

INSPECTION REPORT

St Michael's CE (Controlled) Junior School

Aldershot

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116333

Headteacher: Mrs M Green

Reporting inspector: Mr A C Jolly
8750

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th November
Inspection number: 196489

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior School
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Lane East Aldershot Hampshire
Postcode:	GU11 3SS
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Birt
Date of previous inspection:	17 th March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8750	Mr A C Jolly	Registered inspector	English Physical Education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19491	Mr R Jones	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils or students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30580	Mr D Bateson	Team inspector	Information and Communication technology History Special Educational Needs.	
26405	Mrs C Bond	Team inspector	Design and Technology Music English as an Additional Language	How well are pupils taught?
19897	Mr A Evans	Team Inspector	Science Religious Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
28885	Mrs H Paterson	Team Inspector	Mathematics Art Geography	Equal Opportunities.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Michael's Junior School, situated on the outskirts of the town of Aldershot has 374 pupils on roll, aged between 7 and 11. Pupils are drawn from a catchment area that extends beyond the ward in which the school is situated and a broad cross-section of children is represented in terms of ability and socio-economic background. The percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language is high, with 18 pupils currently at an early stage of English language acquisition. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils identified currently as having special educational needs is just above the national average while for those having statements of special educational needs it is below the national average. The school has given high priority to raising standards in mathematics and pupils' writing and making more effective use of the information and communication technology facilities. A significant proportion of teachers have left for various personal reasons in the last two years and the difficulties in replacing them have reflected the local as well as the national picture.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Michael's provides a very good learning environment in which pupils of all groups and cultures are valued and cared for. Personal, social, spiritual and cultural education is high on the agenda and the children experience a very good range of enriching curricular and extra-curricular experiences. Leadership in these areas is good. The management places great importance on raising academic standards but the effort to do so has not been consistent. Progress has been erratic and the pupils still do not achieve the standards, compared to national averages, of which they are capable. Teaching and curriculum planning are at least satisfactory in most respects but there are some persistent weaknesses, which limit their effectiveness. The school has accumulated a large financial balance that it has been too slow to spend to ensure the full entitlement to existing pupils. It has identified now areas of expenditure to utilise the surplus funds. Therefore overall the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching in Year 6 is often very good.
- Standards in physical education are good.
- Relationships at all levels are very good.
- The provision for pupils' social development is very good.
- The school provides a very wide range of valuable extra-curricular and enrichment activities.
- The school makes good use of its accommodation to further the curriculum and provide an environment conducive to learning.

What could be improved

- Test results in mathematics.
- Standards in class music.
- The spending of available surplus funds.
- The lesson planning in a significant minority of instances.

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 March 1997. Although standards have not improved overall since then, it has made satisfactory improvement in almost all the elements of the key issues identified in the last report. Attendance registers now show correct representation of authorised and unauthorised absences of pupils. The school has developed a coherent, agreed approach to curriculum planning in English, mathematics and science in order to fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum and has planned to ensure the progressive acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. Assessment procedures in those subjects are more rigorous and consistent, relating appropriately to National Curriculum levels of attainment. Long-term and medium-term planning are also better than in the last report although some inconsistencies remain.

The quality of teaching remains generally good. The standard of work seen is satisfactory overall and in most subjects is the same as at the time of the last inspection. Standards in music have fallen to an unsatisfactory level but have improved in physical education in which they are now good. Standards in science and history were good at the time of the last inspection and are now no more than satisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	E	D	D
mathematics	D	D	E	E
science	C	D	D	D

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

This table shows that in the latest Key Stage 2 tests, results based on average points score were below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics when compared both nationally and with schools in similar contexts.

For the year group listed, the attainment on entry to the school was below average. Thus attainment in English and science in 2001 was broadly what would be expected and confirmed the school's predicted levels of attainment based on pupils' test results at the end of Key Stage 1. However, standards in the mathematics tests were too low and reflected a decrease from both previous performance and predicted levels. The major reason for this was the poor results in the mental mathematics part of the tests.

