offered support and advice by staff and through a parenting group. The moral development of pupils takes place as much as possible in partnership with parents and the success of this provision is evident in the very good attitudes apparent throughout the school. Pupils develop a clear idea of right and wrong because teachers give explanations for the behaviour they insist on. For example, pupils became a little over-excited in a physical education lesson and the teacher stopped the lesson to remind them of the importance of safety when using the hall. Pupils enjoy many opportunities to go on school trips accompanied by parents and grandparents, and this helps their social education.
29. The provision of cultural development is good. The contribution of music to the cultural life of the school is notable. The school has put on book fairs, international cultural days and Chinese New Year celebrations, and recently invited an African storyteller into the school. Pupils contribute to the Portsmouth infant schools' music festival. The artwork around the school provides those who work, learn and play in the school with an environment that is stimulating and attractive, and helps to give pupils high expectations of their own standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school has good procedures for the care of the pupils. The governing body and members of staff contribute to a caring school in which the personal needs of the pupils are met successfully. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and are given good support to help them make progress. They are fully included in the life of the school. The good standards of care noted in the last inspection report have been maintained.
31. There is a very positive atmosphere in the school and all members of staff know the pupils well. Pupils say that all members of staff are kind and supportive. They feel secure, knowing they can rely on their teachers, and they have a strong sense of being valued. The school strives to include all pupils in all it does and a bilingual assistant visits the school and helps to make sure that pupils with English as an additional language are helped effectively within their classroom.
32. Child-protection procedures are satisfactory. The school works closely with the relevant authorities and the educational social worker when there are any concerns. However, not all members of staff have had sufficient training in child-protection issues, although the school has plans to provide for this need.
33. Pupils are carefully supervised at playtimes and lunchtimes by a large number of adults. The midday meal supervisors know the pupils well and have received appropriate training. They are well aware of their responsibilities regarding health and safety and, through the school's 'red alert' scheme, all members of staff are aware of the pupils who need a little extra attention at any time. This informs them about incidents, such as bereavement, that may be troubling a pupil. There are members of staff trained in first aid and there are records of all significant incidents. Appropriate letters are sent home should any pupil have a mishap during the day.
34. There have been recent checks on the safety of portable electrical appliances. Fire extinguishers and physical education equipment are regularly inspected. The school caretaker regularly inspects the buildings and grounds, and the school management plan contains a plan for a governor and the premises manager to undertake regular, formal risk assessments. A professional inspection of low-level glass windows has been undertaken and the school is taking appropriate action to minimise any risk to pupils.
35. The school's arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress affect standards for the better. Their progress in literacy and numeracy is tracked from when they enter the school. Targets are agreed between the headteacher, year-group leaders and governors, and are used to guide curriculum planning. Teachers undertake assessments of pupils' attainment each half term and the results are used to review targets and guide future planning. A review of assessment procedures at the end of Year 1 has been identified in the school improvement plan. Results of the national tests are analysed carefully by the assessment co-ordinator and this has shown how the pupils' limited language skills affect their attainment in mathematics. Assessment in subjects other than English and maths is in an early stage of development, except in music, where the assessment arrangements are very good. The assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well focused and clear and achievable targets for improvement are set. The school is aware of the difference in attainment between boys and girls and has begun to consider reasons to explain why boys should be achieving less well and what they can do to improve their attainment.

36. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal, social and emotional development are good. This is fostered by a developing citizenship policy. This includes 'circle time' sessions, which encourage pupils in each class to discuss and share their feelings about a wide range of issues in a supportive and permissive atmosphere. Pupils' personal development is also encouraged in assemblies and science lessons that deal with health and physical development. Class and school rules are displayed in classrooms and remind pupils to be aware of the effects of their actions, and the ways in which they can improve their behaviour. Any serious behaviour incidents, should they occur, are noted by the headteacher.
37. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school monitors attendance well and works closely with the educational welfare officer when necessary. Pupils and their families are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and the school is usually informed about the reasons for absences. The school follows up any unexplained absences and a computer program allows the school to analyse attendance and punctuality with certificates given to those pupils with exemplary attendance records.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. Parents have very positive views of the school. Information from the parents' questionnaires and the comments made at the parents' meeting held before the inspection show that they have a high regard for the work of the school. Parents report that the school works closely with them and keeps them well informed. They feel that there has been a considerable improvement in the accessibility of the school staff and that this is linked to the arrival of the present headteacher. All parents who returned the questionnaire feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems and all parents spoken to during the inspection said that teachers are very willing to listen to their concerns. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
39. Information for parents is very good. The school makes great efforts to involve parents and they are offered more information than is usual in infant schools. At the end of the year, parents discuss helpful reports on their children's academic progress. These reports are detailed and evaluative, and include targets for the future. Parents are asked to add their own comments on a reply slip. In addition, parents are given a brief but informative mid-year progress report that indicates how their children are doing and sets realistic targets for them in English and mathematics. Parents are given plenty of information on what their children will be learning. This is done through letters, noticeboards and regular meetings with teachers. In addition, the school invites parents to a meeting at the start of each half term to discuss what will be taught, although it is disappointing that few attend. About a dozen parents have taken part in a family learning weekend at the school, provided by Portsmouth College.
40. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. Parents support their children's efforts by attending special events such as annual performances. Attendance at meetings with teachers to discuss children's progress is very good. A reasonable number of parents attend class assemblies and parents are always invited, and often come, when their children are awarded special certificates.

