

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ALTON INFANT SCHOOL**

Alton

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115850

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Rees

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey  
3764

Dates of inspection: 20 – 23 May 2002

Inspection number: 194864

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Normandy Street Alton Hampshire
Postcode:	GU34 1DH
Telephone number:	01420 83857
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Alan Rixon
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3764	Stephanie Lacey	Registered inspector	Foundation stage, English, art, music, special educational needs and English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements, How well are pupils taught?
9528	Derek Bowers	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?
24019	Ken Parry	Team inspector	Science, geography, history, physical education and equal opportunities	How good are the other curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31046	Chris Nuttall	Team inspector	Mathematics, information communication technology, design and technology and religious education	How well is the school led and managed?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Alton Infant School is a small community school with 161 pupils on roll aged between four and seven. There are 54 children in the Foundation Stage (the two reception classes). The remaining 106 pupils are taught in four parallel Year 1 and 2 classes. Some of the pupils live close to the school, with about a third coming from further afield. Most pupils live in owner-occupied housing, with a small minority in housing authority homes. About 19 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly average. Most of the families have their cultural roots in the British Isles, with just over two per cent of the pupils coming from France, Turkey and China. Four pupils speak English as an additional language, with two, who speak French and Cantonese, at an early stage. Children's attainment on entry to the reception classes is wide ranging. In recent years it has been slightly below average, with a number of children having difficulties with communication. Forty-seven per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is above average, although about half of these are only a little behind their peers. Six pupils have a statement of special educational need.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school. The staff team, very well led by the headteacher, is committed to meeting the needs of individual pupils. Consequently pupils achieve well and make good progress. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards are high in reading and above average in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- The provision for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs is particularly strong.
- The very positive school ethos, with a commitment to the needs of individual pupils, underpins excellent relationships between pupils and adults.
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning, show great independence and behave very well.
- Very good leadership by the headteacher ensures a clear direction for the school.
- The quality of teamwork and the contribution of the non-teaching staff are outstanding.
- The school cares for pupils very well and checks their progress very carefully.
- There is a very good partnership with parents.

#### **What could be improved**

There are no significant areas for improvement. Minor areas for development are related to the constraints of the building, planning for some sessions and extra support for some pupils in mathematics.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection in June 1997, when the school was judged to be providing a very good education for its pupils. Standards have risen in reading and writing, the quality of teaching has improved and pupils' progress is more carefully monitored. The high quality in other areas of the school's work has been maintained. Only a few areas were identified for improvement by the last inspection and these were related to planning pupils' work, talking to them about how well they had done and helping them to improve. Sound progress has been made in these areas. The school team is dedicated and committed and under the very good leadership of the headteacher is well set to improve even further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	B	A	A	A*
writing	C	A	B	A
mathematics	A	B	C	B

**Key**

very high                    A\*

well above average        A

above average              B

average                      C

below average              D

well below average        E

*(Similar schools are those with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Similar school grades on this table refer to those in the 20 – 35% band.)*

There has been a steady improvement in standards in reading and writing in national tests since the last inspection. Last year standards were well above average in reading and above average in writing. In 2001 standards in mathematics fell to average against the national picture. This was partly because higher attaining pupils did not do as well as they had done previously and partly because there was a larger group of pupils than usual who found mathematics difficult. However, when pupils' performance at Alton is compared with their peers in similar schools, they did better in all areas and were in the top five per cent in reading.

The inspection found that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language and higher attaining pupils, achieve well. Children make very good progress in the reception classes and reach the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. Most do better in their personal development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards in reading and writing in Year 2 match those attained in last year's national tests. Standards in mathematics have improved and are now above average. Pupils reach average standards in science, with higher attaining pupils doing well. Standards are above average in design and technology, physical education and religious education. They are average in all other subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are very positive about all aspects of school life. They work hard and do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very well behaved in lessons and at playtimes and lunchtimes. They are very sensible and there is rarely any need for staff to talk to them about their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils have formed excellent relationships with other children and staff. They make great strides in their personal development and show independence in their work and play.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The attendance rate is average, with an above average rate of unauthorised absence. Attendance levels are not higher because a number of families take holidays during term time. Most pupils arrive at school punctually.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now very good in the reception classes and good in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is also strong. Particular strengths in the teaching include excellent relationships, the successful fostering of pupils' independence, the contribution of support staff, joint planning and preparation for sessions, a very good understanding of how young children learn and good classroom organisation. The skills of literacy and numeracy are both well taught. In English there is a clear focus on the teaching of basic skills and this helps pupils to become independent readers and writers. Teachers also pay careful attention to helping pupils to develop good mental strategies when tackling number problems and this helps them to develop their mathematical thinking. In both areas teachers make the learning tasks interesting and this helps pupils to develop very positive attitudes to learning. Teachers plan very well to meet the learning needs of all pupils and the very good contribution of teaching assistants means that pupils are often taught in small groups with focused support from an adult.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Overall, the school provides a broad and rich range of learning opportunities that is relevant to pupils' needs. There are very good links with the local community.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Support for pupils is very well managed. Careful organisation means that pupils often work in small groups, with focused help, which aids their learning. Support assistants make a particularly valuable contribution to the work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The few pupils who are learning English as an additional language are supported well by sensitive staff. There is a small amount of outside help for pupils at the early stages of learning English, which is effective.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There has been particular improvement in the school's provision for spiritual development since the last inspection. There is a very good emphasis on learning about a wide range of cultural traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A very strong area of school life. Very good procedures to monitor and ensure very good behaviour. Very good procedures for health and safety, security and child protection. Overall, arrangements for assessment are very good. They are manageable and informative.

The school has a very good partnership with parents founded on mutual trust and respect. This is established well in the pre-school 'Rainbow' class. Parents are very happy with all that the staff do to help their children. Many help in school and the Home School Association organises social and fundraising events.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management is good overall with the headteacher providing a very strong educational direction. Senior staff and subject managers are effective. More work needed on written planning to further improve and develop individual subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors, ably led by the chair, support the school well. Most are very involved in the work of the school. They use their talents well to move the school forward. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school effectively uses information from statutory tests and its own monitoring of work in classrooms to evaluate how well it is doing and plan for the future.
The strategic use of resources	Very good financial planning and control. Good application of the principles of best value.

The school is well staffed by committed teachers and assistants. There is a very strong staff team and office staff, school keeper, cleaners and lunchtime staff all support the school well. Staff and governors have made best use of a building that dates from the Victorian period and temporary accommodation to provide a good learning environment. However some pupils' access to the lavatories, the office accommodation and access to the reception classes outside area need improving. Learning resources are good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school.</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become mature.</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• They are well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

*Fifty-nine parents returned the questionnaire seeking their views and nineteen attended the meeting held for them before the inspection.*

Parents are very happy with all that the school does for their children. The inspection agrees with all their positive views. There are few after-school clubs. The inspectors agree with the school's view that pupils of this age are often too tired for after-school clubs, especially as the school currently finishes at 3.30pm. It did find that there were always plenty of interesting games and activities available for pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes and that the visits out of school and visitors to the school helped to provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievement**

1 Pupils achieve well in all areas of the curriculum. Most make very good progress in the reception classes and good progress in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are doing better than they did at the time of the last inspection in reading and writing. Standards in all other subjects have been maintained.

#### ***The Foundation Stage***

##### *Starting school*

2 When children start school their understanding, skills and knowledge are wide ranging. In most years early assessments indicate that they are little below the Hampshire average. They make very good progress in the Foundation Stage (the reception classes) and by the time they start in Year 1 most have reached the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> in all areas of learning<sup>2</sup>. Their personal and social skills are more advanced than other children of their age and they have a well-developed knowledge of the world about them.

#### ***Years 1 and 2***

##### *Standards in national tests*

3 In recent years standards in Year 2 tests have been above or well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. There has been steady improvement in both reading and writing standards since the last inspection, with pupils doing especially well in 2000. In 2001 standards were well above average in reading and above average in writing. Generally boys do better than girls in writing, the school has analysed the reasons for this carefully and the inspection confirms that there is nothing in the school's provision that is impeding girls' progress. Standards in mathematics improved between 1997 and 1999, but have fallen back in comparison with the national average since that time. Last year they were average. This was because not so many pupils achieved the higher level 3 last year as they had done previously and also because fewer than average reached level 2b or above. However in comparison with similar schools<sup>3</sup>, pupils at Alton did very well. Standards in reading were in the top five per cent of schools in this group; they were well above similar schools in reading and above them in mathematics. Overall teacher assessments in science last year indicated that an average number of pupils reached standards expected for their age, with a higher proportion than average doing better.

##### *Inspection findings*

4 The inspection found that standards this year are very similar to last, with improvement in mathematics. Standards are well above average in reading and above average in writing and in mathematics. In science, standards are again average, with higher attainers doing particularly well. In other subjects pupils reach the standards expected for their age and do better than this in design and technology, physical education and religious education. This

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<sup>1</sup> Early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage.

<sup>2</sup> The areas of learning are: personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

<sup>3</sup> 'Similar schools' are those in the same free school meals band. Normally Alton would lie in the 8 to 20 per cent band. However in 2001 the number of pupils in Year 2 entitled to free school meals was 23 per cent, with 46 per cent on the school's register of special educational need and so for comparison purposes the next free school meal band has been applied.

marks an improvement in both design and technology and religious education since the last inspection. In information and communication technology (ICT) standards are average. This appears to be a slip backwards from the time of the last inspection, but this is not the case. Standards are in fact higher than they were five years ago, when not so much was expected of pupils nationally.

#### *Reasons for the differences in standards between subjects*

5 There are several factors that combine to account for the differences in standards from subject to subject.

- The school has done well to enable pupils to reach high standards in English particularly when most year groups are slightly below the expectations for their age when they start school. English standards are high because the school sensibly places a good deal of emphasis on teaching speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. A good proportion of time is spent on these areas, there is a good deal of focused support for pupils with difficulties and parents support their children well at home.
- Standards in mathematics have risen because of the better achievements of higher attainers. Lower attaining pupils do not do so well in mathematics as they do in reading because they are not given as much support in mathematics as they are in English.
- Standards in design and technology, physical education and religious education are above average because of a concentration on the development of skills in these subjects.
- Standards in other subjects are average because the work pupils undertake is largely planned within level 2 of the National Curriculum, limiting the opportunities for pupils to do better. Sometimes time constraints mean that pupils do not have time to tackle a piece of work in sufficient depth.