There is no clear difference between the relative performance of boys, girls and pupils for whom English is an additional language. Results in mathematics have been erratic. There was a significant improvement in 1999, which was sustained in 2000, but results in 2001 were well below the national average. The school has set realistic targets in mathematics which if attained will ensure the necessary improvement. The targets in English, however, have been insufficiently ambitious for both 2001 and 2002 to ensure the standards that are expected nationally are achieved.

Pupils achieve well by the end of Key Stage 2. In physical education pupils achieve good standards. Despite the achievements of the minority of pupils participating regularly in musical performances, in class music standards are unsatisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like school and participate enthusiastically in the wide range of activities offered. They generally work hard in lessons although a significant minority have less positive attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils are polite and friendly and property is well treated. However in a few classes standards are not as good where a number of pupils are disruptive and noisy.
Personal development and relationships	Older pupils, particularly, take responsibility and contribute to school life. Relationships are very good. Pupils work and play well together.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are broadly in line with national averages.

The quality of relationships at all levels throughout the school is a marked strength. The unsatisfactory behaviour of a few pupils in a small number of classes is the only weakness.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The teaching is sound or better in 96 per cent of lessons. Four per cent is unsatisfactory, which is very similar to the findings of the last inspection. Over one-half of the teaching is good or better. It is particularly effective in Year 6 where teachers have very clear learning objectives and match tasks carefully to pupils' ability. Very good relationships are a strong foundation which, combined with effective classroom organisation, sets a good ethos for learning. The least effective feature of the teaching is the management of the behaviour of a small minority of pupils in a few classes. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is consistently good and pupils learn these key skills particularly well because teachers have clear objectives and lessons are well structured to develop learning progressively. In most of the foundation subjects however, the key elements of knowledge and understanding are insufficiently identified in lesson planning so that on occasions the tasks set do not sufficiently develop learning. The teaching effectively meets the learning needs of all pupils with many examples, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons, of challenging tasks being set for able pupils and good support given to pupils who have special needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. There is a particularly wide range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The work of the learning support team is especially valuable.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils' needs are sensitively identified and they are supported effectively. Their progress is monitored carefully. Provision is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The provision for social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school where pupils are secure and well supported by staff, particularly on pastoral matters. There are good arrangements to ensure health and safety and child protection.

The relationships with parents are sound and the school provides good quality information. The school provides a wide range of activities both at lunchtime and after school. The school has good systems to care for its pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership in establishing a caring ethos where there is an effective emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development. She is well supported by the Senior Management Team. The school is well managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil effectively their role as 'critical friend' to the school and ensure all statutory obligations are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes good use of the valuable advice from the Local Education Authority to ensure it has evaluated its performance satisfactorily. This has not yet been translated into strategies which have produced consistently good test results.
The strategic use of resources	Although the school makes sound use of its physical resources it has allowed too high a financial underspend to accumulate.

The school has good accommodation and resources and has sufficient staff to meet the requirements of the curriculum. The headteacher and governors have a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further. The school applies effectively the principle of best value. It promotes a competitive climate to ensure all significant items of expenditure are obtained at an appropriate market cost.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• They are comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems.• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.• The school has high expectations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They would like the school to work more closely with them.• The right amount of homework

The inspection team agree with the positive views expressed by parents although it feels some targets are unambitious. It also agrees with the viewpoint at the parents' meeting that homework was appropriate, rather than the view expressed by a significant minority of questionnaire returns. The questionnaire returns reflect some concerns about communication with the home but the information viewed by the inspection team was of a good standard.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The percentage of pupils attaining the nationally expected level in the English and science tests at the end of Key Stage 2 was broadly in line with the national average in 2001.
2. In mathematics, however, standards fell badly in the 2001 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 and were well below the national average when compared both nationally and with schools in similar contexts. The school has analysed its results and has identified very poor performance in the mental mathematics test as the major reason for the low attainment and this is confirmed by the scrutiny of the test papers. Standards were low in 1998, then improved in 1999, were sustained in 2000 to fall dramatically in 2001.
3. Taking account of the pupils' attainment on entry, the results indicate that reasonable progress is made. Nevertheless, the improvements have not been consistent from year to year and have been slower than nationally overall.
4. The standard of work in mathematics in Year 6 is currently better than last year's test results would indicate. Standards in English and science are average throughout the school and on course to sustain the recent improvement. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been embedded successfully and standards of literacy and numeracy are sound.
5. The attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in most foundation subjects are sound, reflecting the findings of the last report. However, notwithstanding the achievements of the minority of pupils who regularly play instruments or participate in performances the standards in class music are unsatisfactory as pupils lack the necessary basic skills, knowledge and understanding.
6. Standards have improved in physical education to reach a good level of attainment in gymnastics and games. Standards have fallen in history, music and science since the last inspection report.
7. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving well when compared with their low attainment on entry to the school. There is a progressive improvement in the attainments of the new pupils entering the school and standards are rising in Years 3 and 4 in proportion. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys or girls or pupils of different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. Those pupils who are gifted and talented make satisfactory progress.
8. The school is aware of what needs to be done to improve standards further. It has received valuable support, evaluation and analysis from the Local Education Authority. Sound measures have been taken to improve systems for curriculum and assessment and the school has set itself realistic and challenging targets in mathematics for the future. However, targets have been insufficiently ambitious in English in both 2000 and 2001.

Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development

9. The majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning. They show an interest in lessons and other school activities, including clubs. For example over thirty pupils regularly stay after school each week to take part in a writers' master class. They are keen to answer questions and talk enthusiastically about their work. In Year 5 circle time pupils listened well and paid attention while others engaged in role-play activities on the themes of truth and co-operation. Pupils say that they like school and this is confirmed by their parents. Attendance is in line with national averages.

10. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils are valued by staff and their activities are celebrated in displays of photographs and work around the school. They work together well in for example sharing computers and dividing up tasks in an information and communication technology lesson. At lunchtimes they play sociably, sharing a variety of outdoor play equipment and adventure playground facilities.

11. Behaviour around the school and in activities, such as assemblies, is generally good. Pupils are friendly and polite and the school site and property is treated with care. Before school begins pupils come into classrooms and settle quickly to work using computers and other equipment without the need for supervision. Most pupils behave well in lessons. However, in some classes behaviour is not as good and a significant minority of pupils are at times noisy and disruptive. By taking up teachers' time they slow the pace of lessons and lessen the learning opportunities for others. This detracts from the high standards the school is otherwise successfully promoting by using a range of rewards and merit systems and setting clear expectations.

The school provides a good range of opportunities to help pupils become responsible. For example Year 6 pupils help teachers around the school, in their classrooms and at lunchtimes and Year 5 pupils help in the dining room. A school playtime committee has pupil representatives from each class and meets regularly to decide on issues relating to the purchase of equipment and use of the playground. Pupils take the initiative in deciding how to fundraise and support a range of charities.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching remains good overall, as it was in the last inspection report, although there remains some variability. Most very good teaching is in the key areas of literacy and numeracy, and in Years 5 and 6. The few unsatisfactory lessons are in Year 3 but there is also some very good teaching in that year group. There has been a considerable turnover of staff during this academic year, and some significant difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced teachers to match the needs of the pupils, reflecting the national picture. This has meant that the school has not yet attained the consistent approach to key elements of the teaching such as the management of behaviour of the small minority of very challenging pupils. The good quality of the Learning Support Team makes an effective contribution to the quality of teaching in the school.

13. There are several factors that have contributed to the good teaching. Teachers have implemented the new national strategies for literacy and numeracy well, and these provide a good structure for successful lessons. The training and monitoring of teaching by senior members of staff and local authority inspectors is helping to identify weaknesses and spread good practice in teaching in the key subjects.

14. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects taught and pupils' needs are very well developed in Years 5 and 6, particularly in literacy, numeracy and science. Where lessons are really effective, teachers are clear about the learning they expect to be achieved by every pupil, explaining both the content and the method of each task. In a Year 5 literacy

lesson, for example, when pupils were changing a familiar fairy tale into a play script, every step had been planned beforehand so that pupils could see the continuity of their learning as each lesson developed. The teacher demonstrated how to complete the activity of adding stage directions to previous work on dialogue, asking pupils to act out the small sequence she had constructed with them. Consequently, all pupils were able to complete their own version effectively.