41. There is a parents' association that is well supported by staff and parents, and which runs a wide range of activities. It raises useful funds for the school that have helped to add colour and beauty to the environment by funding redecoration projects. Several parents come into school to help pupils read or to help prepare materials. The school regularly asks parents to complete their own questionnaire, but response levels have been disappointing.
42. Parents are given opportunities to help their children's learning at home, such as hearing them read and working with them on mathematics games. They are encouraged to record their comments in the homework diaries. Parents are fully involved in the regular reviews of the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher provides very strong and inspirational leadership, with a very clear direction for school development. This focuses on providing high-quality care, with equal opportunities for all its pupils, including the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and raising standards throughout the school. She is supported by the deputy headteacher in ensuring that all staff work effectively as an efficient team and share a strong commitment to succeed. Since the appointment of the headteacher last year, the school has made rapid improvements in all aspects of its work.
44. The headteacher has reorganised the management structure of the school and this is now effective in managing school improvement. Year group leaders plan the curriculum well with colleagues to provide support and ensure consistency in the teaching provided for the classes in each year. Subject leaders have clearly defined roles and they have received good support from the local education authority. The improved quality of their leadership, particularly in English, mathematics and science, is having a significant effect on raising standards. They are fully involved in preparing policies and schemes of work and are developing a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects by analysing pupils' work throughout the school. They manage budgets for their subjects and ensure that resources are suitable. The school's co-ordinator for special educational needs is also the co-ordinator for English as an additional language. She works effectively with outside agencies and ensures that the support offered through the ethnic-minority achievement grant is well co-ordinated.
45. The chair of governors visits the school regularly and works effectively in partnership with the headteacher, taking an active interest in school activities. She is very well informed and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governors are supportive of the school and, since the appointment of the headteacher, are developing their roles well. They have established sub-committees with clear terms of reference to help them discharge their duties more effectively. Nominated governors have been appointed to curriculum areas and visits to the school are organised, while subject leaders give presentations at governors' meetings on various aspects of the curriculum. This helps governors develop their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision. Statutory requirements are fully met.
46. The school records its planned improvement extensively in three documents. The school development and maintenance plan includes curriculum action plans, the

school improvement plan focuses on raising standards and the school management plan identifies the actions to be undertaken by senior staff and governors. Together, these documents provide a focus for improving all aspects of the school's provision. These are good working documents that contain appropriate details on costs, time scales and success criteria to judge the effectiveness of each initiative.

47. The school monitors and evaluates its performance well. The headteacher monitors teaching, and targets for improvement are identified for individual teachers. This is linked to the school's policy for performance management where all support staff and teachers, including the headteacher, have targets for improvement. The results of the national tests are analysed and this has shown in mathematics, for example, that pupils have language difficulties in using terms such as 'longer' and 'shorter'. Pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy is tracked carefully as they move through the school and targets are set from the first half term in the reception class.
48. Financial planning is good and the strategic use of all the school's resources, including finances, personnel and accommodation, is very good. The school's budget is closely linked to the agreed school development plans, and the governors' finance committee meets each half term to monitor the school's spending. Each governor receives a budget statement that is amended to make it easily accessible to all governors. Day-to-day finances are managed well by the administration officer and the assistant administration officer, and the school applies the principles of best value well. Specific grants are spent appropriately. The school applies for many grants, which have allowed it to improve the playground markings and the play equipment for the children in the reception classes. The school has been awarded a family learning development grant. This will allow three early-years' assistants and the music subject leader to visit local playgroups weekly and for children in the playgroups to visit the school to use the outside play equipment in the summer term. Given the children's low attainment and poor learning skills when they start at the school, this is an important development.
49. There are a good number of staff who are suitably qualified. In addition to class teachers, there are additional teachers for music and special educational needs. The school also benefits from a good number of learning support assistants who support the pupils well in every class. There is a helpful induction booklet for teachers who are new to the school and supply teachers that gives helpful information on school policies and routines. All members of staff receive a planned programme of professional development.
50. The school's accommodation is good and of an interesting design, but there are limitations. The corridors are dark and narrow, classrooms are cramped and the design means that many lessons are disrupted by the noise emanating from adjacent classrooms. The school has created a stimulating environment by using all available space, including alcoves and corridors, to establish many attractive displays. The school has been redecorated with designs placed at the pupils' eye level and the many professional murals are stimulating and fun. There are plans currently being implemented to build walls between the classrooms to minimise the disruption to pupils, who have difficulty maintaining concentration at the best of times. The outside play area has been developed by repainting the playground with designs that stimulate pupils' play ideas. The adventure play space and seating areas further enhance pupils' play experience.
51. Resources for learning are good for English, mathematics, science, art and design, and information and communication technology, and in the Foundation Stage. They

are very good for music and include a very well-equipped music room. Resources are satisfactory for all other subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to continue to improve standards in English, mathematics and science, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) further improve pupils' literacy skills by;
 - (a) planning more opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills; (paragraphs 23, 53, 55-56, 65, 91)
 - (b) increasing the range of opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum; (paragraphs 7, 23, 58, 67-68, 91, 104)
(The school has identified this as an area for development in the current school improvement plan.)

- (2) continue to develop teachers' assessment of pupils' learning in lessons and use this assessment more carefully to set tasks that more closely match the learning needs of individual pupils; (paragraphs 19, 69, 77, 90)
(The school has identified this as an area for development in the current school development plan.)

