

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHINGTON CE FIRST SCHOOL

Ashington, Pulborough

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 125971

Headteacher: Mr D Breach

Reporting inspector: Michael Chisnall
17746

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 June 2002

Inspection number: 196140

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4-10 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Foster Lane
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Abel

Date of previous inspection: 7-10 July 1997

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17746	Michael Chisnall	Registered inspector	Mathematics Physical Education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? – the school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9121	Heather Danpure	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22896	Kate McGuinness	Team inspector	English Music Foundation Stage curriculum English as an Additional Language	How well are pupils taught?
23543	Richard James	Team inspector	Science Information Technology Design and Technology Special Educational Needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
13228	Marcia Foley	Team Inspector	Art Geography History Equal Opportunities	How high are standards? – Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ashington is a smaller than average Church of England Controlled first school catering for pupils aged four to ten years. There are 169 pupils on roll, which is much larger than at the last inspection, with more boys than girls. The school has grown in size due to expansion of the village and was relocated to its present site two years ago. There are 29 full time pupils under the age of six and in the reception class. On entry to the school, pupils represent the full range of ability, but overall are above average and have been for the last two years. Prior to that, attainment on entry was around average for West Sussex. Pupils represent the full range of social backgrounds but overall are well above average. Most come from Ashington village. Few pupils (4 percent) are known to be eligible for free school meals. There are 41 pupils on the special needs register and four pupils with statements of special need. These levels are around average but higher than at the last inspection. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities, as at the last inspection, although three pupils have English as an additional language. The school is slightly over-subscribed and the roll is now stable.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in providing a good standard of education, characterised by very good teaching overall. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are above average. In the foundation subjects, standards are in line with national expectations. The school is very well managed and strong pastoral leadership is provided. Leadership of learning is sound but with the capacity to be better. No aspects were found to be less than satisfactory. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Achieves good standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Provides very good teaching overall.
- Makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Makes good provision for pupils' personal development.
- Management is very good.
- Very good provision for children in the Foundation Stage.

What could be improved

- Subject leadership.
- Standards in some foundation subjects.
- The consistency with which assessment practice is used.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1997. There has been good overall improvement since then. The music curriculum now meets requirements and the school has introduced schemes of work for all subjects. The governing body has now a clear policy for sex education. The school improvement plan is a more strategic document but still has an insufficient focus on pupils' learning and achievement. Standards in the core subjects are now above average and much improved since 1997. Accommodation is much improved. Value for money is now better than at the last inspection. The school's capacity to improve still further is good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	A	C	B	C
Writing	B	C	C	E
Mathematics	B	B	C	E

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

The above table shows that standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 were above average and average in writing and mathematics against all schools in 2001. When compared to similar schools, standards were average in reading but well below average for writing and mathematics. Standards are now above average in all three areas. By the time pupils leave the school, standards in English, mathematics and science are above expectations and pupils achieve well. Standards in physical education relating to games skills are above expectations. In all other subjects, standards are in line with those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and attain standards that are largely in line with expectations for their ages. More able pupils also achieve well and attain high standards. Reading across the school is a particular strength. Children in the Foundation Stage exceed expectations for their age and attain high standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are keen to work and apply themselves well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; consistently high standards of behaviour make a positive contribution to the learning environment. No pupils were excluded last year.
Personal development and relationships	Good; pupils show respect for each other and are kind. There could be more opportunities for them to show collaboration in learning tasks.
Attendance	Good; pupils attend well and are punctual although there is a growing tendency for absence due to family holidays.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are strengths of the school and impact very positively on learning. They concentrate well and work hard. When provided with opportunities to work together, they do so very well. More of these opportunities would provide further occasions for pupils to develop such skills. Pupils are particularly caring to those who need extra support and they go out of their way to help them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 5
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Very good

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

Teaching is very good overall and a major strength of the school. All teaching is at least satisfactory and more than four out of five lessons are good or better. Over one half is very good or excellent with a greater incidence of these high quality lessons in the Reception year and Key Stage 2. Literacy skills are taught well and numeracy skills very well. Staff work hard to ensure that they meet the needs of all pupils, providing the right sort of challenging work for different ability groups. The whole class introductions to literacy and numeracy lessons are particularly well established. Expectations are consistently high throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well so that they achieve good standards for their abilities. As a result of this high quality of teaching, pupils learn very well and gain in knowledge, skills and understanding at a very good pace.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. It meets statutory requirements and pupils study the full range of subjects. Too little time is allocated to some foundation subjects, limiting the ability of pupils to attain high standards in them.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good overall with particular strengths in individual provision.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good; all these pupils are fluent in English and have no need for particular support beyond that for any other pupil.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school makes sound provision for spiritual and cultural development but very good provision for pupils' social and moral growth.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Very good provision for pupils with statements of special educational need; good procedures for promoting behaviour and attendance; assessment practice is inconsistent across the school and needs greater direction.

The school works well with parents who make a significant contribution to their children's learning through supporting and encouraging them and helping with school activities. Communication with parents has improved in recent months and parents are now happier with what they receive. Comparatively little curriculum time is devoted to history, geography, information and communications technology and design and technology so that pupils do not get the depth of coverage needed to achieve the standards they might. Assemblies, class councils and talk time make a significant contribution to pupils' social and moral development. Spiritual development is promoted through assemblies and worship but there are not enough planned opportunities in the curriculum to maximise growth. Western European culture is well represented in art, music and literacy but there are insufficient resources to help pupils appreciate the diverse nature of British and other societies. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils have very good equality of access to the curriculum.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good management, good pastoral leadership and sound educational leadership are provided. Subject leadership needs development. Leadership and management are sound overall but well placed to develop further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Soundly. Recent developments in governance are allowing the governing body to discharge its functions with growing effectiveness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. National tests are analysed well and action taken to address weaknesses. The monitoring of teaching, learning and achievement is undertaken by the senior team but not yet by subject leaders.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses new technology well, targets spending to educational priorities and monitors the budget carefully. It provides good value for money.

The headteacher manages the school very well and ensures that the school's aims are reflected in its work. The recent growth in the school roll requires the school to develop the ways in which subjects are led and managed. At present the school improvement plan is insufficiently focused on learning and achievement. More effective monitoring and evaluation by subject leaders is needed to develop this aspect further. The governing body is developing its role well. The school applies the principles of best value well and makes the most of its budget. Staffing is sufficient and meets the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation is very good and much improved since the last inspection. Resources are adequate overall. There are insufficient books in the library for the size of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress pupils make • Behaviour • Teaching • Leadership and management • Support for SEN pupils • Pupils' enjoyment of school • Recent curriculum evenings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Information about progress • Extra-curricular activities

Inspectors agreed with parents' and carers' positive views and have noted that teaching is a particular strength of the school. Reports on pupils' progress are well written but could include more information about learning targets for pupils. Homework provision is consistent and the school informs parents of expectations for each year group. Inspectors judged that extra-curricular provision is satisfactory but noted that there is currently no provision for musical activities beyond that provided through individual instrumental tuition. Overall, parents commented very favourably on the school's provision for their children.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in the core subjects are above expectations and pupils achieve well. This is because they are very well taught and as a result, apply themselves well to their work. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language achieve standards that are good for their abilities and make good progress. The school also tracks the achievements of gifted and talented pupils and they, too, achieve well and reach standards that are well in excess of expectations for their ages. Boys and girls achieve equally as well although girls tend to attain standards that are slightly higher than boys, particularly in literacy. However, the gap is closing.
2. By the end of the Foundation Stage (the end of the Reception year), children achieve very well and almost all exceed the expectations of the early learning goals for this pre-National Curriculum stage. Although attainment on entry to the school is above average, these children do make very good progress and are very well placed to continue this as they meet the National Curriculum programmes of study. Children are able to read very well with expression and clarity. The more able are beginning to self-correct and can recall events within a story accurately. They begin to use a joined script in their writing and can produce simple sentences, often using correct punctuation. This growing fluency and confidence in language and literacy supports achievements across the Foundation Stage curriculum. Mathematical development is similarly very good. Children receive a robust grounding in number so that they are able to work with the number system confidently and accurately. Counting to twenty and beyond is secure and many children can work with numbers up to 100 and beyond. They learn the names of plane shapes and can talk about their properties. In addition, they show confidence in using the language of comparison. For instance, they can identify that "the bucket holds more than the bottle" when working with capacity, and know that some things are heavier than others.
3. Children in the Foundation Stage are provided with a very good range of first hand experiences to help them learn about the world around them. For example, resources of model animals and pictures help them to be able to identify features of living things such as giraffes needing long necks to reach the leaves on trees. These experiences also help children to explore their creative skills. They have a good understanding of colour through their work with paint and crayons, and can sing tunefully and in time. A good range of small tools and equipment and large toys and materials helps children to develop their movement skills, both small and large. The provision of an enclosed outdoor play area with a good range of resources extends children's learning opportunities from the classroom. Here they are able to use their imagination well to build, for example, a cave for a whale using pieces of timber and other materials. Overall, the quality of provision in this stage is particularly effective in the achievement of high standards for all children, irrespective of ability. This is an improvement since the last inspection when children attained standards in line with expectations.
4. In the 2001 national tests for Key Stage 1, pupils attained above average standards in reading and average standards for writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, standards were average for reading and well below average for writing and mathematics. Boys achieved lower standards than girls did. Early indications from the 2002 test, as yet unpublished nationally, show that standards have risen across all three areas with all or nearly all pupils achieving the national expectations

and many exceeding them. Boys have achieved higher standards this year and have closed the gap with girls. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are attaining standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science and that they achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language or those with special educational needs make good progress and their achievements are equally as good as other pupils.