#### *Progress of pupils with special educational needs*

6 Almost half of the pupils have identified special educational needs. They all receive the support that they need and as a result make the same good or very good progress as their peers. Over half of these pupils are only a little behind their peers and by the time that they leave the school are doing as well as they should for their age. Pupils with more significant difficulties, including six pupils with statements of special educational need, make good progress because of the focused support that they receive.

#### *Progress of pupils learning English as an additional language*

7 Only four pupils are learning English as an additional language, including two children at the early stages. They are all making good progress because of the sensitive support they are given by the school's staff and visiting teachers. Their competence in two languages is celebrated and during the inspection, for example, one five-year-old sang 'Twinkle, twinkle little star' to his classmates in his home language.

#### *Equal opportunities*

8 All teachers have good knowledge of their pupils and carefully identify those who need additional support in order to achieve their potential. Gifted and talented pupils are extended well, particularly in English, mathematics and science. In addition, the higher attaining pupils in each class have the opportunity to extend their problem solving skills as members of the gardening club. In all classes, and in subjects across the curriculum, there are good examples of all groups of pupils being provided with appropriate work and being suitably challenged. Pupils' achievements are carefully monitored to ensure fairness of treatment.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9 The high standards of behaviour and excellent attitudes and relationships have been maintained very well since the last inspection.

#### *A good start*

10 The very good procedures for helping children to settle quickly into school ensure that children are happy and confident in their new surroundings from the very first day. Children develop excellent relationships with the 'Rainbow' group teacher and support assistants on their pre-school visits and the teacher's visits to their homes and this helps them to settle quickly into full time school in their reception year.

#### *Pupils' Attitudes and Responses*

11 Pupils have excellent attitudes to their work. They are keen to come to school each day and are stimulated by the enthusiasm of the staff and the interesting activities arranged for them. Pupils respond positively to the high expectations of the staff and parents and develop good routines and working habits from an early age. The concentration and interest shown in lessons is impressive. For the few children who find it difficult to concentrate in their early years, the staff provide group activities to improve their listening skills. These are successful in improving motivation and concentration.

#### *Behaviour*

12 Behaviour in lessons is very good overall and often excellent. Even the youngest children are clear about the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are very disciplined in class discussions and when working in groups or on individual tasks. They are reliable, trustworthy, polite and friendly to each other and to all adults. Parents are very positive about the standards of behaviour in the school. Break times and lunchtimes are very pleasant occasions. Pupils follow the well-established routines well so that lunch and play arrangements run smoothly. The staff have little need to apply other than minor sanctions for misbehaviour and no children have been excluded from the school. There is no evidence from parents, children and staff of any bullying. Any incidents between children are dealt with promptly and positively and parents are involved when it is appropriate.

#### *Personal Development and Relationships*

13 The pupils' personal development and their increasing self-reliance and self-confidence are important features of many classroom activities. This is a considerable strength of the school. Consequently, teachers and support staff are able to give concentrated attention to groups of pupils secure in the knowledge that the others in the class will work at a good pace and with good concentration on their individual tasks. A good example of substantial personal responsibility is the thorough preparation and planning shown by the pupils involved in the gardening class. They plan the use of the garden area, the crops to be grown and the arrangements for selling the produce from these plots. Costs and income are fully accounted for and the pupils plan for a profit from their sales. Pupils readily take the initiative to help each other in lessons. In the playground the older children help to organise games for the younger ones and help to ensure that no child is without a friend to talk to or play with. Pupils of all ages get on well together and the relationships with all members of staff are excellent.

#### *Attendance and punctuality*

14 Attendance is satisfactory and there are no pupils with significant patterns of absence. Overall there has been an improvement since the last inspection. Attendance levels are not higher because a number of families take holidays during term time. The level of unauthorised absences is a little above the national average this year. It reflects the school's insistence on proper explanations for all absences. Pupils enjoy coming to school and almost all of them are very punctual.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15 The good quality of the teaching ensures that pupils achieve well. There has been further improvement from the strong picture reported at the time of the last inspection. Out of every ten lessons seen during the inspection one was excellent, three were very good, five were good and one was satisfactory.

### *The Foundation Stage*

16 The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good and ensures that children do very well in their first year of school. Almost three quarters of the lessons seen were very good or excellent. The main reasons for this particularly strong teaching are:

- a very experienced teaching team;
- excellent team work between teachers and support staff;
- very careful organisation and planning.

### *Years 1 and 2*

17 Teaching is good overall in Years 1 and 2 and consequently pupils move forward well in their learning. Particular strengths in the teaching are:

- very good planning for the teaching of speaking and listening, reading and writing;
- very good support for pupils with special educational needs.

### *Teaching of basis skills*

18 The basic skills of literacy are very well taught. Work is carefully planned and closely matched to pupils' levels of skills, knowledge and understanding. In many sessions pupils work with an adult in a small group and this helps them to move ahead quickly because of the focused input. Numeracy skills are well taught. Again, tasks are carefully matched to pupils' learning needs, but the levels of extra adult support are not as high as they are in literacy sessions.

### *Teaching of pupils with special educational needs.*

19 Overall the teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is strong. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 and 2. There is some individual and small group teaching, when pupils are withdrawn for extra help. This is of very good quality. These pupils do well because teachers focus on their particular learning needs and work is very carefully planned.

### *Teaching of pupils learning English as an additional language.*

20 Pupils learning English as an additional language are very well taught in the reception classes and well taught in Years 1 and 2. Teachers are sensitive to pupils' particular learning needs and take care to ensure that they have understood what they have been told. There is a small amount of extra support for pupils at the early stages of learning English and in a session seen this was very effective.

### *Teachers know pupils well*

21 All teachers gain good knowledge of their pupils through their day-to-day professional judgements and through the school's improved procedures for assessment. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, are equally motivated by teachers' strategies. This enables them to achieve well and make good gains in their learning

### *Strengths in teaching*

22 In addition to the strengths already identified there are some that that underpin all teaching in the school. These include:

- excellent relationships between staff and pupils, which set a firm foundation for learning;
- the successful fostering of pupils' independence, particularly through 'chart'<sup>4</sup> activities;
- the substantial contribution of support staff, particularly in work related to language and communication;
- careful joint planning and preparation for sessions;
- a very good understanding of how young children learn;
- effective classroom organisation.

#### *Areas for development*

23 Within this very strong provision there are very few areas for development. The following are minor issues that the school should consider in order to strengthen the teaching even further:

- give better support for new staff in planning clear objectives for the 'chart' activities;
- examine the time slippage at the beginning of some music sessions, to avoid limiting the amount that can be covered in a session;
- improve the balance between displays of pupils' work, informative displays and interactive displays.

#### *Improvement since the last inspection*

24 Teaching was identified as strong at the time of the last inspection, but nevertheless the main areas for school improvement were all linked to aspects of teaching. Overall the school has made satisfactory improvement in tackling these. One was related to ensuring that there are specific and detailed objectives for particular sessions. Currently objectives are very clear for most sessions, but with less detail and clarity in written planning for 'chart' activities. Another area for development was the provision for more time for evaluation with pupils of what has been learnt in sessions. This has been tackled well. The last area for improvement has also been successfully tackled and this was related to helping pupils to identify ways in which to improve their work.

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

25 The school provides a broad, balanced and rich range of learning opportunities that is relevant to pupils' needs and prepares them very effectively for the next stage in their education. It is supported and enhanced by a wide variety of stimulating additional activities and very close links with the community. Arrangements for personal, social and health education are a particular strength, reflecting the school's intention to promote pupils' all-round development. The whole curriculum successfully supports pupils' intellectual, physical and personal growth and the teachers' highly inclusive approach ensures equality of access for all. All statutory requirements are fully met. Overall, the curriculum has been strengthened and improved since the last inspection, although a minor weakness remains. This is the lack of clarity in the written learning objectives associated with pupils' 'chart' activities.

#### *Curricular planning*

26 The curriculum is balanced satisfactorily between the subjects. Literacy and numeracy are appropriately allocated the largest proportions of time. Teachers' planning for literacy is

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<sup>4</sup> In 'chart' activities pupils select a chosen activity from a range listed on their personal chart and tackle this independently. Work on 'chart' activities is reviewed every Friday.

based firmly on the national strategy which is being implemented consistently and is contributing to the high standards seen in English. In mathematics the school has adapted the national strategy for numeracy to suit pupils' needs and particular aspects are used, for example to improve pupils' mental calculation skills. Teachers have worked hard to review and improve the long-term plans for each of the other subjects in order to deal with the priority identified on the school's strategic plan. As a result, there are good quality planning frameworks in place across the curriculum. In some subjects, for example science, national guidelines have been successfully adopted. In others, such as geography and history, the school has produced its own planning document. A particular strength is the strong teamwork that is evident in the consistent way in which teachers put these plans into practice to ensure that all pupils have similar learning experiences. The curriculum is individualised to match each pupil's needs through the school's programme of 'chart' activities. This successfully promotes the high levels of independence and responsible attitudes to learning seen in all classes. However, in the sessions where pupils select activities from their charts the teacher's objectives for learning are not always explicit and sometimes there is no clear link with the National Curriculum. Consequently in a few sessions pupils do not move forward as fast as they should. Teachers are strongly committed to the school's organisation of pupils into mixed age classes. When planning to meet the needs of individuals, this presents them, and particularly the less experienced teachers, with an additional challenge. They manage this effectively so that pupils achieve well.

#### *Equal opportunities*

27 The school is firmly committed to the principle of equal opportunities. It is expressed clearly in the recently updated policy and other documents that reflect its highly inclusive approach. Teachers and support staff ensure that pupils are equally and fully included in the curriculum, and indeed in all aspects of school life, and that they enjoy equal opportunity to realise their potential. This is evident in the very good arrangements for pupils with special educational needs. Where pupils are withdrawn from classes for small group support with basic literacy skills, good learning gains in the long term enhance their equality of access to the curriculum. Through its innovative use of the gardening club, the school also provides very well for higher attaining pupils with real life opportunities to practise the skills learned in their lessons. With its main focus on cross-curricular problem solving, it very effectively extends their skills in English, mathematics, science and ICT. In addition it makes a significant contribution to their personal development.