- (3) develop schemes of work to identify more clearly the progressive structure of the National Curriculum and to assist teachers in planning tasks that take full account of what individual pupils have already learned and need to learn next. (paragraph 23)
(The school has identified this as an area for development in the current school management plan.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	4	28	27	0	0	0
Percentage	5	6	45	44	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	195
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	41

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	101

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	39	28	67

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	24	34
	Girls	23	25	25
	Total	48	49	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (83)	73 (70)	88 (91)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	34	29
	Girls	24	25	25
	Total	47	59	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (79)	88 (83)	81 (88)
	National	85 (84)	98 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	134
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.8
Average class size	21.7

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	208

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	528,198
Total expenditure	540,340
Expenditure per pupil	2,649
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,298
Balance carried forward to next year	20,156

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	195
Number of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	41	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	32	59	3	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	68	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	54	8	0	3
The teaching is good.	46	49	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	57	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	32	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	43	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	62	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	49	49	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	54	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	43	11	5	22

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

53. The school's assessments of children when they start school show that standards of attainment in all areas of learning are well below average. In particular, children have poorly developed speaking, listening and social skills. Overall, the standards of attainment for boys on entry are below those of girls. By the time the children enter Year 1, few attain the Early Learning Goals and none attain them in all areas of learning.
54. There have been some improvements in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection, particularly the use made of new play equipment and the outdoor facilities, improved opportunities for children to work independently and extra reading books. The school has employed more assistants in all three classes and this means that children are appropriately supported in small groups. There are suitable links between school and pre-school providers and a good exchange of information between home and school which supports learning. The recently appointed early-years' leader provides good co-ordination between the three classes. Particular challenges result from long-term absence and the distance between the classroom used by the youngest children and the main school. The consistency and quality of teaching varies between classes due to long-term absence and is satisfactory overall.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. Children make good progress in developing their personal and social skills and many are on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. They gain in confidence and learn to establish good relationships with adults and other children in lessons and during play. They learn how to sit quietly, pay attention and concentrate for longer periods of time and many try to contribute in class discussions. Children show good independence when they register themselves in the morning and are able to select and plan activities well. Almost all can work co-operatively in a group when assisted by an adult, but some children are reluctant to take part in conversations and do not start speaking unless encouraged to do so by an adult. For example, after completing their morning handwriting task, children sit on the carpet with a book waiting for the dinner register. Very few children engage in conversation with their peers or adults, preferring to sit still, holding the book unopened in their laps. Children are happy to share toys and equipment with others. Small groups take it in turns to be the cashier in the 'garden centre' and work together doing puzzles or in the sand and water areas. Children show a growing confidence in dressing themselves and almost all behave well throughout the day. They are beginning to show an understanding of what is right and wrong and know the school rules. Teachers use good visual clues to remind them of social targets. For example, a glove on a stick reminds them to put up their hand and they respond well to this instruction. They treat the school environment with respect, tidying away equipment properly, showing an interest in the plants and bulbs growing in the school garden and examining objects on display in the science area.

Communication, language and literacy

56. Almost all children enjoy listening to stories and discussions. Teachers encourage children to speak about their experiences and they show that they value children's contributions. Children are much less confident when speaking, preferring to answer adults' questions using one-word answers or pointing and using gestures rather than speaking. This is particularly true if the questions require children to express an idea or a feeling. For example, when asked what they did in the 'garden centre' none of the children answer. They are only prepared to answer 'Yes' or 'No' when the helper asks, "Did the telephone ring?" On another occasion when a child is drawing a horse, she will only answer very direct questions. 'What colour is your horse?' is answered with "Black". Another child simply points to the office when asked why he is wearing a 'special helper' band. By the time they leave the reception class, few children attain the Early Learning Goals for speaking and listening. The school provides good opportunities for speaking and listening, both during class sessions and through projects such as the 'waves' initiative that seeks to improve pupils' writing skills. However, weaknesses remain in basic expressive language skills such as clear speech, using language to socialise and to express their ideas and feelings.
57. Almost all children are good at identifying initial letter sounds because of very good teaching. The 'jolly phonics' system adopted in the Foundation Stage has proved a very good support for teachers' planning. The children clearly enjoy the direct teaching of letter sounds and make good progress in learning and using new sounds in reading. Children clearly enjoy literacy sessions and show enthusiasm when sharing 'big books' and sound work. They handle books well, pointing out letters by their name and sound and making up their own story to the book they are reading. Children are encouraged to take a library book home alongside their reading book and key words, and good use is made of the home-school reading record. This positive start means that many children make good progress and by the time they start Year 1 they are reading familiar and common words and simple sentences independently. However, most children do not attain the Early Learning Goals in reading by the time they start Year 1.
58. Only a small minority of children are sufficiently confident to write using marks, spaces or letters and few write their first name with recognisable letters when they start school. Effective teaching means that, during the year, children make good progress in writing their name and developing a recognisable script. However, by the time they leave the reception class standards of attainment in writing remain below national expectations. Teachers provide various opportunities for children to practise writing during the day, but only a few use their knowledge of letter sounds to write simple words and few children are confident enough to attempt writing independently.

Mathematical development

59. The majority of children do not achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas of mathematics by the end of the reception year, although many make good progress in their understanding of number. Children find the number aspect of mathematics easier because it involves fewer communication skills. Children experience a wide range of practical activities, with many opportunities to chant, sing rhymes, count and record numbers, and measure in everyday situations. There is a good emphasis on the use of correct mathematical vocabulary and the consolidation of pupils' skills. Children chant numbers to 20 and recognise numbers up to nine. Almost all children make simple sets up to five and some are able to find one more or less than numbers to five. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and teachers use stories well to

explain basic concepts of number. For example, during a lesson on addition the teacher introduces simple addition and subtraction problems through a story about dragons. The children clearly enjoy this activity, but only a small minority of higher attaining children are beginning to relate addition to combining two groups of objects and very few have sufficient experience to develop any real understanding of subtraction. Children use maths in everyday situations. They use money in the 'garden centre', and practical experiences, such as sand and water play, provide useful experience of capacity and volume.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. By the time they enter Year 1, children's overall attainment in knowledge and understanding remains below national expectations, particularly in areas such as finding out about the past, other places, people's beliefs, and looking closely at differences, similarities and change. These activities require children to become involved in more challenging speaking and listening activities and their poor communication skills prevent many from contributing fully to discussions. They are unable to ask questions about why things happen and why they work, and tend to lose concentration very quickly. Many children achieve the Early Learning Goals in building and constructing objects, selecting tools and using the computer. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and well-structured sessions ensure that all aspects of this area are covered suitably. Children are encouraged to observe, explore and describe the world around them through well-planned topics, such as a visit to the local church to watch a baptism, and having a fireman visit the school. Teachers provide a wide range of interesting and different challenges throughout the week and this encourages the children to be alert and eager to find out something new. Good adult support in these sessions ensures that children have a focused science and creative activity each week, as well as the opportunity to develop independent skills by making personal choices of activities that interest them.