15. Occasionally the lesson objectives are not made clear and this leads to some pupils being unsure of how to reach them. For instance, in one Year 3 literacy lesson, pupils were asked to write a setting for a story, but were unclear about the requirements to complete the task. Most responded by writing a story, unable to use the many clues to descriptive writing provided by the teacher. Tasks are not always sufficiently adjusted to suit different ability groups in a class, particularly for higher achieving pupils.

16. In foundation subjects, key skills, knowledge and understanding are not always sufficiently identified and planned for in lessons in any year group. Pupils complete the set tasks with enthusiasm, but their achievement does not relate to the planned subject.

17. In many lessons teachers question pupils effectively, stimulating their interest and making them think as they introduce the day's work. This is less well developed in mental mathematics where pupils have limited opportunities to verbalise their thinking in the rush to answer computational challenges. Plenary sessions at the end of lessons often contribute well to assessment opportunities, when teachers challenge pupils to explain their reasoning or develop their ideas further. Throughout all lessons, the contribution of the Learning Support Team is very effective, continuing to be a strength of the school. They are used very efficiently, sometimes transferring mid-lesson from one class to another to support an individual child, for example during a short writing task, but their contribution does not impede the flow of the lesson. Pupils whose first language is not English and pupils with special educational needs are very sensitively supported at all times, enabling them to make good progress alongside their classmates.

18. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are consistently good. Most teachers use effective and appropriate management strategies to maintain discipline, with a good use of the school's behaviour policy. They reward pupils with praise and team points. The recently introduced system of gold stickers is helping to raise pupils' self-esteem.

19. Teachers throughout the school use resources well. The ICT suite is used to develop pupils' knowledge in a range of subjects. In literacy teachers use individual whiteboards to facilitate pupils' participation in oral, whole class elements of the lessons.

20. Homework, such as reading or research for topics is well established, and used effectively across the school to enhance learning. The marking of work is inconsistent. In a few classes it is constructive but in the rest there are too few comments to help pupils improve.

21. Despite the generally good teaching there are some weaknesses that spoil a small minority of lessons and reduce the effectiveness of some which are otherwise good.

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

22. The school provides a broad and reasonably balanced curriculum, offering the pupils a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities. It affords a sound preparation for secondary school. This judgement broadly reflects the findings of the previous inspection.

23. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics and the school is implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 4 have a six-week session of swimming lessons. Currently, about 37 pupils take advantage of opportunities for instrumental tuition. Religious education (RE) meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and the school meets its obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship, which is mainly Christian in character.

24. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing a key issue of the previous inspection, which was to develop a coherent approach to curriculum planning. English and mathematics are based soundly on the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy respectively. The newly appointed curriculum development manager is developing a sound overall curriculum 'map', which outlines the work which pupils in each year group should cover throughout the school year in all the other subjects. There are policies for all subjects, though some, such as RE, are in draft form awaiting governor approval, whilst others, such as art and science, are now out of date. Planning for subjects other than English and mathematics is soundly based on guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). The teachers plan carefully for the work that the pupils will cover each term, though planning in some subjects, such as art, music and design technology, is much less specific than in others. The school has taken satisfactorily into account the needs of those pupils for whom English is an additional language.

25. A very wide range of good quality extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum and most parents appreciate this. There are upper and lower school choirs, a music ensemble, recorder clubs, S Club 3 and a writing 'masterclass' for about 28 pupils in Years 5 and 6. The special educational needs co-ordinator runs a club specifically for a small group of pupils from Kosovo. In addition, there are clubs for chess, gymnastics, sports, dance, football, netball and cricket. Sports matches are played against local schools. The teachers enrich learning further by organising educational visits to local museums and to places such as Guildford, Hindleap Warren and Butser Hill.

26. The school cultivates strong community links. The pupils visit local churches as part of their work and they celebrate festivals of the Christian calendar at St Michael's Church of the Archangel. There are also strong links with the Diocesan Education Team. At Christmas time, the choir has sung at the Baptist Church and has entertained shoppers at a local gardening centre and at the Galleries Shopping Centre. During the inspection, local clergy led two assemblies. A local pastor runs an after-school YoYo club and accompanies Year 6 pupils on their residential visit. The community police officer contributes to the pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) programme and other visitors have included musicians, authors and theatre groups. Year 4 pupils have visited local allotments as part of their science work.