5. In English by the end of Key Stage 1, every pupil has reached the expected level in reading and writing. Most pupils can read efficiently. They can sound out unfamiliar words and know the alphabet well. They can discuss preferences in reading books and are beginning to establish favourite authors. Their writing is neat and well formed, using a joined up style. They can write at some length using correct grammar and some impressive use of punctuation. Spelling is good. In mathematics, all pupils have reached the expected level and standards are above expectations. They have a good understanding of the number system and show accuracy in mental or paper calculations. They show good levels of understanding in shape, space and measures. Data is presented using a variety of devices such as bar charts or tally tables. Numeracy skills are good. In science, nearly every pupil has reached the expected level and standards are above expectations. They can, for instance, say why lights do not work in an open circuit, use tables to record findings, describe changes that occur through heating and cooling and have a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test.
6. Standards in the foundation subjects are mainly in line with national expectations. In physical education, standards exceed expectations in games skills, where pupils are adept at controlling a ball in catching, throwing or passing. In science, pupils record data well and can make intelligent predictions about what might happen in experiments. In art, they can draw appropriately from first hand observation. In history, geography, design and technology and information and communications technology, pupils display a range of skills and knowledge that is appropriate for their ages. For instance, they know about significant historical events such as the Great Fire of London. They can use atlases to locate countries and use a simple range of tools in making models. They can save and retrieve work on a computer and use a mouse efficiently. However, these age appropriate standards could easily be exceeded if pupils had more time to explore these subjects in greater depth.
7. Standards in Key Stage 2, by the time pupils leave the school in Year 5 are above average in English, mathematics, science, and games skills in PE. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the foundation subjects, standards have been maintained at the national expectations. Pupils' reading skills are above average and they are fluent and expressive. They enjoy reading and have experience of a wide range of fiction and non-fiction material. They write well, using good spelling, punctuation and grammar. Writing is interesting, often very imaginative and shows good understanding of the needs of the reader. In mathematics, pupils' numeracy skills are well developed and used across the curriculum. They can handle complex operations efficiently and have high levels of mental agility. They can apply these skills well in problem solving. They achieve good standards in all areas of mathematics. Standards in science are above expectations. They achieve well across all areas of science. Pupils know and understand what constitutes fair testing and can monitor experiments carefully. They understand what makes for a healthy diet for humans and know about vitamins, carbohydrates and minerals. Their knowledge of physical processes is good and they understand that heat, electricity and sound can be conducted or insulated.

8. The weakness in music identified at the last inspection has been addressed and pupils now have sound composing skills and are able to create simple pieces using percussion instruments and record them pictorially. In the other foundation subjects, standards are in line with expectations, except in PE where pupils attain good standards in games skills. Attainment in history, geography, design and technology and information and communications technology is restricted, as in Key Stage 1, by the insufficient depth and breadth of study. Pupils in this key stage, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress. SEN provision is very well targeted at helping those who need extra support to access the full range of the curriculum. Pupils are well placed to benefit from the next stage in their education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel secure and confident and know that teachers want them to achieve. Pupils work willingly together, co-operating in group and paired work. They are excited and enthusiastic learners in practical subjects such as physical education and music. They can sustain concentration very well in class listening sessions. In a school assembly led by a visiting group they concentrated very well and became engrossed in the acted out story.
10. Behaviour is a major strength of the school. The vast majority of pupils behave very well and respond to teachers' high expectations. They are courteous, considerate and helpful to their classmates and visitors to the school. They respect the new school building and one another's property. The spacious school grounds allow pupils to spread out and encourage harmonious playtimes. A very small minority of younger age pupils find it difficult to keep to the classroom rules agreed by the whole school and need continual support from their teachers to achieve. There have been no exclusions from the school.
11. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility in helping others, as teachers have trained them well to be organised and constructive. For example, when using the computer suite, pupils whose skills are more developed because they have used computers at home naturally support those who are less experienced. The very youngest pupils are enabled to feel quickly confident in the school playground because of the Year 5 "read to a friend" linking in the autumn term. Pupils in the middle part of the school have good opportunities to write stories to share with younger children. Pupils are willing to listen to other's ideas and values in a constructive atmosphere. The school council operating in the top year and due to be extended to the whole school, is providing good opportunities for some pupils to understand alternative viewpoints and to take responsibility.
12. Teaching now allows pupils to be better independent learners by selecting their own resources and organising their own work. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, this is not yet as good as it could be in all subjects and in all classes. There are missed opportunities still which limit achievement, especially in aspects of foundation subjects.
13. Attendance for 2000/01 at 96.3 percent was very good and very high compared to the national average. Unauthorised absence was well below the national average. This very good figure put the school fifth in the local authority league table for attendance last year. Attendance between 1998 and 2001 was better than at the last inspection in 1997. However, the attendance for 2001/02 dropped significantly and is now just above the national average. A number of factors are responsible; a bout of influenza in the winter, a small number of pupils with low attendance and a steep increase in the

number of pupils having holidays in term time. The holidays alone reduced the annual attendance rate by 1.2 percent, contributing very significantly to the fall in attendance rate for the current year to 94.4 percent. Unauthorised absence in 2001/02 also rose steeply but remains below the national average. Pupils are punctual and the school day gets off to a smooth start.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching is very good overall and now better than at the last inspection. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 and good in Key Stage 1. In more than half the lessons the quality of teaching is very good or excellent. Overall, the high quality of teaching and its impact on learning is a very significant strength of the school. Teachers work very hard to produce interesting lessons. They are extremely enthusiastic and show a high level of commitment to their pupils. There is a very good spread of subject expertise amongst the teachers and great willingness to share best practice and ideas. Good subject knowledge is evident in lessons. An example of this is the good teaching seen in a design and technology lesson where a variety of pop-up books is used to give pupils the opportunity to evaluate products with lever and linkage mechanisms. Lessons are well planned and structured using very good subject knowledge.
15. Another important element in the most successful lessons is the knowledge teachers have of how pupils learn best. In the oldest class and in the Reception class this is especially evident. The pace of the youngest children's learning is reinforced by the teacher's use of a variety of teaching methods. Children know and use actions to develop very good knowledge of phonics. Teaching of the older pupils is excellent when opportunities are planned for them to support each other and work together. A significant element of the successful teaching across the school is the identification of the learning objectives of lessons. When these are shared with pupils and they understand clearly what they will be learning, a powerful impact is made on their progress. Teachers have very high expectations and in the best lessons these are made explicit to pupils, both in terms of what they will be doing and in how they should behave. Throughout the school, teachers display weekly numeracy and literacy targets and these usually relate to the learning objectives of each lesson. As a result pupils have very good attitudes and behave well. In an art lesson the methods and expectations were demonstrated by the teacher modelling the techniques to be used, so pupils knew exactly how to set about their close observation drawings of seashells in an appropriate manner. At the start of the session for hymn practice Key Stage 2 pupils were told, "each of you can sing", and this statement was further affirmed by being written up for them.
16. A particularly strong element of lessons seen was the whole class session with direct teaching. Teachers recap on past lessons well and use subject vocabulary accurately and effectively. Humour is used to good effect to motivate and engage pupils. In a warm up session during a PE lesson the teacher participated and made the lesson fun. As a result pupils made greater efforts. Older pupils are given challenging problems that stimulate them, and sensitive questioning supports them and keeps them focused. Teachers' use of a range of questioning is a strength in many lessons. Skilful questioning is used to ensure pupils understand definitions and develop their knowledge. Teachers take care to involve all pupils in these interactive sessions and pupils respond confidently.
17. Teachers make good use of a range of resources. Pupils were enthralled by having real fish to draw in one art lesson and responded to this stimulus by raising many

questions. The provision of plants and pictures in a science lesson promoted learning from direct experience following the teachers' clear exposition on how pupils should handle the flower's main parts. When pupils are given planned opportunities to collaborate, teaching helps the development of social skills. This is particularly strong and successful at both ends of the school but is also an element of good lessons elsewhere. In PE and geography lessons pupils make very good progress when they work with partners using resources promptly and carefully. The pace of lessons is generally very brisk. Pupils are encouraged to sustain concentration and complete tasks by teachers' clear instructions about time. During group activities, the teaching assistants interact very effectively with pupils, asking them questions and supporting pupils with special educational needs. Overall they contribute much to pupils' learning but in many lessons they are underused during the whole class sessions. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and fully included in all lessons. Teachers are very sensitive to health and safety issues and these are carefully attended to and taught in PE and other lessons. Teachers manage pupils very well. Praise and rewards are used effectively and pupils' ideas and opinions are valued and respected. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and at best inspire confidence, security and a willingness to take risks, tackle challenges and solve problems.

18. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. The implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies has strengthened teachers' knowledge of the basic skills, particularly with regard to mental mathematics and grammar in literacy. Teachers use a wide range of good strategies to teach reading and work hard to ensure that pupils continue to read out of school. They plan the teaching of handwriting skills coherently and regularly. Similarly, they are aware of the need to address weaknesses in pupils' spelling and this is being focused on and having a positive effect. Teachers attend in-service training courses related to literacy and numeracy on a regular and systematic basis and the outcomes of these courses are shared with colleagues. In addition to taking reading and spelling books home, pupils are often given homework appropriately related to current topics.
19. There are some inconsistencies in the way teachers use the last part of lessons. In good lessons pupils are given opportunities to evaluate their learning and to review the learning intentions. In some lessons these opportunities are missed. Teachers make use of their analysis of pupils' performance in tests by identifying the whole school focus for development, such as spelling and the teaching for persuasive writing. However, ongoing, systematic assessments are not consistently informing day to day planning. Consequently, sometimes the activities set do not move all pupils' learning on as well as they might.
20. Because of the overall strength in the teaching, pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is very good. They make clear progress in all lessons and they are confident and motivated learners. They respond to excellent teaching with interest, enthusiasm and excitement. Overall pupils work hard and in the best lessons they make enormous effort, such as in PE with high levels of concentration and self discipline. In other excellent lessons pupils make huge intellectual efforts asking intelligent questions and giving full explanations. For instance, in geography they discuss how waterfalls are formed and continue to erode upstream. Pupils are interested in learning and eager to succeed. They respond well when given opportunities to work independently. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress and respond to the very high expectations teachers have of them.

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

21. Curricular provision and guidance to support teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is broad and largely balanced. It meets the statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum and the agreed syllabus for RE. The school has adopted the curriculum advice and planning documents published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for the foundation subjects. These provide clear guidelines on medium and short term planning and include clear and precise learning objectives that are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. There is a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education that gives pupils opportunities to learn about the misuse of drugs and sex education.
22. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and there are no gender issues. Uneven numbers in year groups and the school's rapid expansion have meant that the school has the difficulty of devising a three-year programme to plan coverage of subjects and to avoid pupils studying the same topic twice. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a wide range of learning activities preparing the children well and provides a very good introduction to school life.
23. National strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented. All teachers take good account of the guidelines in both strategies in planning the daily lessons for English and mathematics. The school allocates more time to English and mathematics than the national average, which results in insufficient time being allocated to the teaching of history, geography, ICT and design and technology. This limits the progressive development of subject specific skills and knowledge in these areas. Good opportunities for pupils to use literacy and numeracy skills are planned in the teaching of other subjects. Teachers do not consistently plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in information and communications technology across the curriculum. There is a need to identify these in the schemes of work for the foundation subjects
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. Their needs are identified early and the special educational needs co-ordinator works well with teachers to develop effective programmes of work. Pupils' progress is monitored on a regular basis. Teaching assistants are aware of pupils' targets and provide effective support in lessons. Pupils are taught in class for the majority of the time. When they are withdrawn for individual and small group work by the special needs co-ordinator careful consideration is given to make sure they do not miss significant curriculum opportunities. Much of the group work is planned to support the work in literacy started with their class teacher.
25. Good use is made of the local environment to support pupils' learning in science, geography and history. Fieldwork is a strong feature of the school's curriculum. All classes are taken out on regular visits. The older pupils spend a week in Dorset and this is well used and provides extension work for history, geography and science. The school works very well with other local first schools and collaborates on curriculum development projects planning joint training for staff. There is clear agreement with the intermediate school on curriculum planning to ensure pupils do not duplicate work after transfer.
26. Visitors to school are invited on a regular basis. The school uses authors and poets to enrich the pupils' experiences of literature and to understand the craft of writing a book for children. Splash, a local church group attends and leads assemblies on regular

basis. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory overall. There are sporting activities including football, cricket and athletics. The school competes with local schools on an annual basis on a games day at the local intermediate school. Currently there is no provision for art and music activities after school.

27. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. Pupils are taught the principles of right and wrong as well as care of property and the school environment. There is a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education that gives pupils opportunities to learn about the misuse of drugs and sex education. A visiting theatre group worked with pupils recently on the issue of drugs misuse to good effect. Talk time gives pupils opportunities to develop a caring and tolerant attitude towards others. Class councils enable pupils to raise and discuss issues that affect them.
28. Pupils' spiritual and cultural developments are satisfactory overall. The school's ethos is strong and pupils learn to respect others and to be respected. Assemblies promote the school's values as does religious education. However, there are few opportunities planned for quiet reflection and spiritual development across the wider curriculum. The school provides pupils with good insights into western European culture through English, art, history, music and geography. In religious education, pupils study the major world religions. However, the provision for presenting attitudes, values and traditions of other cultures is less well developed. The use of artefacts and musical instruments to help pupils appreciate the cultural diversity of modern Britain and other societies is underdeveloped.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. The welfare and care of pupils by all staff continues to be good and highly valued by parents and carers. Staff know pupils well and ensure very good provision for them, particularly for those with specific needs. The "talk" and "circle" time sessions are helpful and the recent successful introduction of class councils to seek older pupils' views about the school is to be extended soon to provide a school council. These initiatives have dealt successfully with a number of issues raised by pupils. For instance, girls raised concerns about attitudes to their inclusion in football at playtimes. This helped raise boys' awareness of and sensitivity to such issues. The recruitment of older pupils as volunteer playground assistants is another good initiative. All these factors make a strong contribution to pupils' positive attitudes, enjoyment of school and their personal development. The school's equal opportunities policy is very well carried through in the daily life of the school. Pupils of differing abilities and with differing needs are well supported in their learning by teachers and support staff. Pupils with physical disabilities are fully included in lessons and expected to make equal effort to achieve. Those with English as an additional language are fully integrated into lessons and experience no language difficulties. The school complies with statutory requirements in areas concerned with racial awareness and discrimination. It has arranged a day of multicultural training for staff to improve provision in the curriculum. The school includes everyone very well in its day to day life.
30. The school keeps good records of pupils' achievements in tests, taken regularly throughout their time at the school, and is using them effectively to track pupils' progress and to predict how they should achieve in the future. The information about Year 5 pupils is passed to Rydon school, which publishes the Key Stage, 2 targets in consultation with staff at Ashington. Analysis of data has been used well to identify areas for particular attention, such as writing. The use of other assessment information, from staff's knowledge of ongoing achievement, is not being used as

consistently as it could to ensure the right work is provided for individual pupils in lessons, particularly in foundation subjects. However, pupils with SEN are assessed very carefully and their learning is well monitored.

31. The school is safe, clean and well maintained. Procedures to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors are good. Having a fire evacuation plan on the back of visitors' badges is a particularly good idea. The health and safety policy is up to date and monitoring of this area by the governors is good. Supervision of pupils during lunchtime in classrooms and in the playground is good. Procedures for visits are well thought out and designed to ensure that pupils' safety has a high priority. There are three fully qualified first-aiders and good procedures to ensure any sick or injured pupils are well cared for. Despite being a new school, there is no dedicated area for first aid or medical treatment.
32. The headteacher continues to be responsible for dealing with child protection. He is well qualified and experienced to do so. All staff know to contact the headteacher if they have any concerns about a child. Teachers and teaching assistants have very good guidelines in the staff handbook but other staff would benefit from access to this information. The school follows local guidelines and reporting procedures, if any incidents occur, are managed very well.
33. The school has a good behaviour policy and parents are kept well informed by being sent a copy of the rules each year. Pupils are involved with revising the school and playground rules. The leaflet for parents about bullying, and what to do if it occurs, is helpful. Parents report that the few incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. Teachers maintain good discipline in lessons and pupils are taught that good behaviour is expected. The school has good systems, through, for example, the weekly Headteacher's Awards assembly, which rewards pupils who produce good work, try hard and show good attitudes. There are also appropriate sanctions if pupils' actions are unacceptable.
34. There are appropriate procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. Registers are completed fully and data on attendance is kept on computer. Parents know the procedures if their child is absent and that they will receive reminders if they do not send in absence notes. They also receive a helpful leaflet explaining what is considered authorised and unauthorised absence. There is an effective partnership between the school and education welfare officer that deals well with the few pupils who have a low attendance rate or problems with punctuality. However, a growing number of children are taken out of school for holidays in term time. This disrupts their education and diverts teachers' attention from the rest of the class when they return.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. Parents' views of the school, gathered from those who attended the parents' meeting and completed questionnaires, are good. In particular, they say that their children are making good progress, that pupils' behaviour is good and children are expected to work hard. They also say that that teaching is good, they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem and the school is well led and managed. There are some concerns about homework but parents are fully informed about what tasks may be given for homework and how much time should be spent on it. In addition, children's home reading record books and older pupils' homework books indicate what tasks need to be achieved.