Creative development

61. Children make sound gains in their learning of creative skills and most are on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, with some excellent teaching seen in music. Children have many opportunities to respond creatively and express their feelings in a variety of ways. Teachers plan most activities into a 'Plan, Do and Review' session. This provides at least one focused creative session per week. Teachers encourage children to widen their creative ideas through adult support during role-play in the 'garden centre'. This support extends children's experiences, confidence and vocabulary. They respond and represent their ideas through painting, model making, constructing with kits and performing to parents. They make considered choices when making collages of their favourite nursery rhymes, use paint to record the fireman's visit and make printed patterns using sponges. Musical instruments are available in the classes for children to create their own music and each class has a weekly opportunity to work with an experienced and imaginative music teacher. The children clearly enjoy singing, playing the instruments and taking part in the practical musical activities. At the same time, the teacher's obvious skills enable the lesson to sparkle and have an element of spontaneity that has a very positive effective on pupils' creative development. Children are able to sing in high and low voices along with 'Big and Little Ted'. They enjoy making different sounds to add layers to the rhyme 'Billy is Blowing his Trumpet'. They are able to make their voices get higher as the beanstalk grows and can follow Little Ted's voice as he conducts the xylophones higher in pitch. Children behave exceptionally well during these music lessons.

Physical development

62. The three main playgroups that children attend before starting school have no outside play area and children have only limited structured opportunities to develop their physical skills before starting school. The school has obtained a grant for a project that will allow these children to visit the school and use the outdoor play area in the summer before they start school. Many show particular confidence and skill during physical education and outdoor play activities and make good progress in these areas, and many are on line to attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1. The outdoor physical environment for the children is very good. The attractive planted and paved areas and the adventure playground provide very good opportunities for children to develop their co-ordination, confidence and skills. Two classes have regular access to these areas, but the location of the third classroom, which is used by the youngest children, restricts their access to these play areas. Children engage in a variety of interesting activities outside, taking turns and sharing the wheeled toys. They ride carefully, trying hard not to collide. Members of staff provide opportunities for children to balance on tyres and use the newly painted markings for structured games. The school hall is used regularly for physical education activities. Children behave well in the hall, showing very good awareness of safety rules, and are eager to practise throwing beanbags and move to taped music for dance. They quickly respond to the teacher's request to stop and listen and they improve their skills by watching others demonstrate and then practising themselves. Most children make satisfactory progress in the development of manipulative skills. They handle crayons, brushes and scissors safely and carefully, and good teaching and daily practice mean that almost all can hold a pencil correctly.

ENGLISH

63. Standards in English are below average, which is similar to the finding of the last inspection although inspection evidence indicates that standards are improving. Pupils make good progress in all aspects of English and many exceed national expectations, especially in reading. There are, however, a significant number of lower attaining pupils, many of whom have special educational needs, and this group of pupils does not attain the nationally expected level despite making good progress. Girls do better than boys in English. The school is aware of this and has begun to review the English curriculum to see whether it can be modified to increase the interest for boys. For example, the content of reading books, including the 'big books', is being reviewed.
64. Pupils begin Year 1 with a lack of confidence in speaking, they have only a limited spoken vocabulary and their listening skills are underdeveloped. Teachers provide many good activities that meet the needs of pupils. For example, a teacher in Year 1 uses musical instruments to encourage pupils to focus their listening and improve their ability to remember sequences of sounds they had heard. By the time they reach Year 2, the pupils' ability to listen attentively for longer periods improves, but their concentration span is still comparatively short. The pupils are well behaved and appear to be listening, but teachers have to work very hard to focus their concentration and improve their understanding. In Year 2, for example, a teacher asked for examples of words to begin questions, such as 'Who?' or 'What?' Two of the responses she had from the children were 'chimney' and 'now'.