27. There are good links with the adjacent infant school and with the main secondary school to which the pupils transfer. Year 2 pupils spend half a day at St Michael's in the summer term and are teamed up with 'buddies' from Year 3. Year 6 pupils produce a welcome pamphlet for them. Secondary pupils come to talk to pupils in Year 6 and recently led a 'German week' for them. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to spend a day at the secondary school, in order to familiarise themselves with it. Some secondary pupils have work experience placements at St Michael's.

28. There is a well planned programme of work in PSHCE based on QCA guidelines. Relevant issues are discussed during these timetabled sessions, in addition to science lessons and assemblies. There is formal sex education from the latter part of Year 5 onwards and parents are informed appropriately. Due attention is paid to personal hygiene,

healthy eating and the dangers of drugs misuse. However, there is no drugs education policy as yet.

29. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual development. Its clear mission statement underpins the whole caring ethos of the school, which seeks to develop confidence, self-esteem, tolerance and respect. The classrooms are attractive and provide a positive learning environment. There are strong links with local churches and Year 6 pupils can attend a leavers' service at Guildford Cathedral. Acts of collective worship make a good contribution to spiritual development, on themes such as gifts and giving, giving oneself for God and sharing. The teachers celebrate pupils' achievements appropriately. The school library has a very good selection of books on themes such as disability, old age, racism and honesty. The teachers try to instil in the pupils a sense of awe and wonder in learning, for example in a Year 5 science lesson, where the pupils saw a balloon being filled with helium.

30. The school has a clear behaviour management policy and provision for the pupils' moral development is good. Rules and class charters, drawn up by the pupils, are prominently displayed. In a Year 6 classroom, a notice encourages the pupils to never settle for less than their best. Positive effort and behaviour are appropriately rewarded. The Local Education Authority Behaviour Intervention Service is currently spending six weeks in school, in order to support behaviour management strategies in Year 5. The individual education plans of some pupils on the special educational needs register include appropriate targets for improving behaviour.

31. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' social development. Most parents believe that the teachers help their children to mature and become responsible. All pupils help at times as classroom monitors and older pupils are given extra responsibilities as team captains and as helpers in the school office and library. There are good opportunities to develop social skills through participation in school productions, extra-curricular activities and visits, including a residential visit to Hindleap Warren for Year 6 pupils. In geography, the pupils are learning about the need for conservation of the world's tropical rain forests. The pupils have packed shoeboxes with gifts for children in Eastern Europe and they have supported 'seeds for Africa', the British Heart Foundation, Barnardo's and Cancer and Leukaemia in Childhood. Representatives from each class meet as a 'safe playtime' committee to discuss relevant matters. The school's PSHCE programme contributes well towards the pupils' social development. There have been useful links with pupils at Henry Tyndale Special School. The teachers encourage the pupils to be aware of current world events.

32. There is good provision for the pupils' cultural development. In history, they learn about the legacies of past cultures in Britain, including the Saxons, Tudors and Victorians. In physical education, the pupils performed a Tudor dance. In art, they are familiar with the work of famous artists, such as Turner. The pupils visit museums in Aldershot and Farnham and they participate in theatre workshops at the West End Centre. They have taken part in a writing workshop with a visiting author. The teachers ensure that the pupils are equipped to grow up in a multicultural society. In RE, the pupils learn about aspects of the faiths and cultures of Jews, Muslims and Hindus and in geography, they learn about life on the Caribbean island of St Lucia. In literacy, Year 4 pupils are studying a book about Afro-Caribbean rhymes, games and songs. In the assemblies observed during the inspection, the pupils listened to taped music sung by the African Children's Choir. A Cameroon musician recently visited the school and this gave the pupils the opportunity to play African musical instruments and to make some of their own.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. There is good provision for the care and welfare of pupils, who enjoy a safe and secure environment. There are effective procedures to deal with child protection issues, which are also included in staff training and induction. The school complies with the requirements of health and safety legislation. Appropriate policies are in place, site inspections and risk assessments have been carried out and there are systems for identifying and dealing with potential hazards.