36. There was also some concern that parents are not being kept well informed about how their child is getting on. Inspectors found that the opportunities to discuss pupils' progress are good, with informal meetings in the autumn and summer term and a formal meeting in the spring term. The opportunity for parents to meet class teachers on Wednesday after school is very helpful. Pupils' reports are informative and clearly indicate what pupils can do in specific subjects, especially in English and mathematics. They would, however, benefit from including more information about the areas that pupils need to develop, possibly noted as targets for improvement.
37. A few parents do not think that the school works closely with parents. There is little evidence to support this. Staff are keen to work in partnership with parents, as written in the school's statement of aims, and do contact them promptly if they have concerns, for example about behaviour, so that any problems can be solved jointly.
38. The area that concerned parents the most is that relating to extra-curricular activities. Evidence gathered during the inspection does not fully support this view. The school provides a satisfactory range of visits for all classes, both in the local area and further afield, with a residential trip for the older pupils. There are also various clubs after school. The opportunities provided are sound and similar to those provided by many primary schools, although there are no art or music activities currently on offer.
39. The information provided for parents is good. In response to consultation with parents, each class teacher now provides termly curriculum guides, outlining the work the pupils will be doing and sometimes the homework that will be issued. Parents find these very helpful. The school also responded to a parental request for an open evening in September to enable them to meet their child's new teacher at the start of the new school year. The introduction of information evenings is proving popular, in particular the mathematics evening in October 2001. The more recent sessions on drugs education and sex and relationships held jointly with other local schools in the STARS group were well received. Newsletters, issued twice a term, provide useful information on future and past events and other topics, as required. The new web-site should provide a further useful method of communication between school and home. There is a good booklet for parents of children joining the Reception class. All are helpful and useful resources for parents.
40. The recent relocation of the school and the big increase in pupil numbers resulted in a significant change for the school, pupils and parents. During the changes, some parents felt that communications were not as effective as they might be, but they are now pleased with the arrangements to see staff and the meetings and information provided. This aspect of the school's provision has improved significantly since the last inspection.
41. Parents' support for the school is good. Attendance at parents' evenings and events involving their children is very high. A few parents help in classes, some help on visits or with other jobs. The school has a full complement of parent governors and some former parents continue to help the school. The Parents' Association makes a significant contribution to the school through its fund raising activities. The money raised has enabled the school to purchase various items that are enhancing the school. For example, they purchased the drama stage, class radio and cassette recorders and contributed towards computers for the ICT suite. Most parents listen to their children read at home and assist them with homework. Their support and encouragement is helping their children to make good progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. Within this picture are some strengths and areas for further development with management stronger than leadership. It is a picture that is better overall than at the last inspection.
43. The governing body fulfils all its statutory responsibilities soundly. At the last inspection, it was insufficiently involved in monitoring the work of the school. Recent developments in the work of the governing body have shown real improvement in governance. A regular programme of visits to the school has been set up that will, over time, provide the governing body with good quality information about how the school is discharging its functions. In addition, there are plans to link governors to specific subject areas. Together with the school improvement plan, these links should give a clear focus for visits to the school. Through briefings from staff, the governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development and provide the school in general and the headteacher in particular with strong support. The governing body monitors the budget well. Involvement in helping to set improvement priorities, monitoring their progress and evaluating their impact on pupils' achievement is still at an early stage of development. Nevertheless, under the leadership of the recently elected Chair of Governors, the governing body is very well placed to continue these recent improvements and to grow into a highly effective strategic body.
44. The headteacher and senior staff manage the school very well. Pastoral leadership is good and sound educational leadership is provided. Management of the school is better than at the last inspection. There are very good communication systems so that staff, parents and pupils know very clearly what is going on. A very comprehensive staff handbook promotes consistency of practice across the school to both new and existing staff. Induction of new staff is well managed and the system of appraising the work of staff members is firmly established. There is a very good link between this and the curriculum needs of pupils across the school. The aims and values of the school are clearly evident in lessons, assemblies and break times where there is a strong commitment to learning and maintaining high quality relationships. This pastoral ethos is shared by staff and driven by the leadership of the headteacher. Technology is used very effectively to aid the management of the school. The administrative staff provide very good support to the school and make a major contribution to its smooth running.
45. The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, identified very clear priorities for improvement last year, relating to literacy and numeracy. This formed much of the provision made for staff training, resourcing and monitoring this year. As a result, attainment improved in the targeted areas of writing and computation. There is a need for further development in the school improvement planning process. The current plan does not identify any targets relating to pupils' achievement, nor any relating to reaching the non-statutory literacy and numeracy targets agreed with the Local Education Authority (LEA) for Year 2 pupils. It is costed and has appropriate time-scales but is insufficiently focused on learning and achievement, a continuing weakness from the last inspection. There has been some monitoring of teaching and learning by senior management, showing very clearly the good quality practice evident in the school. What is missing is clear advice to staff about how to improve practice still further. Without this element, the impact of monitoring is limited.
46. Subject leadership is sound overall. Appropriate action is taken to ensure the curriculum is resourced and planned systematically. Co-ordinators have strong commitment to their areas of responsibility and a real will to develop their roles further. At present, there is insufficient time available for them to monitor and evaluate

standards and provision. This results in an unclear programme for improvement, based largely on reviewing provision and resources without a real focus on what would impact on pupils' standards of achievement. However, the headteacher recognises this weakness and the governing body is addressing the issue of providing monitoring time for subject leaders. Provision for pupils with SEN is very well managed and the co-ordinator is skilled in identifying needs and providing the right kind of support.

47. The school is staffed well and meets curriculum needs fully. The team of teaching assistants makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those pupils with SEN. There is the potential to utilise their skills still further during whole class sessions in pupil observation and assessment. The budget is well managed by the senior team and the bursar and appropriate spending is made to support the school's educational priorities. Accommodation is very good and offers a high quality learning environment, although the staff room is too small for the number of staff members. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. The library has insufficient numbers of books for the size of school. There are plans to address this deficiency in the near future. The grounds are extensive and offer significant potential for learning. The school has secured grant aid to develop the environment further. The principles of best value are understood and applied well. Although overall costs per pupil are higher than average, the school provides good value for money as it provides a good education for its pupils and they attain higher than average standards in the core subjects. Value for money is now better than at the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. In order to improve strategic planning for improvement and to raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Improve subject leadership and management through:
 - Making clearer the roles, responsibilities and expectations of subject leaders;
 - Provision of time for subject leaders to discharge their responsibilities;
 - Ensuring that systematic monitoring and evaluation of standards and provision leads to clear improvement priorities.
(Paragraph numbers: 30, 45, 46, 71, 78, 84, 94, 100 and 119.)
 - (2) Raise standards in history, geography, ICT and design and technology through:
 - Reviewing the time allocated to these subjects.
 - Ensuring that the programmes of study are covered to an appropriate depth.
(Paragraph numbers: 6, 8, 23, 90, 98, 103, 104, 107 and 109.)
 - (3) Improve the consistency with which assessments are made and used to inform planning through:
 - Reviewing the school's assessment and recording policy;
 - Ensuring that pupils' records of achievement are consistent between classes and subjects;
 - Monitoring practice across the school so that planning is better informed by those assessments.
(Paragraph numbers: 19, 30, 50, 63, 77, 82, 89 and 100.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	25	17	7	0	0	0
Percentage	6	48	33	13	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 nearly two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	169
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	41

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	13	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	11
	Girls	-	-	12
	Total	21	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (80)	84 (80)	92 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	11	-
	Girls	-	12	-
	Total	21	23	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (80)	92 (100)	84 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Where the numbers of boys or girls taking the tests in any subject area are ten or fewer, these are omitted from the table.

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	169
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y5

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	28.1

Education support staff: YR – Y5

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	230

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	2001/2
	£
Total income	390,046
Total expenditure	394,249
Expenditure per pupil	2,718
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,505
Balance carried forward to next year	6,302

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
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)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	169
Number of questionnaires returned	55

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	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	40	0	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	34	2	4	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	56	11	4	2
The teaching is good.	64	31	2	4	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	47	11	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	25	2	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	0	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	42	9	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	25	0	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	33	4	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	47	14	4	11

Other issues raised by parents

There were 14 parents who attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector. Overall, parents and carers were very supportive of the school. Inspectors agreed with parents' and carers' positive views and have noted that teaching is a particular strength of the school. Reports on pupils' progress are well written but could include more information about learning targets for pupils. Homework provision is consistent. Inspectors judged that extra-curricular provision is satisfactory but noted that there is currently no provision for musical activities beyond that provided through individual instrumental tuition.

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

49. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is very good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Children are very well cared for by experienced and committed staff. The curriculum is broad and provides a good range of activities that are suitable for young children. It is planned in accordance with the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum. According to the baseline assessment, children enter the reception class with above average skills overall but represent the full ability range. At the time of the inspection, all the children have begun full-time schooling. Nearly all the children have already reached the Early Learning Goals for children aged five and most are exceeding them and working at levels within the early stages of the National Curriculum. These standards are now higher than at the last inspection.
50. Teaching is very good, with some excellent features and is consistent across all areas of learning. The high expectations, which the teacher makes clear, are combined with a deep knowledge and understanding of the way in which young children learn. Activities are planned within the framework for the Foundation Stage curriculum in a satisfactory manner but are not being sufficiently informed by systematic ongoing assessment of the children. The teacher employs a very good range of teaching methods and is well supported by the teaching assistants, and the nurse who cares for one pupil during the school day. The teaching of the basic skills is excellent and, consequently, children's progress through the Foundation Stage is very good. Children demonstrate very good behaviour and respond well to the staff's high expectations of them. They have excellent levels of interest and concentration.