#### *Provision for pupils with special educational needs*

28 The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Most support for these pupils is provided within the classroom. It is rightly focused on reading and writing activities. Pupils work on the same tasks as their peers, sometimes with extra support and sometimes with work planned at a simpler level. In some sessions, such as the weekly mathematics introduction, pupils are organised into ability groups. At these times pupils with special educational needs work with pupils at a similar level of understanding. This ensures that they follow the same curriculum as their peers. In other mathematics sessions the extra help for pupils who have difficulties is more limited, especially for those pupils who are only a little behind the others. This means that these pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress.

29 There is some withdrawal of individuals and groups to the 'Red Room' for focused teaching on their particular area of need. This is very effective and helps pupils to cope better within their class. Staff are conscious of the need to ensure that pupils do not miss the same lesson each week. These extra sessions are wide ranging and include speech therapy, a 'hand gym' to help pupils' physical co-ordination, physiotherapy and a social use of language programme.

*Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language*

30 There is a small amount of extra teaching support from the local education authority for pupils at the early stage of learning English. At other times pupils undertake the same work as their peers with extra support from the school staff. This provision works well for these pupils and they make good progress.

*Personal, social and health education*

31 The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education was criticised at the time of the last inspection because of the lack of a cohesive approach. Now, arrangements are very good and are making a big contribution to the excellent relationships seen throughout the school. A whole school plan allocates relevant topics to each term and teachers have carefully identified opportunities to develop this aspect of the curriculum in each of the subject areas. All staff are very good role models, showing respect, understanding, sensitivity and care to all pupils.

*Additional activities, including visits and visitors*

32 The school provides a good range of activities to enhance the basic curriculum, including a French club, a choir and folk and Morris dance groups. In addition, an extensive programme of educational visits and visitors to the school is organised to support pupils' learning. The school is strongly supported by the local community in these ventures and most parents are appreciative of the efforts of teachers. Interesting venues for visits include churches and other places of worship such as a Hindu temple in Southampton, a local museum and gallery, the town centre and a nearby village to conduct a comparative study. Among recent visitors to school have been religious leaders from a variety of faiths who have led assemblies or joined religious education lessons. As part of the school's Arts Week and Book Week, artists, craftspeople, theatre groups and storytellers also visit. While all of these activities are carefully planned to support and extend the pupils' classroom experiences they are also significant factors in promoting their personal development.

*Links with the community and partner institutions*

33 Very good links have been forged with the community in what the school views as a mutually supportive arrangement. In addition to those noted above, pupils make seasonal visits to several local residential homes and clubs for the elderly and hard of hearing and the 'Morris Minors' (the school's Morris dancing group) perform at local events. The school receives sponsorship from several local businesses, for example in support of the school fete and the gardening activities. A yoga group uses the school premises on a regular basis and a bookshop in the town displays pupils' book reviews and artwork. Strong links are also being established with the wider community through the use of the Internet. It is used widely by pupils to research topics in geography, history and science for example, and pupils are in regular contact via e-mail with schools and others in places such as New Zealand, the USA and Indonesia.

34 Links with partner institutions are good and are strongest at the pre-school stage where they ensure the smooth admission of pupils into the reception classes. Pupils are well prepared for their transfer at the end of Year 2 and opportunities for contact with the neighbouring junior school are increasing. Teachers report, however, that the network of local schools is less effective than it used to be as a forum for the exchange of ideas.

*Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development*

35 Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when opportunity for spiritual development was an area needing attention. In addition to the many opportunities provided in religious education lessons, and in daily assemblies, there are frequent occasions for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs, attitudes and values. In medium-term planning, staff highlight



many opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this ensures that these opportunities are well used.

#### *Spiritual development*

36 Spirituality is based upon knowing and understanding beliefs and traditions both in this country and in the wider world. Religious education lessons foster this well through the study of Hinduism and by an extensive study of Christianity. In lessons, very good use is made of examples to develop a tolerance towards other people's beliefs. In a Year 1/2 session, for example, the pupils empathised with the Hindus belief that the god Ganesha will help them to solve their problems. Pupils are given many opportunities to help them to reflect on fundamental questions in life. Each class has a 'Question Box' and pupils are encouraged to submit questions of a puzzling and often profound nature, for example '*Who made God?*' and '*Why can't we see stars in the daytime?*' Every three weeks classes gather together to look at the questions and discuss them and pupils know that often there is no right or wrong answer. Considering the young age of the pupils this is a highly effective way of helping them to reflect on their place in the world. Pupils also have the opportunity to experience, first-hand, ceremonies such as a baptism.

#### *Social and moral development*

37 Social and moral development is fostered very well. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to interact both in lessons and socially outside the classroom. Teachers ensure that groups maintain a good gender or ability mix. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and the respect they have for one another and the adults in the school is demonstrated daily in the way in which everyone is valued. There are many opportunities for the pupils to take responsibility in small jobs like returning the register but also in the wider context of running the gardening club accounts and being responsible for checking the weather. Independence is very well promoted as the pupils not only take responsibility for their behaviour and attitudes but also for their learning during 'chart' activities. The quality of the excellent relationships throughout the school provides the pupils with powerful role models to encourage good social behaviour and self-discipline.

38 Provision for pupils' cultural development is also very good. Western traditions are nurtured through planned opportunities in subjects such as geography and ICT. More ancient cultures are studied in history and pupils have the opportunity to learn how these traditions relate to our own. Pupils are taught about Hindu traditions and cultures and they have the opportunity to watch and take part in dances from different cultures. The school has good links with other countries through the e-mails that pupils send and receive and this is proving an excellent way of fostering understanding of different cultures. Many planned experiences enable the pupils to learn about their own culture and there is a strong tradition in the school for country dancing with the 'Morris Minors' performing Morris dancing at many different local events.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

39 The school's provision for the care of the children is a strength. It derives, in part, from the very good relationships and detailed knowledge of the pupils and their families. The staff are very caring and vigilant in lessons and at break times. Parents are impressed by the support given to pupils of all abilities. For example, one child has been loaned a laptop computer to help with writing. Parents feel confident about approaching the school for information or to discuss any problems.

#### *Procedures and practice*

40 Good policies for behaviour, physical restraint, bullying and child protection underpin the very good practice. The staff are consistent in their management of the pupils. Their positive

approach is very successful. The successful early building of the partnership with parents ensures an effective sharing of the high expectations of good behaviour and attitudes. The rewards systems are popular with the pupils and are used actively to encourage good standards of behaviour and an awareness of the needs of others. Good communication ensures that lunchtime staff are briefed well and there is a clear recording of any incidents. Any problems which arise are resolved through prompt discussions between pupils and, where appropriate, with their parents. The child protection procedures are well established. All staff are familiar with these procedures and use the proper channels if they have any concerns. The local social and welfare agencies give good support.

41 Attendance is monitored daily and parents are contacted if no explanations of absences are forthcoming. The importance of good attendance is stressed in the induction sessions and in the written guides for parents. The attendance information is also recorded on a computer each week and this helps the staff to track any patterns of absences or lateness. The education welfare officer checks registers monthly and gives good support on the rare occasions when it is thought necessary

42 The health and safety policy is a substantial document which gives appropriate coverage of procedures for safety in the classrooms, shared areas, playground, equipment, first aid and outdoor play. There are very good arrangements for the management and recording of any accidents and illness and for the storing, recording and administering of essential medicines. The governor representative, staff representative, headteacher and caretaker do regular, rigorous inspections, recording any points for action. The caretaker frequently takes prompt action to rectify any problems as they arise. Consequently the governors and staff help to maintain a safe working and learning environment.

43 One of the school's aims is to encourage greater independence in the pupils and this is fostered and reinforced during lessons. The staff monitor individual personal development throughout the year and work with pupils regularly to set individual targets.

#### *Assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress*

44 Good progress has been made since the last inspection to refine the procedures that were judged to be good at that time. These improvements are based firmly on teachers' shared understanding of the purposes and uses of assessment and therefore their consistent implementation in all classes. A significant strength of the system now in place is that teachers see it as manageable. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are now very good and very good use is made of the information gathered in this way to plan for the whole school. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress as they move through the school are not quite as strong. The school has already identified the need for further work to be done on this and a good start has been made.

45 When children first enter the school they are carefully assessed to identify particular strengths and weaknesses. The information is used successfully to form groups and to plan teaching programmes. It is also used as a first step in the identification of pupils with special educational needs and as a result early action is taken to support them. As well as the statutory tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2, teachers carry out regular reading tests to compare standards twice a year with those expected nationally. A range of other tests is used where individuals give cause for concern. In addition, the school has devised very good systems to assess pupils' attainment on an on-going basis through the year in all subjects except art and design and physical education. Teachers carefully identify learning objectives for each unit of study and assess pupils' attainment against these criteria. Results are recorded on a simple grid. In order to ensure a consistent approach in all classes teachers meet regularly to compare samples of pupils' work and to discuss their judgements. As a result they know their pupils well.

#### *Using assessment information as a basis for planning*

46 Although many of these are fairly recent initiatives the school is beginning to gather a considerable amount of information about its pupils. Over time this is likely to grow into a detailed picture of their strengths and weaknesses. It should enable teachers to ask and answer questions such as 'Are there areas where he/she is underachieving?' and 'Are there areas where he/she is near the boundary to a higher level?' At a whole school strategic level very effective use is already being made of the information deriving from the careful analysis of assessment data. For example, the senior management team identifies weaknesses in the national test results in English and mathematics and shares this advice with colleagues in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. It also analyses results to ensure that there are no variations between different groups of pupils such as boys and girls. In addition, the school's internal assessment data is currently being used to ensure that support for special educational needs is deployed efficiently to meet the needs of pupils most effectively.

#### *Assessment of pupils with special educational needs.*

47 The procedures for assessing pupils' special educational needs are very good and ensure that pupils receive suitable levels of support. Close links with the local pre-school provision, the early years centre and the 'Rainbow' sessions help staff to identify any difficulties that children have at an early stage. This identification leads to early action and so children are well supported from their first days at school. Class teachers are responsible for assessing pupils' progress and, with the teaching assistants, they draw up individual education plans for the pupils. These are reviewed half termly. The special educational needs co-ordinator keeps a close eye on pupils' progress and helps staff to plan appropriate tasks for pupils. All statutory requirements in relation to the annual reviews of pupils with statements of special educational need are met.