65. By the end of Year 2, the higher attaining pupils begin to extend their spoken vocabulary, but the speaking skills of many in this year group are still limited. For example, many pupils give only one-word answers to questions and find it difficult to think of new words to describe characters in stories or feelings. Teachers include activities aimed at extending pupils' verbal skills and, in one lesson, pupils took turns to sit in the 'hot seat' representing the character of the wolf in a story and other pupils asked the wolf questions. Pupils found both questioning and answering difficult. The inability of pupils to talk freely about their ideas, knowledge and feelings is inhibiting progress across the curriculum. In a very good music lesson, the teacher worked very skilfully and sensitively to encourage pupils to identify the emotions expressed in the music, but they found it very difficult to match words with feelings. In maths lessons it is apparent that language skills often impede progress rather than mathematical ability. Some good opportunities are offered to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. For example, they are encouraged to work collaboratively in mathematics activities and a Year 1 class delivered a class assembly admirably to the whole school and parents during the inspection. Nevertheless, there are insufficient planned opportunities for the development of speaking and listening in all areas of the curriculum.
66. Although standards in reading are below average, by the time pupils are seven years of age, the majority makes good progress in reading and some make very good progress. For example, the proportion of pupils who attained the higher Level 3 in the national tests in 2001 was well above the average for similar schools. By the time they leave the school, many pupils read fluently from books suitable for their age. They know how to find information from non-fiction books and can use dictionaries and other alphabetical lists. These higher attaining pupils express opinions about characters and events in stories. However, there are a significant number of pupils who find reading difficult. These pupils often use picture clues or other contextual clues to support their limited phonic skills. Several strategies are used to help these pupils. For example, literacy lessons begin with a shared reading session when the whole class study from a 'big book', and in one lesson they tried to find words that looked different but sounded the same or rhymed. Some pupils are taken out of lessons for additional literacy support and some, who have particular difficulties with letter sounds, have daily 'precision teaching' sessions. All pupils have individual reading books and there is a good choice from which to choose. Pupils choose books for themselves, but teachers do not monitor their choices closely enough.
67. The standards attained by most pupils meet national expectations in writing at the end of Year 2. However, a significant proportion of pupils does not attain standards that meet national expectations and, although standards are improving, inspection evidence confirms that they are below average, overall. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 punctuate sentences correctly and use speech marks. They write a set of clear instructions and retell a traditional story such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. However, even these pupils find it difficult to write a sequence of sentences and their written vocabulary is limited. Many pupils in Year 2 find writing independently very difficult. This was observed in one lesson when, after sharing ideas as a group, they were asked to write some questions to ask 'the wolf', but many pupils still needed support to write simple sentences. Whilst some pupils are able to attempt a short creative poem, any form of extended writing presents an enormous challenge. For example, a group of comparatively more able pupils in the school needed considerable support to write a short conversation between two characters. Pupils' creative and independent writing skills are restricted by their lack of ideas and imagination, but there are also insufficient opportunities to use exciting or interesting experiences in other subjects, such as the Fire of London in history, as a stimulus for writing.

68. Daily handwriting practice is raising standards of both handwriting and the general presentation of pupils' work, and there are good opportunities to develop grammar, spelling and punctuation with a word processor. However, pupils' writing in their 'general studies' books is not good enough. The unlined pages are mostly filled with untidy writing or untidy captions to drawings and diagrams. An increased emphasis on spelling, including spelling homework, is improving spelling competence, which is generally weak throughout the school
69. The quality of teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have implemented the National Literacy Strategy effectively. Their knowledge of the subject is good and they consistently use accurate vocabulary; as when a teacher wrote some notes on the board and reminded her pupils she was writing in phrases not sentences. The management of pupils is very good and this goes some way to minimise the negative effects of their poor concentration skills. Teachers' planning is good and they establish clear learning objectives that they share with the pupils. Teachers adapt tasks for different pupils and give extra support where necessary. However, learning objectives tend to be written for the whole class and do not focus sufficiently on what groups of pupils and individuals already know, understand and can do, and what they need to learn next. There are good examples of day-to-day assessment, such as the group assessment sheets for reading.
70. Teaching methods are generally good, but the teaching style used is not always appropriate for the pupils. For example, some teachers sometimes speak too quickly or do not give sufficient emphasis to important learning points. More time is devoted to English than any other subject on the curriculum, but there is little time planned for pupils to enjoy listening to stories and poems. Sometimes, they are expected to listen to their teacher for too long and, although they do not misbehave, this challenges their limited ability to maintain concentration.

MATHEMATICS

71. The school's results in the national tests in 2001 were below the national average but above the average for similar schools. This is similar to the test results at the time of the last inspection. Inspection evidence confirms these standards. However, these results represent good achievement as the pupils enter the school with low attainment and few attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Furthermore, almost nine out of ten pupils attained the nationally expected Level 2 and almost one in three pupils attained the higher Level 3, which is close to the national average and well above the average of similar schools. This good achievement is the result of good teaching and the careful way the school tracks pupils' progress through the school. The school sets pupils in Years 1 and 2 for mathematics, with the higher attaining pupils taught in a separate class and this is helping these pupils to achieve high standards. Other pupils are taught in two parallel classes with an equal spread of ability in each class.
72. Girls do better than boys. This appears to be because some boys develop effective learning skills, such as the ability to maintain concentration, more slowly. Teachers are aware of this and combine boys and girls in groups for tasks and activities. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make progress at different rates. Some make only satisfactory progress from their low attainment when they start school, most make good progress and many pupils make very good progress.

73. Higher attaining pupils make very good progress. They develop a quick mental recall of number facts to 20 and most of these pupils learn many multiplication and division facts. They have a good understanding of place value because they know clearly that the number system operates with groups of ten and they recognise odd and even numbers without difficulty. They develop their understanding of multiplication as multiple addition, and division as multiple subtraction, through good and frequent practice.
74. Lower attaining pupils have more difficulty in developing their numeracy skills. They have a poor understanding of the number system and some are not able to add and subtract to ten accurately when using materials to aid their counting. They have little understanding of place value and this limits their attainment. Most pupils are somewhere between these two extremes and are progressing suitably to attain the standards expected of pupils of their age by the end of the year. They understand place value, recognise odd and even numbers and have a suitable mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to ten.
75. Pupils develop their understanding of shape and measurement, with similarly different rates of progress. Nevertheless, most pupils recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes such as circles, squares and triangles, and many are familiar with some of their basic properties. Pupils are also familiar with some common three-dimensional shapes and they create some of these shapes, such as cubes, from 'nets'. They measure in both standard and non-standard measures. For example, younger pupils measure objects using their own hand, whilst older pupils estimate before measuring in centimetres.
76. This wide range in attainment and the different rates of learning demonstrate the challenges that teachers face in ensuring that pupils learn effectively. Indeed, they do well to ensure that so many pupils attain as well as they do and it is not surprising that a few do not meet national expectations, considering their attainment when they start school. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and teachers teach the basic skills effectively. Pupils' progress is tracked in each aspect of mathematics as they move through the school and individual targets are set. These targets are printed and stuck inside the front of pupils' books, immediately available for pupils, teachers and learning support assistants. These might be, for example, 'to know number bonds to ten' or 'say numbers that are one more and one less'. These procedures are helping to improve pupils' learning. Good opportunities are provided in information and communication technology to develop numeracy skills when pupils create and interpret graphs on the computer.
77. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are purposeful activities with a clear direction. Teachers plan carefully, noting the learning intention for the lesson and sharing it clearly with the pupils. They give clear explanations and instructions, so that pupils understand clearly what they are doing and why. Teachers have developed very good relationships in their classes and this allows them to manage the pupils well and with apparent ease. They insist on high standards of behaviour and pupils respond co-operatively. Teachers maintain the generally suitable pace to the lesson recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy and provide different levels of support for pupils, depending on their need. However, some pupils do not learn as well as they might because they have poor learning skills. In particular, they have difficulty maintaining concentration on a task for more than short periods. For these pupils, lessons are less successful when the pace is not brisk enough to accommodate their short concentration span, after which the amount they produce