Personal, social and emotional development

51. Children come into the Reception class with very high levels of personal development and these are built on carefully and purposefully. Very high levels of collaboration are encouraged. Children are expected to and shown how to organise their resources. They carefully clear away materials and look after books with great care. Children have opportunities to care for others and when they are encouraged to support and guide a newcomer to the class they respond with maturity. Children show great interest in each other's contributions, in formal and informal settings. There is a high level of confidence and even the quietest pupils are encouraged to participate in all discussions and activities. The very good pace of lessons and the strategies that the teacher uses, involving many practical activities and her own enthusiastic approach, means that pupils are excited and highly motivated throughout the day. Relationships between the children are very good. Several children work together to build a large shelter from planks of wood, whilst others were observed collaborating in organising a "picnic". This was shared on a rug outside the wooden shed painted inside as their forest. Young imaginations are fired by such innovative use of resources and the needs of the child with physical disabilities are sensitively addressed so another wooden shed, which he can enter in his wheelchair, is turned into a castle.
52. Care is taken to develop children's awareness of their own needs, views and feelings during the lively interactive discussions held in groups and as a class. The excellent relationships between staff and children inspire confidence, security and a willingness to take risks and "have a go". Children demonstrate an enormous capacity to care for others during the course of the day and this is actively encouraged. Turn-taking is well

established in games and discussions. Children will distribute pencils and books and share resources without being prompted. They respond very well to the high levels of expectation and praise is used well, through reward booklets and in ongoing conversations. In lessons seen, children demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm, self-discipline and very good behaviour throughout.

Communication, language and literacy

53. When children enter the Reception class, their speaking and listening skills are well above average for their age. These are developed further by very good teaching. There is a great emphasis placed on the development of communication skills. Children's knowledge of language and vocabulary is extended through a wide range of carefully planned activities. They listen to, learn and recite exciting rap chants, with an exact sense of rhythm. The teacher uses every opportunity to develop children's language skills and so they become confident and skilful at talking to an audience and respond thoughtfully to a range of questions. Children have great fun whilst extending their vocabulary, exploring the sounds of the sea and talking about the "postcards" that they have made. They use language descriptively and imaginatively through role-play and during group activities such as model making.
54. Children enter the Reception class with very good attainment in reading and writing. Because of the very enriching opportunities children have to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, poetry and stories, nearly all the children have achieved the Early Learning Goals in these aspects. Many of them are already working at levels within the National Curriculum. The most able children employ a range of reading strategies. They recognise many familiar words in the stories they read and in the labels and captions around the school. They can predict what will happen in stories and will talk about characters they like. Children of all abilities enjoy books immensely and get great satisfaction from reading with adults and sharing books with each other. They recall text with confidence and know that they can derive information from non-fiction books. Familiar stories are recounted with accuracy, such as the story of Noah's Ark.
55. The strategies used in the teaching of phonics are very effective. The teacher uses a variety of methods to recall initial sounds and phonemes and the children respond with great enthusiasm and humour. The children know and use the actions taught and develop a good phonic awareness. Care is taken that all pupils are fully involved in these sessions. Extra support is provided for pupils with additional educational needs. Activities are planned specifically to meet the child's individual needs with quality work on a one-to-one basis. This helps them respond with positive behaviour and supports their self-esteem. Children of above average and average attainment can use knowledge of simple sounds and initial phonics in their reading. Children derive great joy in the use of alliterative words whilst they compose class poems about "going on a whale hunt". This is further developing their knowledge of the sounds letters make. The teacher routinely involves all the pupils in alphabet rhymes and often one or two children will perform these with actions.
56. Overall both boys and girls are developing very good writing skills. The most able children are working well beyond the Early Learning Goals in writing. They are already developing a joined script and they are beginning to use full stops. All the children can write legibly and form letters correctly. Many children are using their knowledge of phonics with confidence to write simple words and attempt more complex ones. Children are encouraged by the teacher's use of sentence starters and other strategies to help them write independently. They are inspired by the teacher's own enthusiasm in the writing of a class book about going on a whale hunt. The inspiration has been

drawn from a loved and familiar story and the children are totally engaged. Consequently the work that several children produce shows very high levels of competence. The teacher further enhances learning through word processing and graphic design.

Mathematical development

57. Most children are already working beyond the Early Learning Goals in their mathematical development. Very good teaching exploits opportunities to develop children's counting skills. Children can count to 20, missing out odd numbers, and backwards and forwards. The use of hand movements when the children are counting in twos to 20 supports all the pupils in this activity. They demonstrate the ability to count very confidently to well beyond 20, many to 100 and take great delight in demonstrating their ability. The teaching assistant and nurse give high quality support through their questioning skills. Very good activities, related to topics, build on and develop children's ability to explore and record patterns linked to addition. Using the story of Noah's Ark, children think about concepts by counting the legs various animals have. They can record these and use number symbols accurately.
58. Children can recreate quite complex patterns and talk about these as well as matching objects. They recognise shapes such as circles and squares and can describe them. They can use a wide range of positional language with clear understanding and are challenged to think about the relative sizes of containers. Planned opportunities for pupils to use language such as more, less, greater, smaller, heavier and lighter ensure their growing understanding. In one lesson children were encouraged to consider the concept of partial fullness and see the difference between empty, part full and full and to sequence containers accordingly. All children are enthusiastic about these activities and will eagerly take risks and apply themselves to problems. Their learning is supported and revised through displays and posters about what they have learnt.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. On entry to the Reception class children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. The very good teaching ensures that this is built on and extended and the majority of children have achieved the Early Learning Goal in most aspects in their last term in this class. The teacher plans to provide children with a range of activities to enable them to investigate objects and materials. They find out about the properties of shells and pebbles from the seashore by handling them, looking at them through magnifying glasses and making close observation drawings. They are encouraged to work together and discuss what they have observed. Sensitive interventions by the teacher and support staff help them to focus on patterns and differences between, for instance, a crab shell and a seashell.
60. The outside area provides an additional and invaluable learning environment that has been imaginatively organised and resourced. Children's interest and curiosity are aroused by the "pebble pool" and they are given opportunities to find out about and identify features of the snails and various mini-beasts that they look after outside. They have made simple recordings related to animals' habitats and they can all clearly describe the similarities and differences between different animals. Children grow a range of plants, including pumpkins and potatoes, flowers and herbs. They are learning about their growth and find out about the parts of plants and what they need to grow. They are encouraged to use all their senses including smell, sight and touch when exploring these and other objects. They are given many opportunities to work alone and with others to build and construct for a purpose. Children play with water, dough,

mud, bricks, Lego and wood and are able to discuss the qualities that these materials have and what changes can happen to them, for instance, that dough hardens if left.

Physical development

61. The provision for the programme for physical development is very good, resulting in the early learning goals for this area being met and exceeded. Children are very confident and have good co-ordination. In the outdoor area they ride safely and confidently on wheeled toys. They notice how this exercise affects their bodies and can describe how they feel. Gymnastic lessons are well planned to ensure that children gain competence travelling over large apparatus. Practice activities for the sports day, to improve their ball control and accuracy are provided.
62. Children show a good degree of dexterity in their manipulation of materials such as playdough and they use a range of construction materials with confidence. Some extensive work with wood has been started by several children. With careful supervision they are confidently sawing different widths of wood with the aim of making boats. Other children demonstrate accurate use of scissors when they select pictures and cut into appropriate shapes and sizes to fit the card for their "postcards". As they move around the room they make way for others and they can form orderly lines, entering and leaving the hall in an appropriate fashion.

Creative development

63. The Reception class is a busy environment that provides opportunities for children to access a range of creative experiences. In painting they explore colour and look at the shapes and forms of objects when they make careful drawings of shells. They mix colours to emulate as realistically as they can an elephant's hide and other animals on Noah's Ark. They also are given opportunities to cut out different materials to make different patterns and collages. They talk about the effects and critically appraise the finished article. Because ongoing assessments of children's progress through direct observation is relatively under-developed, sufficient time is not always planned for them to return to an activity and develop ideas further.
64. Children are given ample opportunities to use their imagination in role-play. The playhouse in the outside area will become a beach house and the children will act out scenes from familiar stories in their "forest", or take on different roles whilst "fishing" or building shelters. They listen attentively to stories and can empathise with the characters and describe their feelings. Children respond very well in singing, whether during assemblies or in the classroom. They have developed a strong sense of rhythm and enjoy a range of songs, many from memory.

ENGLISH

65. In the national assessments for seven-year-olds in 2001, standards of attainment in reading exceeded those nationally. Performance of pupils in writing was close to the national average. When compared to similar schools, the school's performance in reading tests was average but well below average in writing. The proportion of pupils that reached higher than expected levels in reading was well above the national average whilst in writing this was below. Girls did better than boys, particularly in reading. Results have varied from year to year but there is an underlying trend of improvement. The most recent national assessments, as yet unpublished, show further improvements in both reading and writing with the gap between boys and girls closing. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English are above expectations for both seven and ten year old pupils. The very few pupils who have English as an additional language attain standards that are at least in line with expectations.
66. Attainment in speaking and listening exceeds the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school. In Year 1 pupils demonstrate careful listening and are eager to respond with their observations and descriptions. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are keen to express their ideas, for instance in creating a word bank for a story. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to listen very carefully and can demonstrate through their spoken responses understanding of the main teaching points of literacy lessons. They use grammar and a wide range of vocabulary accurately. They are capable of adapting their discussions to the purpose at hand, for instance when considering bias and persuasive language through an alternative version of the story of *The Three Little Pigs*. They thoughtfully develop their ideas through collaboration. They can express opinions clearly, such as the advantages of being in a new building compared to the old one. All through the school pupils listen very attentively to each other and to their teachers, appreciating shared ideas and contributions. Pupils who have special educational needs are given planned opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. They enjoy taking part in retelling stories and the support they have from teachers and teaching assistants makes a valuable contribution to their progress.
67. Standards in reading are good throughout the school. Girls read better than boys, in line with the national picture. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils of all abilities are using the sounds of letters to identify unfamiliar words. More able seven-year-olds are attempting quite complex stories and can read a variety of texts accurately and fluently. They will read non-fiction books to acquire information, for instance related to a recent project on recycling. Most pupils are clear about the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils become confident and keen readers who can explain their preferences for favourite authors. One pupil was being introduced to Harry Potter books by an elder brother and was enjoying the adjectives in them. Poetry is particularly favoured throughout the school and pupils in Year 2 enjoy reading a range of poems, from "quiet" ones to tongue twisters. Overall reading in Key Stage 2 is above national expectation for the age of the pupils. Pupils read confidently. All pupils read widely at school and most enjoy reading at home. Generally attitudes to reading are very positive and pupils express their favourite genre with clear reasons. Year 4 pupils of all abilities can correctly identify unfamiliar words using a range of strategies. By Year 5, independent readers are confident and fluent in a range of context. In their work they find and make use of ideas and information. More able pupils are developing the use of deduction, for instance the conclusions of the novels they read. The majority of pupils understand the important ideas and events in the books that they read and can relate a synopsis of a story.