#### *Monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance*

48 Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are good. Beginning with early assessment in the reception classes a simple, but very effective tracking sheet has been introduced to monitor pupils' performance in English and mathematics. Completed termly by teachers, it is not only a means of recording assessment results but also identifies for them the next steps in learning for each pupil. Comparisons between classes are made and discussed to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all. The school has appropriately identified the need to continue to develop this area in order to refine its methods of reviewing the pace of individual progress and tracking each age group in subjects over a period of time.

49 Pupils are well supported by a target setting process in which both they and their parents are actively involved. In consultation with parents, academic and/or personal targets are agreed in the autumn term and reviewed and re-set in the spring term. Written reports to parents in the summer term evaluate progress made to meet the targets. In addition, pupils are encouraged and supported by teachers in setting personal targets to be reviewed at monthly intervals, thus contributing to the mature and responsible attitudes to learning seen in all classes.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

50 A very good partnership with parents has been maintained well since the last inspection.

#### *Parents' views of the school*

51 Parents are very positive about almost all areas of school life. A very high proportion feel that that their children like school, that they are making good progress, are expected to work hard and are becoming more mature. They believe that the school is well managed, that

teaching is good and they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with suggestions or complaints. All of the evidence during the inspection supports these positive views of parents.

52 In the questionnaires 17 per cent of parents felt that the school does not provide a good range of outside activities. However, this was not raised as an issue at the parents' meeting. The staff feel that additional provision is not appropriate because the school day is sufficiently long for most children of this age. The inspectors agree with the school. The current provision includes a French club and a Morris dancing group.

#### *Information provided for parents*

53 The prospectus gives sound information on school organisation and the curriculum and has recently been updated to include the school's aims. It includes loose sheets with information on standards and attendance and is supplemented by useful handbooks for parents. The governors' report to parents is informative and well presented.

#### *Information about children's progress*

54 Parents find the consultation evenings in the autumn and spring terms helpful and useful. They are given information on progress and get indications of standards in relation to national averages. Teachers always make themselves available at short notice for discussions with parents throughout the year. Much useful information is given to parents during the substantial induction programmes so that parents are very familiar with daily routines and practices well before their children start at the school. Regular additional information is provided through the frequent friendly letters and on the notice boards.

55 The continuous assessment reports at the end of the year include informative sections on social and personal development. All subjects are included in the reports with satisfactory detail provided for the core subjects. In some of the foundation subjects such as art and music the information focuses on what has been covered during the year. The staff have put considerable effort into producing guidelines for the reports from this July, in order to give clearer indications of the standards achieved.

#### *The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school*

56 The 'Rainbow' class for pre-school children provides an excellent foundation for the strong partnership between parents and school. Parents work with their children in the class for seven weeks and for a further five weeks meet members of staff to discuss ways of preparing for school and helping their children at home. Once pupils begin school, most parents help their children with reading regularly. A valuable feature of the consultation evenings is the time used to discuss additional individual targets to be tackled at home. The home-school agreement is well established and almost all parents and children sign these by the time they start at the school. The agreement contains clear statements that stress the importance of a strong partnership, good attendance and behaviour, help at home and daily preparation for effective learning.

57 The school involves the parents of pupils with special educational needs well. In addition to the consultation evenings, parents are contacted if there are any significant changes in their child's progress. They feel happy with the level of partnership they have.

58 The Home School Association is active with a small core of organisers and gives substantial support for events. These include well-attended fairs, discos, tea and coffee sessions and barbecues. Many parents and grandparents help in lessons in many ways, including reading, mathematics, computing and cooking. Parents feel really welcome and appreciated. The parents also raise substantial additional income for the school.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

### *Very good leadership by the headteacher*

59 Since the last inspection, the strengths in the leadership and management of the school have been maintained and further improvements made. The current headteacher has been in post for just over three years and, in that time, she has successfully enhanced the quality of education that the school offers. Her leadership is very good and she has improved many of the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. Her drive, determination and focus on improving standards ensure a clear direction for the school. The school now has clearly defined aims that are centred on the development of pupils as independent learners. The headteacher has developed an effective staff team who share the same vision and who work particularly well together. Since the last inspection standards have risen and the quality of teaching has improved.

### *Impressive team spirit*

60 The team spirit is impressive and involves all who work in the school and not just the teaching staff. The impact of this can be seen in the overall ethos of the school, the excellent relationships, the very good parental involvement and the support and commitment given by the governors. The constructive climate for learning ensures that the school is a very happy place in which the attitudes of pupils and the relationships are especially good. This is a major reason why most pupils are making good progress and achieving well.

### *The work of the senior management team*

61 The senior management team is effective. Its structure is well established and it meets regularly to discuss the work of the school. Consequently senior staff have a shared understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Staff use their individual expertise well to move the school forward. The deputy head has been at the school for many years and she is extremely committed to enabling children to develop independence. She gives good support to the headteacher and takes the lead in curriculum matters whilst also being involved in the performance management of staff. The other senior teacher also has extensive experience at the school and, together, the senior managers analyse available data and monitor the teaching and learning in order to prioritise the action needed to further improve. The delegation of management responsibilities and the hard work of the subject managers effectively feed into this process. The teacher who co-ordinates the work for pupils with special educational needs is a member of the senior management team. She is very effective. She organises the support staff well and keeps a close monitoring eye on pupils' progress. The special needs policy has been rewritten in the light of the new Code of Practice and the register is also being maintained with due regard to the new requirements.

### *Evaluating the school's work and planning for improvement*

62 The school makes good use of information from national tests and its own monitoring of work in classrooms to plan for the future. There is a good level of informal discussion amongst staff about the next steps to take. Formal structures for development planning have improved since the last inspection and the improvement plan is now more strategic and centred on raising standards. However, the action plans produced by subject managers do not clearly identify what needs to be done to push standards higher. At the moment subject plans are vague and very similar in content rather than providing specific agendas to further raise standards in each subject. The headteacher has recognised this and work has already started in further developing the subject management plans.

### *The work of the governing body*

63 Aably led by the chair, the governing body works hard and is very supportive of all that is achieved by the school. All governors are committed and conscientious and they use their

talents and expertise well in the best interests of the school. An appropriate range of committees is in place and much of the work is undertaken in these and then reported to the full governing body. The chair has a good working relationship with the headteacher and they meet regularly. Governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Although governors are involved in the development of the school improvement plan they do not, as yet, have a clear understanding of strategic planning with regard to raising standards. Governors rely heavily on the headteacher's input rather than being proactive in determining the strategic direction of the school. All statutory requirements are met.

#### *A commitment to equal opportunities for all*

64 The school is strongly committed to providing equality of opportunity and this is clear in its very positive ethos and in teachers' determination to provide rich and varied learning experiences for all pupils. It is based on the caring and sensitive attitudes of all staff and is evident in the highly inclusive approach seen in all classrooms. It reflects the school's determination to ensure the all-round development of all its pupils.

#### *Financial planning*

65 Financial planning is very good and is closely linked to the key priority of raising standards. Careful budgeting throughout a period of adjustment to maximum class numbers has resulted in the maintenance of six classes and a substantial level of classroom support. This has had a significant impact on raising standards. A new cohort profile initiative will be used to determine even more closely targeted use of the support staff. Resources are used very effectively and specific grants are used properly for the purposes intended. The continuing provision of the Rainbow Class for the new intake of children is a very effective use of relatively small expenditure to enhance substantially the induction of pupils and partnership with parents.

66 Financial management and control are very good. The very competent and supportive administrative staff have established effective routines and maintain good records. The school receives excellent additional support from the county finance officer. The most recent audit reports for the main and unofficial accounts confirmed the good records and practices in place. Good use is made of information technology to support the school management and administration, particularly the county's wide area network and Internet facilities.

67 The principles of best value are applied well. There is a high level of consultation with staff, governors and parents on key aspects of decision making. Efficient service agreements have been established with the local authority providers. Regular review ensures good competition in the provision of goods and services. Governors and staff are beginning to analyse and use the comparative information from the county on similar schools. The school actively seeks, and is successful in securing, additional sources of funding. The Home School Association provides substantial additional income from the events it organises. Much of this is donated to developments agreed with the staff, such as the outside play areas and computer enhancements. The unit costs are high but nonetheless the school is giving good value for money.

#### *Staffing*

68 The match of number, qualification and experience of teaching staff to the demands of the curriculum is very good. There are a large number of support staff who are very competent and committed and make a significant contribution to the pupils' welfare and to the pupils' attainment and progress. This gives particularly good support to pupils with special educational needs. The efficient administrative staff, lunchtime supervisors, kitchen staff and cleaners all contribute to the effective care of the pupils. A particular strength is the

commitment of the school keeper who gives a great deal of extra time and effort to the school. He manages to maintain the cleanliness and good order of the buildings despite the difficulties experienced with temporary classrooms and the age of the main building. In addition he gives endless hours working with the pupils on technology projects that greatly enhance the curriculum.

69 Performance management procedures are in place and recently these have been extended to learning support staff. Teachers attend a wide range of courses, which support the school's development programme. There are good procedures for the induction of new staff and the recently appointed newly qualified teacher feels particularly well supported. The school accepts trainee teachers and makes good provision for their needs in school.

#### *Accommodation*

70 The accommodation presents many challenges for the school and the headteacher and staff work very hard to overcome these difficulties. Apart from the two reception classrooms, all other year groups are housed in individual huts, two of which are completely out of sight of the main building behind the separate kitchen block. This arrangement creates many difficulties during the school day. None of the huts has lavatory facilities and, as a result, pupils have to walk across the playground to use the lavatories in the main building. Given the age of the pupils and the need to send another pupil to accompany each child, this is unacceptable. Two administrative staff share an office that is barely adequate for one, although plans are in place to extend the main building to provide additional office space and a disabled toilet. Staff and parents have worked very hard to improve the accommodation both inside and in the grounds and they ensure that the pupils' education is not compromised by the longstanding poor facilities. There is no enclosed outside play area for reception children and, although staff do make use of the playground space, it is not readily accessible from a classroom. Governors are proactively seeking ways to improve the accommodation and it is to the credit of everyone involved in the school that they are providing a very good education in spite of these difficulties.