34. There are sound systems for recording and monitoring attendance and the criticisms in the last report have been addressed. Unexplained absences are followed up and the school works closely with the Education Welfare Officer, who visits regularly, when there are problems.

35. There are good arrangements for the monitoring of behaviour and personal development. Social profiles for pupils are maintained and passed between teachers each year so that problems can be spotted and parents involved. Class teachers record incidents of both good and poor behaviour and records are regularly checked. Individual behaviour targets are devised when necessary. The school has been proactive in involving the local authority's Behaviour Intervention Service to work with a group of Year 5 pupils and last year devised a lunchtime activities project to develop the social skills of a group of older boys whose aggressive behaviour was giving cause for concern. There is strong pastoral support for a small group of children whose parents are seeking political asylum and the school nurse makes a valuable contribution to general health education.

36. Since the time of the last inspection the school has been developing improved systems for monitoring and recording pupils' academic progress so that they can be more effectively targeted and supported. Work is continuing, including a move towards computerising the collection of data, but sound systems are now in place for monitoring progress in English and mathematics. Each year all pupils take a variety of nationally recognised tests, including reading and spelling. All teachers maintain a curriculum assessment tracking file where information is recorded and used, for example in the setting of Year 6 pupils and identification of mathematics "catch up" and additional literacy support groups. The assessments make a useful contribution in the allocation of learning support staff in each year. Monitoring and recording in other subjects has a suitably simple system.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The relationships with parents are sound. The last inspection report noted that the school worked hard to encourage parents to play an active role in their children's learning and provided them with good quality information. This remains the case. Parents have mainly positive views about the school and most feel comfortable about approaching it with problems or queries.

38. The school is open and welcoming with notices and booklets in the foyer and senior staff are available at the end of the day for discussions. There are effective channels of communication, including monthly newsletters and an established programme of parents meetings each term, with alternative arrangements made for parents who cannot attend. Information on what is being studied is sent home for each year group and this is supplemented by special events, such as a well attended numeracy evening which involved pupils demonstrating to their parents the work they were doing in mathematics. Annual reports on pupils' progress give a full and personalised account of what has been studied but many still lack details of attainment levels and progress.

39. The school is keen to further develop parents' involvement with their children's learning both in school and at home. A small number of parents regularly help in the library and with practical activities, such as cookery. Others help with trips adding to the range of experiences available to pupils. The school has produced some learning materials for parents of Year 3 pupils so that they can help their children with reading. 'Learning plans' have also been developed for each pupil, setting targets that are discussed and agreed with pupils and parents at the autumn parents meeting. Such initiatives have strengthened the links with parents, although overall parental involvement does remain inconsistent at times.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. Sound leadership has been a critical factor in maintaining a clear educational direction during a period when there has been a major turnover of staff. The school has not found it easy to recruit teachers but has still engendered a good team spirit, with a shared commitment to improve. A caring ethos has been created in the school which has a stimulating learning environment. There is an effective approach to equal opportunities and pupils of all abilities and cultures are valued and cared for.

41. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 were below the national average from 1998-2000 in the key subjects of English, mathematics and science. Effective strategies have been developed with invaluable support from the Local Education Authority to raise standards in writing. The impact has been less substantial in other areas, particularly mathematics.

42. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have completed joint lesson observations in order to monitor teaching and have started to encourage consistent and effective strategies to raise standards. There is a sound system to track pupils' performance and set targets. Targets however, are not yet sufficiently ambitious to match the levels which would be expected nationally.

43. The governors have fulfilled an effective role as a 'critical friend' to the school and the minutes of their meetings provides evidence of them asking pertinent, challenging questions. They have a good understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. They have ensured all statutory obligations are met. They operate efficiently; all committees have terms of reference and meet regularly to determine the school's broad strategies.

44. The school improvement plan takes full account of comparative national information on tests and the school's own performance in identifying priorities for improvement. For each priority there are firm targets and completion dates, arrangements are made for checking progress, resources are planned, those responsible are named, and the criteria for recognising success are set.