68. Attainment in writing is above national expectations. Pupils make good progress with handwriting skills and generally take pride in presenting their work well. In Year 1 clear progress was seen in the quality of pupils' joined script. Regular practice related to developing their phonic knowledge, and the spelling of key words helps pupils to become secure in letter formation and fluency of handwriting. By the time they reach Year 5, letter size and spacing is refined and writing is fluent. Pupils can use a range of skills for presenting their written work. In Year 1 pupils use and gain familiarity with full stops and capital letters. They are attempting short stories and letters to various fictional characters. They are planning their own verse for titles such as "I am Glad". In Year 2 they use story settings from their reading to write imaginative stories, such as "When my teacher turned into a monster". They begin to use poetic styles creating their own lines to describe events such as firework night. The research that they have carried out looking at sunflowers is recorded well describing the sequence of their lifecycle. In Years 3 and 4 pupils are confident independent writers. They use a variety of devices to make interesting story openings and use speech and quotation marks very effectively to create a scene or mood. They are also using a range of vocabulary to convey feelings and moods. By the time pupils reach Year 5, they have built on earlier experiences and can use a range of grammatical structures accurately and effectively. Similarly the effective use made of dictionaries earlier on is fully established. Overall they are working at a higher level than national expectations, particularly with regard to technical knowledge of grammar through exercises related to changing tenses and nouns to verbs. Pupils explore ways to write myths in a lively and thoughtful fashion. The work on animal rights is well planned and executed, with slogans, extra information, opening sentences and conclusions effectively written and presented.
69. The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good teaching in Key Stage 2. Teachers' short-term planning is detailed and useful. Because they identify the intended learning objectives for the lessons, there is clarity in the range of strategies to be used. Currently there are few opportunities identified in short-term plans for teachers and support staff to assess pupils' learning. Sometimes, as a consequence, pupils have tasks that are not sufficiently matched to their abilities. A particular strength of literacy lessons is the whole class sessions at the start. At the beginning of the week pupils are informed of the learning targets and these are written up for them to see. Teachers' use of questions is a strength of lessons. A range of open, complex questions elicits thoughtful responses and helps move pupils' learning on. In an upper Key Stage 2 lesson, the teacher's careful questions elicited deductive and relevant responses. Text was used to full effect to help pupils gain understanding about biased opinions and persuasive writing. Teachers make good use of a range of strategies and resources, such as modelling story sequences on a white board and enlarging text for pupils to highlight grammatical points. In a lower Key Stage 2 class the teacher gave a very practical demonstration of the need for commas by making the class read aloud from the text without stopping for breath. Time is used well, exposition and instructions are clear and pupils sustain interest and concentration.
70. In most lessons, pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment is evident. The exception is in the middle years of the school where a very small number of boys quickly grow restless and do not apply themselves as well as their peers. Teachers' expectations of behaviour are high and most pupils respond well with good behaviour and positive attitudes to their work. There are inconsistencies in the quality of the work that the pupils are given during the independent and group sessions. In the very good lessons teachers promoted learning by focusing one group whilst other groups worked independently. Where teaching was not as effective, the task set did not match the abilities of the pupils so they completed their work quickly without suitable extension

tasks. Homework is given to pupils, which is often related to their work in literacy, such as designing a poster for road safety. Spellings are taken home regularly, as do books. However, the way reading information is shared with parents and carers is inconsistent.

71. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented and staff regularly attend training courses and conferences related to this. Pupils' performance in national and yearly tests is analysed and areas for improvement, for example in spelling and persuasive writing, are identified. However, leadership of the subject is under-developed in terms of monitoring. Although the subject co-ordinator oversees planning, there is little opportunity to build on the good practice in place and to ensure consistency through systematic lesson observations with feedback to teachers. As a consequence, those parts of literacy lessons that are having the least impact on learning are not being kept under review. A range of very exciting experiences for pupils is provided, such as the poetry writers' workshop. Poets work with pupils and the impact of this has been considerable, as seen in the spirit poems produced. An improvement plan is in place, which is used to identify the year's focus for development in the subject.
72. The quality and range of resources for the teaching of English and literacy is generally satisfactory. There are sufficient texts to support guided reading and provision within the classroom book corners is satisfactory. Resources for teachers to use in the whole class sessions are good. There are many big books in evidence and published schemes of work are available and are used widely to support teachers' planning. The school recognises that the library stock has been depleted following the move to the new building. The links to information and communications technology are under-developed and although pupils have knowledge about library systems there are few opportunities to promote research and study skills using areas out of the classroom.
73. Overall there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The National Literacy Strategy is now well established and has had a good impact on teachers' subject knowledge and delivery of lessons. This is reflected in quality of learning in pupils' reading and speaking and listening. The school is well placed to build on these strengths and further improve on the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

74. In the Key Stage 1 national tests for 2001, the latest reporting year, standards in mathematics were in line with national averages but well below average when compared to similar schools. Girls achieved higher standards than boys did. The most recent tests, taken in 2002 but as yet unreported, show that standards are now higher and that boys' attainment has caught up and slightly exceeded that of the girls. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are attaining standards that are above average and boys and girls attain similar standards. By the time they leave the school in Year 5, standards remain above expectations in all areas of mathematics. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress across the school and achieve well. This is because they receive consistently good and very good teaching with high expectations of achievement, and well-targeted support for those who need extra help. Standards overall are now higher than at the last inspection.
75. In Key Stage 1, pupils experience a broad range of mathematical ideas and skills that are in line with the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS). Although the lessons seen during the inspection were all related to number, scrutiny of work

from across this academic year shows clear evidence of pupils learning about shapes, measures, data handling and simple problem solving. Numeracy skills are systematically built on as pupils move through this key stage, so that by Year 2, they are able to add and subtract two-digit numbers and handle simple multiplication and division problems. They show the ability to compute in different ways using both mental and paper methods. They can round up or down to the nearest ten and work with sums of money up to and exceeding £1. In one lesson, pupils were learning to recognise and extend number sequences. The very good use of resources, including that of pupils numbering and ordering themselves, allowed them to talk about what should come next in a sequence, see the patterns involved and achieve standards that were above expectations for five and six year olds. By the end of this key stage, pupils are able to recognise symmetry in shapes, create simple block and line graphs, and work with simple fractions such as halves, quarters and thirds. The more able pupils can read simple scales, tell the time using minutes past and to the hour and describe the properties of shapes such as circles, triangles and rectangles.

76. This good grounding is built upon further in Key Stage 2 and pupils continue to experience a broad and balanced curriculum, supported by the NNS. Their skills in mental arithmetic are good and they are confident in manipulating quite complex operations in their heads, such as working out what should be added to a number with two or three decimal places to make 100. They become competent in working with the four rules to solve problems using large numbers. By the time they leave the school, pupils understand how to use negative numbers, relating this to temperature scales, for instance. The more able pupils could extend this further by linking this concept to plotting co-ordinates in all four quadrants, instead of confining plotting to just one quadrant. Ideas of shape and space are extended to include rotational symmetry, calculation of area and perimeter and good understanding of angles and their measurement. Pupils can operate with mixed and improper fractions, percentages and decimal fractions to several places. Data is presented in a variety of forms such as pie charts and line graphs. These skills are utilised in other areas of the curriculum. For example, line graphs are used to record changes and other data in scientific experiments. Pupils are developing good problem-solving techniques and can apply them well. In one upper Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils showed very good skills in analysing the vocabulary used in problems to ascertain which operations to use. Reasoning skills are good. Numeracy skills are good overall and utilised well in the wider curriculum.
77. Across the school pupils show consistently positive attitudes to their lessons. They work hard, behave well and show good levels of motivation. This is because learning activities are well matched to their abilities and staff give very good support to individuals and groups of pupils. Teaching and learning are good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2 and very good overall. Lessons are very well planned throughout and staff make clear to pupils what it is they are to learn. This enables pupils to see where their work is leading them and contributes to their commitment. A very good range of questions is used to challenge thinking and to promote learning. Staff are skilled at posing questions of varying complexity so that pupils of all abilities are included in important introductory sessions. Sometimes opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to work co-operatively. Where this does happen, for instance in checking the work of each other, pupils learn even more effectively. Assessment practice tends to be inconsistent. Some staff use it effectively in helping shape the direction of lessons or in checking what pupils have gained at the ends of lessons. A more focused use of assessment knowledge would promote further achievement and raise the quality of teaching still further.