becomes less. In some lessons, the tasks set are insufficiently different to fully meet the needs of all the pupils. Good improvements have been secured in the subject in the last year. However, the use of daily assessment to set tasks that take full account of what pupils have or have not already learned effectively and what they need to learn next has not been developed fully to help pupils progress as well as they can.

SCIENCE

78. Currently, most pupils in Year 2 are meeting national expectations, which is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Standards are improving and this can be attributed to better teaching. More-structured planning and assessment procedures have improved teachers' confidence and provide a clearer focus for planning lessons and evaluating pupils' work. Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress and almost all record and consider evidence when carrying out investigations.
79. In Year 1, pupils have a wide range of opportunities to study the natural world. They learn to name parts of the body and match animals to their young. They observe plants and trees grow and they investigate shiny and light objects. Higher attaining pupils explain the reflection of the moon and label a diagram of a plant with all its parts, explaining that, 'It needs a drink to help the stem stay up'. During a lesson on magnetism, almost all pupils predicted which material would be attracted to the magnet. Most pupils think all metal is attracted to magnets, but a few higher attaining pupils offer explanations for their findings, such as 'It's only the things with iron in which are attracted'. In Year 2, pupils cover a variety of topics. They classify living and non-living things and make comparisons when observing how things grow and change, noting, for example, "This one's not grown. It has not been watered and the sand is very dry". Higher attaining pupils carry out simple, fair tests using toy cars. They explain how some forces work and draw conclusions, such as, "The more trays you put up, the further it will go", or, "It's a fair test because we used the same car".
80. Science contributes appropriately to other subjects. Pupils use their homework surveys about favourite foods to create a chart that is then fed into the computer. The results of the survey are discussed in class lessons and this contributes to the pupils' speaking and listening skills, which are limited. Almost half the pupils find it challenging to explain their findings in words without visual support
81. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers have good class control and plan lessons carefully. The interesting activities are relevant and well balanced with a clear focus and structure. Consequently, pupils respond well to lessons. They behave very well throughout the lesson, taking turns, and they sustain interest in the task. Many lack the confidence to explain their findings by speaking aloud in the group and are generally passive during discussion. After much persuasion, one child says about a bar chart, "It will show us our favourite" (sic). Lessons involve the direct teaching of skills, practical activities and opportunities to record and explain their findings. Marking in books is good and provides further opportunities for pupils to clarify their understanding as they make written replies to the teachers' questions that are written in their books. The new scheme of work and improved assessment procedures have helped teachers to plan more effectively and make more secure teacher assessments, which is helping pupils to make better progress.

ART AND DESIGN

82. It was only possible to see one art lesson during the inspection. However, evidence from a scrutiny of displays, pupils' sketch books and art portfolio shows that art is a strength of the school. Pupils' standards in art are good throughout the school and exceed national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when pupils' attainment and progress were judged to be satisfactory. This improvement has been achieved by good skills training in art for teachers and raising the profile of displays throughout the school. Importantly, curriculum planning has been improved to ensure that skills are taught in a systematic way. There are improved resources to teach a wider range of skills, such as weaving and printing, and many opportunities are now given for pupils to appreciate the work of artists; for example, the pleasing sea shore and jungle environments created by a local artist, the celebration of different types of art during the school's 'Cultural Week', and the response to celebrations, such as Chinese New Year.
83. Pupils' artwork includes sketching, observational drawing, printing, weaving and collages. Some examples of three-dimensional work exist, such as clay models and animal masks. In Year 1, pupils mix colours accurately, using different brushes and tints to achieve a variety of well-executed test palettes. They use these newly acquired skills to good effect when producing paintings of houses. During a weaving lesson in Year 1, pupils showed good enthusiasm and concentrated well as they learned how to create patterns using fabric, paper and wool. All pupils are able to explain the task and a few attempt to use the correct vocabulary. Many children are eager to try to use the correct words 'warp' and 'weft' to explain the task. For example, one pupil says he is 'wefting (sic) the fabric through the warp'. In Year 2, pupils show increasing accuracy in observing natural objectives and use shade and tone well. They produce very effective winter scenes in silhouette, using charcoal and pastels. Very good links are made between art and other subjects. For example, pupils create pictures inspired by Mondrian on the computer, and in geography they create tissue maps of the fictional Isle of Struay. They make a large fruit and vegetable monster using wax crayon based on author Nick Sharratt's book in response to work carried out in science and they use their skills to mix colour well when painting posters of the characters in the 'Little Red Riding Hood' story.
84. Based on the teaching observed, teachers' planning for lessons and the good quality of work seen, the quality of teaching is judged to be good. Lessons are well organised with a clear purpose, and the good use of learning support assistants during activities ensures that the teachers can move around the class during the lesson, offering support or additional challenge as required. Praise is used well to encourage pupils, and their achievements are celebrated at the end of the lesson. Pupils clearly enjoy art and are proud of their results. They talk with enthusiasm about their work. They remember different techniques and explain enthusiastically what they have done. They work purposefully and collaboratively and tidy away equipment sensibly.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. Only one lesson was observed. However, from a scrutiny of past work and displays, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils, evidence indicates that standards meet national expectations. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and teaching is no longer variable between classes. The school has