#### *Learning resources*

71 Learning resources are generally good in all subjects. In the majority of subjects they are of good quality, with some excellent artefacts in religious education. Pupils have access to at least three computers in each classroom although only those in the main building can be networked so access to the Internet is limited.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72 The headteacher, staff and governors might consider the following minor areas for development for inclusion in their school improvement plan:

- make better links between the subject manager action plans and the impact of new initiatives on standards; (*Reference paragraph: 62*)
- continue to improve the unsatisfactory aspects of the accommodation; especially in relation to the access between the reception classes and the outside area, the size and location of the school office and the necessity for four classes to go outside in order to use the lavatories; (*Reference paragraphs: 70 & 81*)
- provide better support for pupils with special educational needs in some mathematics sessions; (*Reference paragraphs: 5, 28 & 93*)
- make the learning objectives for 'chart sessions' clearer for staff new to the school. (*Reference paragraphs: 23, 25 & 26*)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	12	20	4	0	0	0
Percentage	10	30	50	10	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 two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (Full-time equivalent for part-time pupils).	161
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	30
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	75
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	35	22	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	33	33
	Girls	18	20	20
	Total	51	53	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (95)	93 (97)	93 (95)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	33	34
	Girls	19	20	20
	Total	52	53	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (95)	93 (94)	95(98)
	National	85 (84)	89 (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	106
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*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)	8.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.9
Average class size	26.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	227

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
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	395,374
Total expenditure	385,183
Expenditure per pupil	2438
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,335
Balance carried forward to next year	24,526

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	161
Number of questionnaires returned	59

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	20	2	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	66	31	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	42	2	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	41	7	3	8
The teaching is good.	75	24	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	46	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	12	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	34	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	49	44	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	31	3	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	25	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	42	12	5	7

*Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number and may therefore not total exactly 100*

## **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**

73 Children start school in one of the two reception classes the September term before their fifth birthday. They attend part-time initially but by Christmas all children stay in school for the full day. Their smooth transition into school is fostered very well by the 'Rainbow' sessions for pre-school children in the summer term.

74 A main strength of the Foundation Stage provision is the excellent teamwork between all members of the teaching team. This ensures that:

- children are happy and confident in their new surroundings because of their positive experiences in the 'Rainbow' sessions;
- children, their families and staff develop excellent relationships as a result of home visits from the 'Rainbow' group teacher and the friendly manner of the staff team;
- children's special educational needs are identified early because of the good links made with families early on and the close links with the early years centre and pre-school providers;
- children are given the help and support that they need because of the flexible grouping arrangements made possible by the very good support staff;
- children achieve well in all areas of learning.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

75 Children make very good progress in the development of their personal, social and emotional skills and by the time they start in Year 1, most have reached the early learning goals in all aspects of this area. They do so well because of very good teaching and support from the staff. The 'Rainbow' sessions and the reception classes are very well organised with very well structured sessions, so that children feel safe and secure and know just what is expected of them. This secure framework is set within the context of excellent relationships between the staff. Children respond very well to this and in their turn show friendship and respect for adults and other children. They are polite and friendly and listen very well to what the staff have to say to them. They play sensibly with other children and take turns and share the materials and equipment. Children are given opportunities to work and play in a range of settings and this helps them to develop their social skills and adapt to different situations. Sometimes, for example, children select their own activities and at these times show great independence. At other times they work in small groups with an adult and most are beginning to modify their behaviour to suit the activity. Sometimes the children meet in larger class groups and already show that they can concentrate well for a reasonable length of time. In both work and play situations children's behaviour is very good. Staff rarely have to talk to a child about their behaviour, but all children are clearly aware of the difference between right and wrong.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

76 Children make very good progress in this area, again because of very good teaching. The principles of effective communication underpin work in all areas of learning and children are given every opportunity to become effective communicators. There is a very good emphasis on providing children with time to develop their speaking and listening skills. They are encouraged to listen to the staff and each other carefully in class and group sessions and manage this well. Sessions are organised so that children work for some time each day in very small groups with an adult. At these times the adult fosters children's speaking skills by introducing new vocabulary and encouraging children to talk about what they are doing. In the frequent 'show and tell' sessions, small groups of children gather with a member of staff to share their news or talk about something that they have brought in from home. In one

session, children were very enthusiastic about this and talked with animation about their prized possessions, these included a skateboard, diving flippers and a baptismal candle.

77 By the time children move into Year 1 most have reached the early learning goals for their reading development and attainment is broadly average. There is a good emphasis on helping pupils to develop phonic skills effectively and in sessions seen, some children worked particularly on 'm' and 'd' sounds, while others built up words beginning with 'ch'. Again, children worked in small groups with a member of staff and this ensured that they were given very good support. Much of the phonic work is based on a published scheme, which the children find enjoyable. Children are encouraged to enjoy stories and books and chose from a wide range within their classrooms. They all take books home to share with their parents or carers and this has a very positive impact on their progress.

78 Children are developing their writing skills well. Most already write their names clearly, some are forming words independently and some are beginning to write in sentences. Some of their independent writing is in their own books and other work involves completing worksheets. Again, children work in small groups with an adult, so that they are closely monitored and supported. Some of the children are quite small and staff are aware that their seating positions need to be altered so that they can put their feet to the ground. There are writing areas in each classroom, where children can write independently. At the time of the inspection these were not well equipped with a wide range of papers and writing tools, because space in the area is limited. Children know where additional materials are stored.

### **Mathematical development**

79 Children make good progress in developing their mathematical understanding and skills because of the good teaching and provision in this area. Most reach, or are likely to reach the expected level by the time that they enter Year 1. Their attainment is average overall and this indicates good progress from entry. Children's recorded work is fairly limited but shows that higher attaining children are confident with numbers to 7. In sessions seen children were happy with larger numbers. About a quarter are confident in recognising numbers beyond 10. Higher attaining pupils know that 15 is 5 more than 10 and that 12 is 2 more than 10. They worked this out mentally in the session seen and checked that they were right with unifix cubes. Lower attaining children are well supported and in a session seen worked with a teaching assistant to identify numbers to 5. As well as designated mathematic sessions, staff take care to help children to develop their mathematical language in every day situations. There was less evidence of a regular diet of number rhymes and songs, although staff report that children do know these.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

80 This area is particularly well taught and children make very good progress. Most reach the expected level by the time that they enter Year 1, with many doing better than this. Every opportunity is taken to interest them in the world around them and very good use is made of children's own experiences and the school environment to help them to move forward. The 'show and tell' sessions, already referred to, help children to learn from their friends. The regular gardening sessions help them to understand how plants develop and the trips out of school like the sensory walk in Alice Holt forest help them to explore their senses in a new environment. Topics are often a focus for learning and engage children's interest and imagination. This term, for example, children are studying pirates. In one session seen children used their understanding to draw maps of a treasure island. Their maps were of high quality with symbols clearly representing geographical features. Children also have many opportunities to use the computers. They work on these sensibly. Most have good control of the mouse and work on a variety of programmes independently. With adult help they progress quickly. In one session seen, children clicked on and dragged symbols onto a map, which they eventually printed off.

### **Physical development**

81 Children move ahead well in their physical development because of the good provision and effective teaching. Most are on course to reach the expected level by the time that they enter Year 1. Within focused class sessions in the hall the teaching is very good and children achieve very well. In sessions seen during the inspection children again worked on their pirate theme to move carefully around the hall using the ropes, benches, stools and bars. They reached high standards in these sessions, using the space well and balancing carefully. There are opportunities for less directed physical activity in the area outside the classrooms. Here children play with wheeled toys and small apparatus. When it is wet, as it was during the inspection, children transfer to work in the dining hall. In a session seen they used some small climbing apparatus confidently. Overall the opportunities for children to play and work outside are limited by the access to the playground from the classrooms. It is not possible, for example, for children to move directly from the classroom to the outside area. This limits the amount of time that teachers plan for work outside the classrooms.

82 Children are developing their fine hand control well. They enjoy playing with construction toys, for example, and deftly fit pieces together. They are gaining good pencil control and many form letters and numbers accurately.

### **Creative development**

83 Children make good progress in their creative development because of the good teaching and good overall provision in this area. Opportunities for children to engage in role play, for example, are good. They include role play areas within the classrooms that change with the topic being studied. Currently these are pirate ships. Children also choose role play activities when playing outside or in the dining hall and this helps them to develop their understanding of story. No directed art activities were seen during the inspection, although work displayed shows some effective work with plasticene to make 'Flat Stanleys', some chalk pictures of flowers and some butterfly prints made with paint. During the inspection there was not a wide range of materials and resources for children to select to make their own pictures, because the focus for the week was on malleable materials. Some children made treasure pictures from a selection of shiny paper and sequins, but this followed a 'colouring in' activity, which did little to foster creative development. Whole class sessions led by the nursery nurse support children's musical development very well. In one session seen, children worked very hard and achieved well. They all followed a pictorial score to play instruments. Most managed to play both quietly and loudly, as directed. They enjoyed a range of action songs, with most enjoying the actions rather than the singing!

#### *Strengths include:*

- *very good team work;*
- *very good organisation and teaching;*
- *very good emphasis on helping children to be independent;*
- *very good partnership with parents.*

#### *Areas for development include:*

- *access to the outside play area;*
- *range of materials in writing areas.*

## **ENGLISH**

84 Standards have risen since the last inspection, when they were above average in reading and average in speaking and listening and writing. There has been steady improvement in national tests, with pupils doing particularly well in 2000, when there was a larger group of higher attaining pupils. The inspection found that standards in speaking and listening and

writing are above average. They are well above average in reading. Generally boys do better than girls in writing.

85 All pupils achieve well. The very good support given to pupils with special educational needs helps most to reach the levels expected for their age by the time they leave the school. Pupils learning English as an additional language achieve well because of the staff's sensitive approach to their learning needs.

#### *Reasons for the improvement in all areas of English*

86 There are several reasons for the improvement in English. These include:

- very good planning for the development of skills, partly as a result of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy;
- a consistent approach to teaching from class to class;
- improved assessment and target setting procedures;
- very clear leadership by the subject manager.