78. Subject leadership is sound overall. Good use was made of knowledge of relative strengths and weaknesses in mathematical achievement last year to direct this year's focus on division. However, the current improvement plan is insufficiently focused on pupil achievement and does not identify specific targets for improvement. It is too concerned with systems such as budgeting and staff training. There has been too little opportunity for the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate standards and provision and this is why the improvement plan is not as sharp as it could be. Nevertheless, the headteacher has been monitoring some numeracy lessons and this has contributed to an overall picture of quality by senior management. The NNS has been implemented well and this has supported the higher standards evident. Resources are good and used well. Information and communications technology is underused in supporting pupils' mathematical development. Time allocations to this subject are now consistent across the school representing an improvement since the last inspection. Overall, there has been good progress since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

79. Standards in the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 for 2001 were well below those achieved nationally. The assessments for this year show an improvement and are now above expectations. Standards in Key Stage 2 are above average. Science has improved since the last inspection when standards were judged to be sound. The quality of investigational work is now good.
80. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are recording the results of their investigations using pictures, charts and written text. For example, they use block graphs to record the distances a toy car travels down a ramp. They are starting to make predictions about what they expect to happen when undertaking investigations. For instance, when looking at materials they predicted that chocolate would melt when heated and that water turns to steam when boiled. They understand the use of electricity in day to day appliances. They can name the components in simple circuits and understand the failure of a bulb to light up if the circuit is not wired correctly. When studying forces, they understand the difference between pushes and pulls and can explain how pushing propels a scooter.
81. In Key Stage 2, pupils' scientific knowledge is good, as is the quality of their investigations. They can record their own work in a consistent manner. They understand the importance of collecting data and that scientific ideas are based on evidence. They are able to plan a fair test and know the importance of controlling variables. They can make predictions and suggest how they can improve their investigations. They recognise how to present work well and are able to plot points to produce line graphs. Pupils' knowledge is good. They understand and can explain the water cycle and the relative positions of the earth moon and sun. They can sort materials into natural and man-made items.
82. The quality of teaching is at least good and in one lesson it was excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use the schemes of work well to plan clear learning objectives for lessons. Teachers use clear explanations and questions to extend pupils' thinking. There is an appropriate emphasis on scientific enquiry and practical activity. The local environment is used well and fieldwork is an important part of the subject. Lessons challenge all pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants. Assessment sheets are being introduced by the subject co-ordinator but are not used by the teachers in a consistent manner. The use of information and communications technology is underdeveloped and the schemes of

work need to indicate opportunities for pupils to use CD ROMs and the Internet for research and to view that which is impossible to see first hand.

83. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good through this subject. The way that pupils are encouraged to record their investigations in their own words is a strength of the school. This is reflected in the quality of the work that pupils produce. Pupils have plenty of planned opportunities to measure and record data using line and block graphs. Pupils enjoy science lessons and have very positive attitudes to the subject. They listen to their teachers and are keen to participate by answering questions and contributing to discussions. They work well together and handle equipment with care. They take a pride in their work and it is well presented, showing attention to detail.
84. The science curriculum is well planned throughout the school and the science co-ordinator is supplementing the existing scheme to secure coverage of the National Curriculum with breadth and balance. She leads the subject well and has a plan and a clear view of continuing improvements. The co-ordinator has monitored planning and pupils' work and now needs to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through the observation of lessons.

ART AND DESIGN

85. Only one art and design lesson was observed during the inspection. However, displays in classrooms, in the subject portfolio and around the school were scrutinised, and pupils' sketchbooks were examined for evidence of standards and progression in their work over time. These, and interviews with the subject leader, provided sufficient evidence to show that attainment continues to be in line with that expected for seven year olds at the end of Key Stage 1 and ten year olds when they leave the school.
86. Younger pupils reach satisfactory standards in exploring techniques. They can experiment using ICT to record computer paintings of what they saw on a visit to Amberley. They improve their knowledge of techniques, such as combining paint and glue to paint with the fingertips, and build well on early experiences in observational drawing because of good teaching. The one lesson observed demonstrated how pupils are taught well to observe closely the structure and patterns of natural objects that they have already been dealing with in a seaside topic. They are able to begin to communicate the idea of texture and some have an initial understanding of the use of shading techniques. A minority achieved well for their age using the prompts highlighted by the teacher. The breadth of the Key Stage 1 curriculum has improved since the last inspection and pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject has improved.
87. The teaching of techniques is clearly effective as pupils progress through the school, observing everyday objects and materials to build up knowledge of symmetry in pattern and how this can be adapted and used. The oldest pupils gain clear understanding in how to follow through the stages of a technique. They can break down the designs of the designer William Morris in order to produce print designs of their own which they then incorporate in the production of a folder. This is painstaking work, followed through with care and pride to achieve a high quality finished product. Teaching was good in the lesson observed.
88. Local visits are used well to promote creative ideas. Although pupils in different years often visit the same place and study the same theme, there is progression in their work as teachers' planning ensures a different approach each time with different year groups. For example, Year 5 pupils observe the themes depicted in a stained glass

window as part of a visit to a church, link them to landscapes and interpret them creatively in their own designs, with good attention to detail.

89. Art and design is clearly linked to other areas of the curriculum and is beginning to be used effectively to improve the multicultural dimension of the subject, which is limited at present. Islamic tile patterns have been used as a good stimulus for abstract design, linked with the Muslim faith. References to artists and designers from different times and cultures are fairly restricted but the school is seeking to alter this through staff development. The art portfolio of photographs lacks the relevant commentary to make it a useful document to indicate standards. This task is scheduled to be done by the subject leader but will lack pupils' evaluative and developmental comments.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. Standards in design and technology have been maintained since the last inspection. They were judged to be satisfactory then and are now broadly in line with those expected nationally with pupils achieving soundly. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced the national guidance on curriculum planning for the subject. However, the time allocated to the subject limits pupils' development of a wide range of making activities, particularly a lack of work with tools and equipment to cut and shape resistant materials. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection.
91. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to generate simple ideas and use a range of techniques in the correct way. They can use a range of tools such as scissors and staplers safely and choose from a range of suitable materials such as paper, card and fabric from which to make their work.
92. In Key Stage 2, older pupils can generate product ideas by considering the use to which they will be put. They explain their ideas and list the materials they will require. They make good use of labelled sketches and work neatly and accurately. In a Year 4 and 5 class, pupils making wallets and purses evaluated the finished product and made suggestions such as, "I would use Velcro fasteners if I made this again". In a Year 3 and 4 class, pupils making picture frames understood the need for their design to be able to stand up and also be attractive.
93. Teaching is satisfactory overall. This judgement comes from a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. The scheme of work the school has adopted has helped teachers identify and share with pupils what they are to learn. In a Key Stage 2 lesson on linkages and mechanisms the teacher used clear explanations to help pupils to look at pop up books in order to try and work out how the pictures moved.
94. Pupils enjoy design and technology and talk with enthusiasm about their work. They collaborate well and listen to each other in group activities. They show a pride in their work. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the school but has identified that the use and provision of tools needs to be addressed. As yet the co-ordinator has not monitored teaching and learning. There is no formal way of assessing and recording pupils' progress in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

95. Only two lessons were seen in geography. However, a discussion was held with the subject leader and displays and pupils' work were scrutinised. In addition Year 4 and 5 pupils and staff were questioned about pupils' work. Curriculum planning was also scrutinised.

96. Sufficient evidence was available to judge that by the ages of seven and ten pupils meet the national expectations overall, maintaining standards since the last inspection. The oldest seven-year-old pupils are often well travelled for their age. Their experience is used well in school and they can use atlases and globes to locate continents and countries. In a very good unit of work, lower junior age pupils are able to do guided research about countries and apply that information to group decision making about the best place to send people with different needs on holiday. Fieldwork helps them identify features on maps of Ashington and they are able to describe the land use of the local area well using vertical aerial photos. Year 4 and 5 pupils undertake well-organised stream survey activities. These, supplemented by excellent teaching, develop their knowledge and understanding of the physical patterns and processes of rivers at an appropriate pitch for their age. Their understanding of the environmental aspect of the subject is not very well developed. This is because little scope for focus on environmental quality is included in the scheme of work. Similarly, there is insufficient focus on progression in the skill of getting pupils to ask geographical questions in order to become more independent learners.
97. The small sample of teaching observed was very good because pupils were given sufficient opportunities to use high quality resources such as photos in a practical way. For example, Year 2 and 3 pupils are able to reinforce previously taught knowledge of contrasting types of environments around the world by sorting photos into the relevant types of environment, working in groups to discuss their thoughts. Pupils enjoy their geography learning because it is largely very active, both in class and through the fieldwork opportunities, which include a residential visit to Swanage.
98. Curriculum time for the subject is inadequate. In Key Stage 1 although geography is taught each term, which is good, the actual amount of time for the subject in a topic is very variable and sometimes not enough is done in depth. In Key Stage 2 although what is taught is good, only one unit in most years plus a little topical work does not provide enough time for progress in all aspects of the subject. Thus achievement is satisfactory when it could be good, as in core subjects.
99. The school is making some effective links between humanities and other subjects and this has a good impact on children's understanding and motivation and often saves time. For example, data collected in stream measurements is graphed, supporting data handling in mathematics. Digital photos taken in fieldwork are used as an excellent tool in the computer network room to develop the presentation and begin the analysis of geographical information. The developing use of ICT as a relevant up to date resource for the subject is a strength of provision.
100. Leadership and management of the subject are sound overall. The subject leader recognises the need for more monitoring of provision and standards. The geography improvement plan has too long a timescale and is not focused sufficiently on pupils' learning. Records of pupils' progress against the unit of work expectations are kept in some classes, but this assessment system is informal and is not yet a policy followed by the whole school. Resources are good and properly organised, although the school lacks suitable atlases for the younger children.