- improved its medium-term planning and this has led to increased opportunities for pupils to develop their designing and making skills.
86. In Year 1, pupils design and make fruit salads. They are able to evaluate their finished products and make simple suggestions for how they might improve them. They visit the local park and observe how equipment fits together. Most pupils recognise the basic features of familiar play equipment and some explain their findings to an adult. In Year 2, pupils have the opportunity to design and make vehicles. They evaluate their models and photographs in their design folder, showing clearly that they are very proud of their final efforts. Pupils also draw and label plans for making puppets. They become familiar with a wide range of different puppets and are able to transfer their ideas appropriately into actual models. In a Year 2 lesson, all pupils are attentive as they listen to the teacher's clear instructions for decorating the puppets' heads. All pupils, including those with special needs, are fully involved and produce satisfactory results. Pupils are clearly pleased with their final painted puppet heads, which have imaginative expressions and hair. Almost half the group finds it difficult to explain what they have done or how this relates to their plan. This is because they lack the essential speaking and listening skills to communicate their ideas effectively. Some links are made between design and technology and other subjects. For example, work in Year 2 was inspired by a puppet show in school, work in Year 1 is related to a study of the local area in geography, and their favourite play equipment is recorded on the computer.
87. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and occasionally very good. Teachers have a sound understanding of the subject and plan an interesting and broad range of activities. Consequently, pupils clearly enjoy the lessons and respond well, trying very hard and becoming very involved. Good use is made of additional learning support assistants to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported and suitable resources are organised. Pupils are effectively encouraged to show care when using scissors, even when the tools they are using do not work easily. Design and technology vocabulary and skills are reinforced effectively through displays, such as the puppet display in Year 2 and an interactive display on handbag fastenings. Good use is made of the local 'scrap store' for suitable materials, and parents contribute by loaning artefacts such as puppets for display. The introduction of more-specific planning ensures that pupils are taught skills in a systematic way and this is raising standards.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

88. Standards of attainment meet national expectations in both geography and history and have been maintained since the last inspection.
89. Pupils develop a sense of chronology by comparing modern items in the home with those from the past. They learn about everyday lives of famous people and events in the past such as Florence Nightingale and the Fire of London. In geography they look at local street maps to find where they live and plan a route to school. Older pupils study their own local environment in Portsmouth and compare this with the fictional Isle of Struay, inspired by a Katie Morag story. Good multicultural opportunities are provided through the intercultural week, where each class learns about the activities and customs of various countries around the world.
90. Pupils' attitudes in the lessons observed are variable and dependent on the quality of teaching. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have positive attitudes to both geography and

history. They enjoy stories about famous people in the past and practical activities to support their learning that include outside visits and role-play. Although most pupils behave well, they lack confidence and show only limited geographical or historical vocabulary when answering questions. When lessons are not well matched to pupils' abilities or are not actively involved, pupils quickly lose interest.

91. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and has improved since the last inspection, when some unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers manage their pupils well and use resources effectively. However, work is not always planned effectively to challenge and stimulate all pupils. New subject leaders have been appointed in the last year and they have identified the need to review and revise these schemes at the end of the year to provide a systematic development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Some useful cross-curricular links have been established with subjects such as information and communication technology to find information and use a painting program to produce pictures of the Fire of London.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

92. Standards of attainment meet national expectations and have improved significantly in the last year, after the subject was declared a cause for concern by the local education authority. This is due to the appointment of a new, enthusiastic subject leader who, supported by the headteacher, has produced a well-structured scheme of work. The school has invested in good, modern computers to support pupils' learning. This gives good opportunities for pupils to use computers and develop their skills. Resources are now good and make a positive impact on the rising standards of attainment throughout the school.
93. By the age of seven, many pupils produce their own simple sentences and stories. Higher attaining pupils develop more-advanced word-processing skills and editing techniques. Most pupils use texture and pattern tools to create pictures using geometric shapes in the style of Picasso and Mondrian. Many older pupils can control devices such as a programmable toy by giving it instructions to move chosen distances. When necessary, pupils are given good support in using programmable toys by adults, including parent helpers. In Year 2, pupils use the Internet to find information on topics such as cats. Literacy skills are used effectively in word-processing stories, such as 'Barnaby went to the Beach', where pupils have the opportunity to develop their use of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Numeracy skills are developed well through the construction and interpretation of graphs of pupils' favourite colours and pets. Further skills are developed through using mathematical games and arranging geometric shapes on the computer to make patterns.
94. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved significantly through professional training and they now confidently provide pupils with a wide range of experiences, making good use of the improved resources. Each classroom has a designated computer area where the quality of the displays demonstrates the teachers' high expectations, which have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes. Those pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are supported well by learning support assistants and parents. Good teaching is characterised by secure subject knowledge, well-planned activities and challenging tasks. Consequently, pupils develop good attitudes to learning and thoroughly enjoy the opportunities to use computers in classrooms and the corridor.

Pupils work well together in pairs and can be trusted to work sensibly when working independently on various tasks.

95. Good support has been received from the local education authority, and regular targets have been set in the school improvement plan that show a clear focus on raising standards. Useful assessment procedures are in place, including a tracking document to record pupils' achievements and progress.