#### *Reasons for the differences in the performance of boys and girls in writing*

87 Staff have identified the possible reasons for the difference in the performance of boys and girls in writing. They feel that the following are contributory factors:

- an emphasis on non-fiction writing;
- the development of speaking and listening skills, which has been particularly beneficial for boys;
- asking pupils to write about things that interest them.

The inspection also looked carefully at this area. It found nothing in the current provision to suggest that boys were better taught than girls and agrees with the school's views about the reasons for the difference. In this area all pupils are achieving well and the current differences between the attainment of boys and girls are not significant.

#### *Speaking and listening*

88 In Years 1 and 2 teachers build on the very good foundation laid in the reception classes. Introductions to sessions are used as opportunities to help pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and pupils are involved in discussion and question and answer sessions. Most contribute confidently, using whole sentences instead of single words. Pupils frequently work in small groups with an adult and at these times all pupils have the chance to contribute. This area has moved forward well since the last inspection. Planning is much improved and activities like 'show and tell' and drama are now regular features of the curriculum. Role play areas are carefully planned. This term, for example, they are used well as puppet theatres with close links to play writing and performing.

#### *Reading*

89 Reading is taught well and consequently most pupils make good progress. The very good strategies that the school has in place to help pupils to develop as readers include:

- providing a wide range of interesting fiction and non-fiction books;
- making libraries and class book areas attractive and good places to browse;
- introducing pupils to good writers through book fairs;
- sharing good quality fiction and poetry with pupils;
- special events like the summer term book week;
- teaching phonic skills well;
- providing opportunities for pupils to share books with adults;
- providing extra help for pupils who find reading difficult;
- encouraging pupils to read with an adult at home.

Consequently pupils enjoy reading. They are keen to talk about favourite books and authors and some are familiar with the work of writers as diverse as Roald Dahl, Dick King-Smith,



Allan Ahlberg, JK Rowling and JRR Tolkien. Many read very confidently and all are clear about the strategies that they can use to tackle difficult words. They mentioned sounding out, context cues, breaking up words and using pictures as useful strategies. Pupils talked enthusiastically about taking their books home and their reading diaries show that many parents and carers read regularly with their children. The record sheets are well designed, but are loose-leaf sheets, which tend to become dog-eared easily.

### *Writing*

90 Writing is also taught well. A good range of interesting tasks is planned, often linked to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils respond well to this and their writing is lively and often extended. Work in both year groups shows good progress made this year. Most are writing at the levels expected for their age, with some doing better than this. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils, for example, write in a joined, cursive script, use speech marks and exclamation marks well and spell polysyllabic words phonetically correctly. Some of the work is in pupils' writing books, with about half on pieces of paper or worksheets. These are bound together for each child by 'treasury tags', but are awkward for pupils to handle and look back on. At the time of the inspection very little written work was on display, either on walls or in book collections of pupils' work. A stronger focus on this would help pupils to view themselves more clearly as writers for an audience.

### *Teaching*

91 Overall the quality of teaching is good, ranging from satisfactory to excellent in the sessions seen. Basic skills are systematically taught and teachers also emphasise the enjoyment to be had from learning to read and write. The strengths in the teaching include:

- very detailed planning and preparation, ensuring that all classes follow the same programmes of study;
- the outstanding contribution of the support assistants, which makes a significant impact on pupils' good progress;
- good links made to develop pupils' skills in other subjects;
- very good organisational strategies, for example the grouping of pupils into 'Mogs', 'Elmers', 'Kippers' and 'Little Bears';
- high expectations of good behaviour and hard work.

In the excellent lesson, the teacher fired the pupils with her enthusiasm and all worked extremely hard and sensibly. They enjoyed working with a range of books, including one about caterpillars and 'The Mousehole Cat' by Antonia Barber. In the one satisfactory lesson organisation was also very good, but the teacher did not spend sufficient time monitoring the group activities.

92 The subject manager leads this area very well. She is committed, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She is clear in her own mind about what needs to be done to improve the subject further. However, the agenda for development in the school improvement plan is sketchy and is not used effectively as a basis for action.

### *Strengths include:*

- *standards;*
- *good links with other subjects;*
- *support for pupils with special educational needs.*

### *Areas for development include t:*

- *agenda for improvement;*
- *display of pupils' writing;*
- *home reading records.*

## MATHEMATICS

93 Standards are above average, as they were at the time of the last inspection. This year most pupils are reaching the level expected for their age. Higher attaining pupils are doing particularly well and this is why standards are above average. Although there has been an apparent dip in standards in national tests in the years since the last inspection, the school's own tracking system shows that most pupils make at least satisfactory progress from entry, with some moving ahead very well. Standards have improved this year for the following reasons:

- the school has adapted the Numeracy Strategy to make effective use of the framework to help with planning;
- a weekly focused teaching session for pupils of different attainment levels is proving an effective way of challenging all pupils, especially the higher attainers;
- the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and this is having an impact on standards.

The school is conscious of the need to provide more additional support for pupils who are a little behind their peers so that more pupils attain levels 2a and 2b.

94 Pupils are developing numeracy skills well. By the age of seven most pupils know by heart all addition and subtraction facts to 20 and many go beyond this. In a Year 1/2 class the pupils enthusiastically revised number bonds to 20 whilst recognising the significant doubles and halves that would help in their mental calculations. Thorough attention to the development of mental and oral skills in all classes has improved pupils' speed and ability in number work. Pupils in Year 2 explained that they used their knowledge of 20 being double 10 to quickly work out that  $10 + 5 + 10 = 25$ . In another lesson one Year 1 pupil clearly understood that  $8 - 4 = 4$  because  $4 + 4 = 8$ . These examples reflect pupils' thorough understanding of number and this a strength. Pupils also measure and compare lengths using centimetres and non-standard measures and can explain the strategies they use in determining their answer. The school supports higher attainers well. One Year 1 pupil is particularly gifted, for example. He works at level 4 confidently and in a session seen compared his own height with that of a tree in the playground and investigated ways of measuring both.

95 Pupils' work on solving problems and using and applying their number knowledge to investigative situations is underdeveloped. Although pupils' achievements are satisfactory in these areas, they are not as good as achievements in measure and mental and oral calculations in number. This is mainly because pupils do not have nearly as many opportunities to work on them.

96 The quality of teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and the majority of lessons were well taught. Examples of very good teaching included the work done with higher attaining pupils on the accounts for the Gardening Club and the work planned for a more able pupil in Year 1. Teachers have made mathematics interesting and practical for pupils by sharing their enthusiasm with them. As a result, pupils respond well, expect to enjoy their lessons and work very hard during them. In a Year 1/2 lesson pupils responded with excitement as they rose to their teacher's challenge to work out the total cost of a meal from a menu she had prepared. Pupils present their work carefully, take a pride in it and discuss it seriously with each other. They behave extremely well, concentrate on what teachers explain, and organise themselves for work quickly and quietly. Pupils' ability to present the outcomes of problem solving in a logical way is less well developed and teachers need to help their pupils to improve on this aspect of their work.

97 Teachers' planning is based on the National Framework for Numeracy and it takes account of pupils' needs and the targets that have been set for them. Most work is planned

to meet the needs of pupils of different attainment levels and activities are carefully planned to encourage group and individual work. Teachers use resources effectively to enhance pupils' progress, including the use of ICT to consolidate learning. Links with other subjects are well developed, with graphs being drawn in science, the 'roamer' control device being used to create mathematical shapes and data from a sorting and classifying activity, and then entered on the computer to produce different ways of displaying the information.

98 The subject manager co-ordinates mathematics well throughout the school. She monitors the work by observing colleagues, looking at planning and analysing data. This gives her a good overview of standards and quality. Resources are of good quality and are used well in lessons. The subject manager is aware of the need for additional focus on problem solving and extra support for less able pupils. The school is well placed to further improve standards in mathematics.

*Strengths include:*

- *pupils' ability to use a range of mental and oral strategies successfully;*
- *links with other curriculum areas;*
- *the progress made by higher attaining pupils;*
- *good teaching;*
- *pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.*

*Areas for development include:*

- *further develop the ability to solve problems and present results in an organised way;*
- *direct more focused support for less able pupils in order to raise standards.*

## **SCIENCE**

99 Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 have improved steadily since the last inspection, with a considerable increase in the number of pupils achieving higher levels. During the inspection standards in the current Year 2 were found to be average overall with a significant proportion working at the higher level. This picture is closely mirrored in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2001. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. There are several factors contributing to this steady trend of improvement, including better teaching. It is now consistently good. In particular, the adoption of national guidelines has helped teachers to improve their planning. As a result, teaching is more focused and ensures that pupils' learning builds on their earlier experiences as they move through the school.

100 Teachers develop pupils' knowledge of life and living processes, materials and their properties and physical processes well. There is evidence of a good range of work across each of these aspects of science. In addition, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop their enquiry and research skills and to learn through experience by applying their knowledge and understanding in practical situations. However, they have too few opportunities to carry out open-ended investigations.

101 Teachers work hard to ensure that science lessons are fully inclusive and that all groups of pupils are actively involved in all activities. As a result they achieve well over time and develop their scientific thinking effectively. This includes higher attaining pupils, who are suitably challenged by the work set. A small number of particularly able pupils from each class benefit from the problem solving opportunities provided by the gardening club. Teachers match tasks appropriately and provide additional support wherever possible for pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. As a result they also achieve well. In one lesson, for example, the teacher's main focus was on Year 2 pupils. More able pupils in Year 1 were carrying out a challenging

research task linked with their work on frogs and tadpoles, while lower attaining pupils sequenced a series of pictures to show the life cycle of the frog. Both groups were well supported by adults and made good gains in their learning.

102 By the end of Year 2, pupils have a thorough understanding of humans as organisms, and of growth and change. They understand the importance of exercise to keep healthy and food as a source of energy. Most pupils carefully investigate the conditions required for plants to grow and the changes in ingredients brought about by cooking, making predictions and testing them by scientific methods. They know about different sources of light and energy. They successfully conduct scientific experiments and draw accurate conclusions, such as when they investigate melting ice cubes. Higher attaining pupils recognise and explain why their tests are fair and use their knowledge and experience to make well-ordered observations on forces and vehicles moving down ramps. They communicate their findings clearly in writing. All pupils make good attempts in learning to use tables and diagrams and achieve well in using correct scientific vocabulary.