HISTORY

101. No lessons were observed as no teaching in the subject was taking place at the time of the inspection. However, a discussion was held with the subject leader and pupils' work

was studied. In addition, Year 4 and 5 pupils and staff were questioned about their work.

102. There is insufficient recorded evidence in Year 1 to provide sufficient evidence of standards. However, good challenge is provided in Year 2 where able pupils gain knowledge of the vocabulary of history by using dictionaries to recognise the different kinds of jobs Victorian servants did. They can then link the servants' jobs to the different parts of a wealthy Victorian home. Less able pupils can show their knowledge of simple differences between now and Victorian times by drawing, whilst those with better literacy skills can describe Victorian dress from observing pictures. Pupils acquire limited knowledge about particular events and famous people of the time. For example, they can retell simply the story of the Fire of London and can sequence the events during a week of the fire on a simple time line. This skill of representing information introduces chronology well.
103. What pupils do in Key Stage 2, they do well, and reach the national expectation overall. They could exceed that expectation if all aspects of the subject were equally well developed. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teachers who design tasks to enable them to achieve. Greater demands are made of the higher achievers who are required to cover more aspects of Victorian life, broadening their historical knowledge. However, the school lacks written source material to enable pupils to act as historical detectives more often. The highest achievers are not required to develop their understanding of different viewpoints about the past and to formulate their own historical questions to investigate sources. The subject leader has identified CD Roms for purchase. The school lacks video stimuli for the subject, although it makes good use of the county resource loan service. This is a crucial resource because of the way the school organises its history programme.
104. In the junior part of the school all classes study the same topic for one term out of the three as part of a rolling whole school history programme. Insufficient time is given to history overall and gaps between the units are too long. Local history, currently placed in the summer term for the oldest class, is not properly investigated because some relevant history is done on the residential visit. Good use is made of topical history issues to motivate and interest pupils and involve families – the Queen's Jubilee has provided relevant extra breadth to the limited history curriculum. As at the time of the last inspection, visits to museums, historical buildings and sites are important to the history studied. Pupils speak with consistent enthusiasm of their role play experiences of the Victorian school day led by a visiting theatre company. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

105. At the last inspection standards in information and communications technology (ICT) were in line with national expectations throughout the school. Since then, expectations of pupils' performance has been raised and the provision of equipment has improved. The school has broadly maintained standards expected nationally. It has acquired an excellent facility in the computer suite equipped with a data projector to enable whole class teaching. However, in Key Stage 2 the pupils have insufficient planned teaching of controlling events, using sensors, and problem solving through modelling. Throughout the school ICT is not used as consistently as it might to support learning in other subjects.
106. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils reach expected standards. They are able to explain how ICT is used in everyday life. They know that E-mail is used to communicate for

leisure and business. They understand and can use the terms keyboard, mouse, toolbar and icon. They are able to save and retrieve work that they have created. They are able to use graphics programmes to produce detailed pictures and images. A good example of this was seen in a Year 1 and 2 class where pupils had produced designs for their calendars. In their written work they are able to change the font size and colour. They are able to use data programs to produce bar charts to show favourite foods and the pets pupils have at home.

107. In Key Stage 2 pupils broadly meet expectations for their age. They can combine information from a variety of sources. A good example of this was noted when Year 4 pupils researched an author using Internet web sites to download text and pictures. They understand the need to refine searches using a search engine to get better information. They can use word processor programmes and are able to manipulate text, using cut and paste and can import pictures from files. They are not, as yet, using computers to collect data by using sensors and using ICT systems to control events.
108. During the week of the inspection it was only possible to see a limited amount of ICT teaching. Teachers' planning and pupils' work were scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils about their skills and knowledge of ICT. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some individual examples of very good teaching. In a very good lesson the teacher made use of the data projector to show digital photographs taken on fieldwork. The teacher explained clearly what they wanted the pupils to learn. Pupils supported each other well as able pupils were paired with the less able.
109. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the use of computers and are keen to share their knowledge and skills. In one lesson they were very willing to suggest methods and tips to the teacher, sharing skills they had developed at home. The ICT co-ordinator understands clearly what is required of pupils and what the school needs to provide. There is a plan for the subject's development. Teachers have undertaken the nationally provided training and have increased their confidence and subject knowledge. More planned use of the suite is needed to give pupils increased opportunities to apply their ICT skills across other subjects.

MUSIC

110. Standards of pupils' attainment are in line with those expected for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave the school. This is an improvement since 1997 when inspectors judged that there was unsatisfactory progress in musical composition in Key Stage 2.
111. By the time pupils are seven, they record symbols to represent musical elements and understand how sounds can be produced in differing ways. In Year 1 pupils have represented different instruments by drawing their symbols and silences are represented in coloured blocks. During one Year 1 lesson pupils demonstrated understanding of graphic notation and could follow this by playing chime bars. There is much evidence to show how pupils produce musical patterns both individually and in groups. In Year 2 pupils learn about long and short sounds related to their topic about the sea. They can compose simple pieces and perform to the teacher's conducting. They listen extensively and respond imaginatively to a range of recorded music. They express ideas and views with increasing fluency and understanding of musical vocabulary. They know how music and song can be used for particular purposes, such as for celebrations and to interpret moods and weather, such as stormy days. In assemblies and in lessons pupils use their voices expressively and can usually sing in

tune and use appropriate variations in volume and tone. Pupils enjoy lessons, try hard and pay close attention.

112. Although no music lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 there is evidence available through pupils' work, portfolios and albums of clear gains in knowledge, skills and understanding of music. Progression can be seen in their records of how they create and develop musical ideas through composition. They notate beats and identify instruments used whilst listening attentively to pieces of recorded music such as Bizet's L'Arlesienne Suite. They listen for pitch, rhythms, mood and styles and make informed and thoughtful evaluations. In Years 4 and 5, groups of pupils attempt compositions to represent a picture or a story with three instruments. The compositions are then tape recorded and performed so that pupils can discuss and appraise each other's efforts. In one assembly, pupils demonstrated knowledge of musical vocabulary as well as clear diction, pitch control and a keen sense of phrase and musical expression in their singing. They have an obvious enjoyment in performing and sustain concentration and involvement with very good behaviour and attitudes.
113. Teaching has improved since the introduction of a scheme of work to support teachers' planning and it addresses weaknesses found in the last inspection. Teachers feel more confident in aspects of music related to opportunities for pupils to explore, improvise and compose and this is reflected in the work seen. In lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory or better. Previous work is built on and generally the pace of lessons ensure that interest and attention is sustained. Modelling by teachers is used effectively. Teachers use praise and encouragement well.
114. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Coverage of the subject is monitored through records of plans. Currently the curriculum action plan focuses on resourcing for music and there is recognition that there needs to be greater provision for instruments from different cultures. There are no extra-curricular musical activities on offer at present. The school does offer some private tuition in the violin and clarinet.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. During the course of the inspection five lessons of physical education (PE) were observed across both key stages, most of which were teaching games skills. By the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school, standards of attainment are above national expectations in games skills, an improvement since the last inspection. It is not possible to make judgements about standards in other areas of PE such as gymnastics, dance or athletics as these were not observed. However, the school does make provision for these activities during the year. Swimming is not currently part of provision but there are plans to include it in Key Stage 2 in the coming academic year.
116. In Key Stage 1, pupils know the importance of warming up before physical exercise and can bend, stretch and twist their bodies so that they are ready for demanding activity. They are learning to co-operate well and know that teamwork is essential in group activity or games. For instance, in one lesson, pupils worked co-operatively with a large "parachute" in the hall to manipulate a ball across its surface. They learned to work together in moving the material to enable the ball to stay within it. This activity also contributed well to pupils' social and personal development. Pupils also learn to control a ball using their hands to throw and catch it, and a racket to send and receive it.
117. In Key Stage 2, these skills are built upon so that pupils are able to become proficient at striking and fielding, in readiness for team games such as rounders or cricket. They

can throw a ball underarm with good levels of accuracy and most pupils can catch well, reaching out for the ball if it is delivered at a distance. Older pupils show particular skill in working co-operatively in teams and in identifying where improvements can be made. They understand the effect exercise has on the body and know why exercise is important for good health. Boys and girls perform equally as well.

118. Across the school pupils show very positive attitudes to PE lessons, work hard and behave very well. This is partly because teachers plan lessons well with challenging activities, and partly because specific skills are taught well. Overall, teaching is good in both key stages, maintaining the quality of provision since the last inspection. Questions are used well to help pupils consider how they undertake specific activities such as holding a bat. As a result, pupils learn well, make good progress and achieve standards that are higher than expectations. What is less consistent are opportunities for pupils to assess how well they are doing and to evaluate the performance of others.
119. Leadership of this subject is sound but management is good. Specific training on gymnastic activity has been provided for staff so that best use can be made of the new and improved facilities. Resources are good and are mainly new, an improvement since the last inspection. There are limited opportunities for monitoring and evaluating PE across the school so that planning for further improvement is under-developed. Good attention is paid to health and safety issues and staff ensure that appropriate clothing is worn.