MUSIC

96. Music is a strength of the school. Throughout their time in school pupils make very good progress, so that, by the time they leave, their musical skills, knowledge and understanding are above national expectations. The high standards reported in the last inspection have been maintained. The school emphasises the importance of music by the inclusion of part-time specialist music teacher on the school staff and allocating of a room specifically for music that contains an excellent stock of musical instruments.
97. Pupils learn about the families of instruments, how they are played and how to recognise them. They explore the sounds of instruments and use them to represent moods and actions. They use simple symbols to represent pitch and volume, and lines to represent the length of notes. All music lessons build up towards performances each half term and classes compose 'scores' for these performances. All pupils in Year 2 have the opportunity to learn the recorder and most pupils take advantage of this and attend the recorder club. Parents are presented with a recorder book for the pupils to practise at home. The music teacher organises a choir club at lunchtimes and the choir sing in assemblies and other school celebrations. This group of singers can sustain the singing of tuneful counter-melodies unaccompanied. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 performed a long action song in their class assembly with great enthusiasm and a good sense of rhythm. Pupils are encouraged to listen to and appreciate a range of music in their music lessons and in assemblies, where the name of the composer of the week's music is clearly displayed.
98. The quality of the teaching of music is very good and often excellent. The music teacher uses a number of effective strategies for engaging pupils' interest, including the expressive use of her voice and her actions, positive praise and encouragement, humour and sometimes making lessons seem like a game. Music lessons are planned thematically to link the development of the pupils' musical knowledge and skills to their experiences in other parts of the curriculum. Year 1 pupils had visited the local Activity Park, and the music teacher used this to teach aspects of music. For example, singing up and down the scale was compared to climbing up the apparatus and down again and, when they stayed on the same note, they were going along the 'monkey bars'. With Year 2 pupils, the teacher used their design and technology project on puppets to work towards a performance. The puppets had to express different moods through music, and the very difficult concept of texture in music was brilliantly demonstrated by different puppet voices chanting in layers over the top of one another.
99. There are other close links between the pupils' music lessons and other work in the classroom. The class teacher supports the music teacher in music lessons, including assessing pupils' learning. This means that the music teacher is continually building upon pupils' learning. Each class has a box of musical instruments together with lesson notes and ideas provided by the music teacher for consolidating in other

subjects the work she does with them. Music is also used effectively to help pupils with their language skills. Many of the pupils have difficulty distinguishing different sounds, vocabulary, rhyme, sequences and patterns. The music teacher is sensitive to these needs and very knowledgeable about the way in which music can help. When teaching whole-year groups of pupils, the music teacher is outstanding. In short sessions of 20 minutes or so she engages the pupils completely and takes them step by step very skilfully to the point where they have learnt a completely new song and are singing it tunefully and rhythmically.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

100. It was only possible to observe lessons in dance during the inspection. However, the evidence of these lessons and observations of pupils during play show that standards meet national expectations at the end of Year 2. This is similar to the judgement in the last inspection report. However, considering the pupils' limited opportunities before they start at the school, they achieve well in the development of their physical skills.
101. Pupils demonstrate good co-ordination when moving around the hall at various speeds. They are aware of the needs of others with whom they share the space and they adjust their movement accordingly. This is also noticeable in the playground and helps to make playtimes enjoyable for everyone. In lessons, pupils move with good control. For example, pupils in Year 1 consider the different parts of their bodies on which they can take their own weight. They maintain balance very well on knees, elbows and hands, making interesting shapes. In Year 2, pupils use their knowledge from a science topic and concentrate well while moving as mini-beasts. They move quickly or slowly, making interesting shapes, such as the wing movements of butterflies. A thoughtful movement was one representing a worm as some pupils arched their backs and dragged their feet up to their hands before moving their hands forward again. Pupils find it difficult to explain why a movement is good or suggest how it might be improved, despite the helpful encouragement of the teachers. However, it is not certain how far this is caused by a limited understanding or an inability to express their understanding.
102. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers change suitably for physical activity and ensure that pupils do so as well. There are appropriate warming-up and cooling-down sessions that help pupils to develop an understanding of the importance of exercise. A feature of the lessons seen was the very good control that teachers exercise. This is usually positive and encouraging due to the very good relationships that have been established. However, pupils are not allowed to become over-excited and, if they do, the lesson is paused while they regain their concentration on the task. This results in a good deal of effort from pupils, both physical and intellectual, and they enjoy their successes. Teachers plan lessons well with a clear idea of what they want the pupils to achieve and they maintain a brisk pace to the lesson.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

103. Standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' learning is focused mainly upon Christianity, but they also learn about Judaism. In Year 1, pupils learn about special books including the Bible and the Koran. They also learn stories from the Old and New Testaments. In Year 2, pupils learn about a number of celebrations and festivals including Easter and Christmas and why people visit

special places, such as Lourdes. Year 2 pupils recount some of the stories they have heard, including the story of Hanukah and the Creation story. They can retell the story of 'The Good Samaritan' simply and relate it to doing good deeds in their own lives. They know that Jesus told many stories and that these are contained in the Bible.

104. No religious education lessons were observed during the inspection, but through talking to pupils, looking at their work and examining teachers' planning, the indications are that the quality of teaching in the subject is at least satisfactory with some good elements. Teachers take pupils to visit the local church and they arrange for the pupils to re-enact weddings and baptisms. The school has a small collection of artefacts, and teachers use these together with displays of books and special items to help the children develop their understanding. A weakness in the teaching, however, is the lack of recorded work and the disappointing untidiness of the small amount of writing and drawing which the pupils produce. Teachers miss opportunities for pupils to use and improve their writing and presentational skills. A good link with literacy is being planned with the intended purchase of 'Big Books' with religious stories. Adequate time is allocated to religious education, and further learning takes place in assemblies when, for example, teachers speak about things that are special to them or when the visiting vicar tells a story that emphasises how the natural things around us, like gardens and flowers, are really very special. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development.