103 At the time of the last inspection teaching was satisfactory. It is now consistently good throughout the school. This is reflected in pupils' knowledge and in their positive response and enjoyment of the subject. Teachers are enthusiastic, have good scientific knowledge and communicate their own interests very well. As a result pupils are curious and enjoy experimenting and discovering for themselves. They work well in small groups discussing ideas, sharing equipment and recording with care. Pupils quickly become absorbed in their work and their behaviour is good.

104 In all of the lessons seen, skilful direct teaching led pupils in Year 2 to a clear understanding of the way in which devices such as bulbs, batteries and switches work in simple electrical circuits. Teachers' careful, methodical approach ensures that pupils' learning builds systematically as the well-planned series of lessons proceeds. They give clear explanations and instructions and make good use of questioning to challenge and extend pupils' scientific thinking and to check their understanding. Classroom assistants and parent helpers are very well briefed to ensure that pupils of all attainment levels are included in the activities and are given suitable support when recording work. In one lesson, for example, the teacher scribed for lower attaining pupils to enable them to record their observations.

105 On some occasions, however, pupils in Year 1 who were not the focus for direct teaching during these sessions, did not make sufficient progress in their chart activities. This was partly because teachers had not defined precisely what they expected pupils to learn and partly because they did not monitor these non-focus activities to ensure that pupils remained on task.

106 Science is well led by an experienced and knowledgeable subject manager, whose aims are concerned with promoting an enthusiasm for learning and developing well-motivated and independent learners. These are clearly reflected in the work of pupils who are provided with a firm foundation for future learning. The policy and scheme of work have been revised since the previous inspection and provide good coverage of the subject with good opportunities also to develop the ICT skills of word processing, information retrieval and data handling. A very good system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in both knowledge and understanding and investigative skills has been introduced since the last inspection. Key criteria that are firmly rooted in the National Curriculum programmes of study are used to measure pupils' progress. There is a clear and straightforward format for recording the results that could be usefully developed to identify the next steps in learning for individual pupils as, for example, in English and mathematics. The current action plan is not sufficiently detailed to guide future developments in the subject.

*Strengths include:*

- *consistently good teaching based on good subject knowledge;*
- *thorough planning;*
- *very good assessment procedures;*
- *pupils' and teachers' positive attitudes to science;*
- *the firm foundation for future learning;*
- *strong leadership by the subject manager.*

*Areas for development include:*

- *continuing to refine assessment procedures in order to identify the next steps in learning;*
- *developing higher order skills by introducing more open-ended investigations;*
- *ensuring that the action plan is sufficiently detailed to guide future developments.*

## **ART AND DESIGN**

107 Work in art and design was not timetabled during the inspection and judgement is based on a limited amount of work seen, discussions with staff and teachers' planning. Based on this the provision noted at the time of the last inspection has been maintained, but not developed further. Standards remain average.

108 The work seen indicates good focused teaching on the development of skills. Drawings and watercolours of anemones, for example, show that pupils have paid careful attention to detail. Their paintings in the style of Monet show good teaching about brushwork. However there is generally insufficient emphasis on the work of famous artists and the school's collection of reproductions is fairly limited. Quite a number of the displays are of work related to collage. Some of these, such as the group work on fruit collages are of high quality. They show that pupils have a good understanding of colour and texture. Some others are very teacher-directed, such as the collages to illustrate different stories. They do not celebrate the individuality of pupils' work or provide opportunities for skills' development. The annual arts week provides a rich opportunity for pupils to learn about artists and experiment with different techniques. This year, for example, pupils made felt and learnt about machine knitting.

109 There is a sound planning framework in place which ensures good coverage of all the strands of art. It provides guidance for teachers about activities and skills development, although there is no overall overview of the development of skills in areas such as drawing, painting and printing. Since the subject manager left two years ago, staff have been sharing the responsibility for art and design and this why the management of the subject has not developed. There is no manager's file, for example, and unlike other subject areas, no assessment procedures. There is currently very little monitoring of work or teaching in this area.

*Strengths include:*

- *contribution made by arts week;*
- *teaching of skills.*

*Areas for development include:*

- *subject management;*
- *assessment;*
- *learning from artists.*

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110 Only two lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence was also gathered from teachers' planning and discussions with them and the subject co-ordinator. Examples of pupils' finished work were seen as well as design drawings and the school's resources provision. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be at the national expectation by the time the pupils left the school. Present inspection evidence indicates that standards have improved and are now above the expected levels.

111 The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was good overall and, in one, very good. Teaching has a significant impact on pupils' learning about the design process. Teachers have particularly high expectations of the way pupils think about their designs and they offer constructive advice. As a result, pupils produce pleasing designs and identify what materials they will need. In Years 1 and 2 pupils had previously visited a play park to investigate the play equipment and how it was made. They confidently use their knowledge and observations to develop good designs for their own playground equipment. During the making stage pupils are able to explain clearly how they are developing their joining techniques. They also discuss how they are modifying their designs as the making progresses. A recently organised competition to design a scarecrow for the school grounds, to protect the plants and produce, really fired the pupils' imagination. Pupils now have the opportunity to work with the school keeper to make some of the best designs.

112 The teachers in the lessons observed use their own good subject knowledge to assist the pupils in their evaluations and to encourage them to further improve the final product. This process could be further enhanced by teaching pupils simple finishing techniques to improve the appearance of the final product. Provision for food technology is particularly well developed and pupils enjoy the range of experiences presented to them. During the inspection pupils had the opportunity to make vegetable soup and to design and make their own pizzas.

113 A new co-ordinator has recently taken over the management of the subject and she already has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. A well-organised curriculum cycle is in place to cover the recommended elements and this ensures progress across the school. A skills-based assessment system is in place that allows teachers to track pupils' developing skills. The school has excellent provision for food technology and a good variety of making and joining tools and materials, including wood products and fabrics.

*Strengths include:*

- *pupils' secure knowledge and understanding of the design process;*
- *breadth of experiences, including very good food technology;*
- *pupils' ability to evaluate and improve their designs as they move through the 'making' stage;*
- *pupils' ability to communicate their ideas through effective drawings.*

*Areas for development include:*

- *further enhance the finished product by teaching pupils simple finishing techniques to improve its appearance.*

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

114 No lessons were seen in either geography or history during the inspection. Judgements, therefore are based on pupils' work samples, teachers' plans and other documents and discussions with teachers and pupils. In addition, the subject manager provided comprehensive and most helpful portfolios of pupils' work with excellent photographic

records of studies undertaken. This very firm evidence shows that standards are securely in line with expected levels. These standards have been successfully maintained since the last inspection. In both subjects pupils are meeting all the requirements of the expected Level 2 of the National Curriculum but teachers have not yet identified precisely what is required in order to move pupils on to the more challenging Level 3.

115 There have been significant improvements in the school's provision for these subjects. They have resulted in a more cohesive approach with a greater emphasis on developing the specific knowledge, skills and understanding of geography and history. At the same time effective links are made with other subjects, including English, through the use of stories to introduce topics and to stimulate interest, and ICT through the use of the Internet to carry out research. Both now provide a well balanced and rich range of experiences of a higher quality than is normally seen for pupils of these ages. As a result, pupils of all abilities achieve well.

116 In geography, teachers begin to promote a sense of place through the study of the school site and its surroundings. They plan tasks that are relevant and stimulating and support pupils' learning effectively by the use of pictures, photographs, atlases, wall maps and the globe to track the class bears on their distant and not so distant travels. By the time they are seven, pupils draw maps and are introduced to the need for a key as part of their work on Mousehole, a Cornish fishing village. The study is effectively introduced through the reading of '*The Mousehole Cat*'. Discussion with pupils in Year 2 shows that this approach has brought the study to life for them. They talk enthusiastically about their work and the topics studied. They use terms such as sea, beach, harbour and jetty with confidence to describe the human and physical features of coastal landscapes but they have not yet begun to offer explanations for their location. They have a sound awareness of distant localities and demonstrate good map work skills.

117 In history, teachers successfully foster pupils' interest in the past initially by focusing their attention on changes in their own lives and in the lives of familiar adults. They go on to acquire knowledge about people and events in the more distant past, and by listening to stories, for example about the voyage of The Mayflower, they begin to appreciate the difference between fact and fiction. Their knowledge and understanding of the passing of time is promoted through the regular use of timelines and the sequencing of episodes in the lives of people such as Dick Whittington, Guy Fawkes and Queen Victoria. Pupils in Year 2 have good recall of these studies, demonstrating strong factual knowledge of the events and people studied. While they are beginning to give reasons why people in the past acted as they did, they are not yet able to explain or suggest consequences of the main events. Similarly, while their understanding of the passage of time is developing strongly, their awareness of different periods and their use of associated dates are not so well developed.

118 Although no lessons were seen it is clear that good teaching occurs throughout the school in both subjects. Teachers set interesting and challenging tasks designed to develop the essential and specific study skills of geography and history. In both there is a strong emphasis on asking and answering questions. Teachers plan carefully and co-operatively to ensure continuity of learning and that all pupils have access to the same richness of experiences. Pupils are successfully motivated by a variety of approaches, many enabling them to acquire knowledge and skills through first-hand experiences.

119 In geography, these include good opportunities for pupils to practise their fieldwork skills in a study that culminates in the production of attractive and well-researched guides to Alton and the neighbouring village of Selborne. In history, teachers make very good use of historical artefacts to enliven the past. A particular strength in the teaching of history is the use of role-play to meet the school's intention of 'conveying historical information in an interesting and stimulating format.' Teachers enter into these activities wholeheartedly with

their pupils to explore the lives of the Pilgrim Fathers, Guy Fawkes and his fellow plotters and the children of Victorian times.

120 Both subjects are very well led by an experienced and committed teacher. She has very good knowledge of geography and history coupled with a clear vision of the most effective ways in which pupils learn. Good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have recently been introduced although they are not yet impacting on standards. Pupils' learning is well supported by a good bank of resources. This is a particularly strong feature of history teaching where the school boosts its own supply of original and facsimile artefacts by very effective use of local loan services.

*Strengths include:*

- *good teaching based on subject knowledge and enthusiasm;*
- *rich, lively and meaningful range of experiences;*
- *good assessment procedures;*
- *very good subject leadership;*
- *very good use of resources, particularly in history.*

*Areas for development include:*

- *identifying and promoting higher order skills;*
- *refining assessment procedures to identify next steps in learning.*

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

121 At the time of the last inspection, the standards were judged to be above the national expectations by the end of Year 2. Since then, the nature of these national expectations has increased significantly and the school has kept pace with them. Pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectation by the time they leave school. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and judgements have also been based on discussions with the subject manager and with pupils, an analysis of work completed this year, teachers' planning, displays and resources.

122 A well-planned programme of lessons ensures that all pupils experience the full range of ICT required by the National Curriculum. Pupils and teachers make good and regular use of class computers and other resources, such as cassette recorders and the school's digital camera. Staff planning for all subjects routinely includes consideration of the possibility of ICT support and teachers are increasingly recognising the opportunities afforded to develop knowledge and skills in other subjects through ICT. Activities, using a programmable device, called a 'roamer', enable pupils to enter simple instructions to make it move in predetermined ways. Using this technique Year 2 pupils were able to produce different mathematical shapes and pictures. In another activity, Year 1 and 2 pupils confidently used software called '*Exploring Nature*' to research information about the environment and birds. The information retrieved was then used extremely successfully as a comprehension exercise in English. Pupils' communicate and share information with other people and schools both in this country and abroad. Pictures taken with the digital camera are sent with e-mails and pupils learn a great deal about life in other countries whilst also consolidating their use of the Internet and e-mail system.

123 The quality of teaching observed was good and the teacher managed the activities well demonstrating good subject knowledge. The recent New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training has enabled teachers and support staff to answer pupils' questions confidently and for learning to be extended. Displays and teachers' assessment records show that pupils have used an art package and programs to support recognition of phonetic and mathematical



patterns. Timetabling shows planned equality of opportunity in use of the class computers to support learning in English on a regular basis. However, only the computers in the main building are networked and this limits the pupils' accessibility to computers with Internet facilities. This weakness is a direct consequence of the accommodation difficulties and staff work hard to ensure all pupils have regular opportunities to use the Internet for research and e-mail contacts.

124 Pupils are highly enthusiastic and fully focused during their time at the computer. They persist well when entering information and enjoy the process. Year 2 pupils already know how to load a CD-ROM and start a new piece of work. They use the mouse confidently and, in word processing, use the shift and caps keys, space bar, enter and letter keys before naming and saving their work. Pupils' ability to evaluate their work as it progresses is less well developed and this is an area the school should develop.

125 The subject leader gives a strong lead and is highly supportive both to teachers and pupils. She has a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' work in the subject. There are suitable schemes of work and the policy is clear. Recent additions to the planning, such as guidance on using the Internet, have enhanced teaching and learning. The level of resources is good, although the lack of networked computers in the huts limits the progress the pupils can make in certain aspects of the subject.

*Strengths include:*

- *use of ICT across the curriculum;*
- *breadth of experiences, particularly sharing information using e-mail;*
- *pupils' use of ICT to find things out and to solve problems;*
- *opportunities to explore a variety of ICT tools;*
- *strong leadership.*

*Areas for development include:*

- *further develop pupils' ability to evaluate and improve their work as it progresses;*
- *accessibility to network (restrictions due to accommodation)*

## **MUSIC**

126 The school's provision for musical education has developed well since the last inspection, especially in the area of assessment. Pupils continue to make sound progress and reach the standards expected for their age.

127 Pupils have two music sessions a week. One is taken by their class teacher and one by the music subject manager. In the class music sessions seen, pupils used percussion instruments in order to combine long and short sounds to fit with a steady pulse. By the end of one lesson some understood the meaning of 'duration' and all held a steady beat with their instruments. Most were confident about the difference between long and short sounds. Many identified instruments such as a kabassa, egg shaker and Indian bells correctly. One of the lessons seen took place in the hall and this meant that children had more room to play their instruments. In the session taken by the music manager, all of Years 1 and 2 met together to sing. Pupils worked very well in a warm-up activity, which involved following a pictorial score to beat out a rhythm. They sang three songs tunefully, although not all participated, possibly because they could not remember the words.

128 The quality of teaching is good. High expectations of behaviour and excellent relationships result in very sensible behaviour. This was particularly noticeable in the work with the percussion instruments. No pupils touched instruments until they were told to, for example. Planning is clear and there are activities noted to challenge the Year 2 pupils

further. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they explain musical terms clearly. They also extend pupils' musical vocabulary by taking care to help pupils to identify instruments by their correct names. In two of the three sessions seen a late start meant that teachers were not able to develop the lesson as much as they had intended.

129 The very effective subject manager has considerable expertise. She uses this well and takes all of Years 1 and 2 for singing, for example. The subject is well managed. There is a sound planning document based on recent national guidelines and the school's original planning framework. Assessment procedures are effectively linked to the National Curriculum. Resources are good, instruments are well cared for and each class has its own box of percussion instruments, with further instruments in the hall. The annual Arts Week makes a good contribution to work in this area. This year, for example, a Latin American band played some Latin American instruments. Other visits and visitors also enhance the overall music curriculum. Recently pupils played Indian instruments during their Hindu temple visit and have enjoyed welcoming the local secondary school band.

*Strengths include:*

- *expertise of subject manager;*
- *quality of the resources.*

*Areas for development include:*

- *length of music sessions.*

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

130 The physical education programme includes dance, games and gymnastics, all the essential aspects of the subject for infant schools. During the inspection, lessons were seen in dance and games. Standards in dance are above average while in games they are average. This variation in standards arises as a result of the clear focus on what teachers want pupils to learn provided by the structure of traditional dance movements. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve as well as their peers as a result of teachers' careful strategies to engage all pupils actively and fully in their learning. Frequently this involves the sensitive support of classroom assistants. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls

131 By the age of seven, most pupils move around the hall showing good awareness of space and working enthusiastically. They listen carefully to their teachers and follow the clear instructions promptly. They begin to evaluate their own performance and the performance of others to help them refine their movements. Behaviour is very good overall, although it was excellent in more than half of the lessons seen because of the very good relationships that have been developed and high teacher expectations. They put a great deal of effort into their activities and gain a strong sense of achievement and enjoyment as a result. They are well aware of safety issues and this is essential within the constraints of the relatively small hall in which the games lessons took place. In dance they demonstrate a good repertoire of traditional folk dances making a very strong contribution to their awareness of their cultural heritage. They alter the rhythm, speed and direction of their movements in response to the music to attain standards that are better than typically seen for this age group. In games they show satisfactory levels of control and co-ordination to pass, throw, bounce and roll a ball to a partner. Teachers and pupils are always appropriately dressed for physical activity.

132 The quality of teaching in physical education is good overall. In each of the dance lessons seen it was very good. In the most successful lessons it was particularly effective because of teachers' good subject knowledge leading to a clear focus on what they wanted the pupils to learn. Most teachers share the purpose of the lesson with the pupils and this raises their awareness from the outset and ensures that learning proceeds at a brisk pace. Lessons usually begin with a suitable warm-up activity and end with a recovery session. This is particularly useful when the recovery is coupled with a review of the lesson to assess progress and discuss the next steps in learning. Teachers have high expectations and give good clear instructions so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. In all lessons, pupils were supported in improving their techniques in dance and in sending and receiving a ball through evaluating good examples selected by the teacher.

133 While there are no significant weaknesses in teaching, in some lessons more time for reflection and evaluation would have been helpful. In others, the identification of key coaching points would have ensured more rapid gains in the skills of catching and throwing.

134 For some time physical education has not had a subject manager. To some extent, therefore, the subject has lagged behind others in terms of the good recent developments that have taken place across the curriculum. These include reviewing schemes of work and introducing assessment procedures. This is now being addressed and the currently newly qualified teacher appointed to take on the role from next September has already made a good start to address these issues.

*Strengths include:*

- *quality of teaching, particularly in traditional dance;*
- *standards in dance lessons seen;*
- *pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour;*
- *teachers' co-operative planning.*

*Areas for development include:*

- *completing the review of the scheme of work;*
- *introducing assessment procedures.*

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

135 No judgement on standards was made at the time of the last inspection because of very little evidence for teaching and learning, although planning was detailed and of good quality.

136 By the age of seven, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have detailed knowledge about Christianity and Hinduism, the two religions chosen by the school. They talk knowledgeably as they compare other traditions with their own and see the relevance of particular symbols for believers. Pupils identify and retell Christian and Hindu stories accurately and explain links between stories and celebrations in key festivals. They have learned about special occasions in the religious calendar, for example harvest and Christmas. They have discussed what God could look like, and drawn pictures of their ideas. They appreciate and respect the differences between Hinduism and Christianity and regularly visit the Hindu temple in Southampton as well as several Christian churches in the locality.

137 The quality of teaching is consistently good and in one lesson seen it was excellent. Year 1 and 2 pupils are learning about the Hindu god, Ganesha, and they were fascinated by the story of how Ganesha was created. In the excellent lesson, the teacher successfully

related the Hindus' belief that Ganesha can help them to solve their problems to the pupils' own experiences and who they talk to when they have a problem. The pupils in this lesson showed remarkable insight into the significance of the Hindu god and when asked why they thought Hindus turned to Ganesha for help, one child replied '*Because he is wise and powerful.*' Teachers make excellent use of religious artefacts to help pupils to appreciate the traditions of Christianity and Hinduism and the range of resources available for the study of Ganesha is outstanding.

138 The planning for the subject is very good and the subject manager maintains a photographic record and a substantial portfolio of the pupils' work in religious education. The work for inclusion in the portfolio is annotated by the teachers to highlight the context and nature of the evidence. The subject leader gives a particularly strong lead in the subject and she has been instrumental in ensuring that teachers are confident and committed in their delivery of the subject. Resources are of the highest quality with a wide range of artefacts and posters to use as stimuli for the different aspects of the syllabus.

*Strengths include:*

- *particularly strong leadership;*
- *pupils' ability to ask and discuss questions when investigating different religions;*
- *above average standards achieved throughout the school.*