45. The governors' finance committee meet at least every half term. They actively seek to obtain the best value in their dealings and have good monitoring arrangements. They made sound use of standards funds and other grants. However, they have been too cautious in their financial planning although they planned for a predicted decline in numbers, which did not materialise. Last year the school had a balance of £129,886 and a significant element of this year's budget has not been allocated. The school has not given sufficient urgency to redistributing this balance to ensure the entitlement of the existing pupils is met appropriately and has not used its finances to best advantage.

46. When taking into account the low attainment on entry of most of the existing pupils, the average income per pupil, the satisfactory quality of education including teaching and the overall average standards of attainment, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. *Draw up an action plan for improving mental skills in mathematics by:

- ensuring teachers match questions more closely to the varying needs of pupils in mental mathematics sessions;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to explain how they work out mental calculations;
- focusing teaching more closely on areas of recognised weakness in mental mathematics.

***Develop and improve the quality of day-to-day planning in the foundation subjects by:**

- identifying more closely key skills and subject specific knowledge;
- ensuring that learning objectives are shared with pupils:
- devising a whole-school approach to promote greater consistency.

***Raise standards in class music by:**

- preparing an interim plan for implementing the new scheme gradually so as to take more account of the pupils' starting points, regardless of age;
- providing training in the use of the scheme for all teachers responsible for class music who do not have specialist knowledge;
- capitalising on the achievements of pupils with special musical aptitude to improve class music;
- improving the organisation of the music room.

***Draw up a plan for the phased spending of the excessive funding reserves so that pupils can benefit now and in the near future.**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

54

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	10	21	21	2	0	0
Percentage	0	19	38	39	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

Y3– Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

374

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

33

Special educational needs

Y3 – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

4

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

122

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

18

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

20

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	46	54	100

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	32	19	43
	Girls	41	25	47
	Total	73	44	90
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73(66)	44(67)	90(85)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	25	41
	Girls	32	26	43
	Total	61	51	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61(67)	51(54)	84(71)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	-
Indian	3
Pakistani	8
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	347
Any other minority ethnic group	11

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	-	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	10	-
Other minority ethnic groups	1	-

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29.9 : 1
Average class size	31.2

Education support staff: Y3 - Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	249.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	7111,62.0
Total expenditure	680,369.0
Expenditure per pupil	1,782
Balance brought forward from previous year	99,093.0

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.5
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	374
Number of questionnaires returned	87

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	53	1	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	29	58	9	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	66	4	5	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	55	14	5	0
The teaching is good.	26	66	5	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	53	14	5	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	39	5	5	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	49	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	51	14	7	3
The school is well led and managed.	26	53	7	7	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	53	12	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	49	12	4	5

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

ENGLISH

48. Standards in English are average by the time the pupils leave the school, which reflects the findings of the last report. The 2001 Key Stage 2 test results were markedly improved from the previous year when low standards in writing, particularly had been responsible for poor results. The school had tackled the problem rigorously with the help of the Local Education Authority with the result that the percentage of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4 was only 2 per cent below the national average, with 11 per cent more pupils reaching the standard in writing. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was also close to the national average. However, when results are compared according to the whole range of pupils' scores in these tests the school's performance remains below average both when compared nationally and with schools in similar contexts.

49. The shortfall is mitigated to some extent by the fact that the cohort of pupils concerned had obtained results in the Key Stage 1 tests four years earlier that were significantly below average. The pupils had entered the school with standards in writing and reading that were clearly below average.

50. There has been no difference between the relative performance of boys and girls when compared nationally from 1999-2001. There is also no discernible difference for those pupils for whom English is an additional language. The overall pattern of test results has been slightly upward, but much slower than the national trend until the last year's sharp upturn.

51. The emphasis on improving pupils' writing has now ensured that the standards are similar to what would be generally found. Pupils' work covers a good range of writing for different purposes and includes play scripts, letters and descriptive prose. Pupils in Year 5 are able to convert prose passages into a play script and are aware of the devices and conventions for the different form of presentation. The current work in Year 6 contains some effective descriptive writing and a good command of the basic skills of punctuation. Throughout the school pupils write at length regularly and their skills develop progressively.

52. Standards of reading are sound. All pupils have reading logs to maintain the links between school and home in developing their reading. The more able readers can discuss authors such as Roald Dahl and J K Rowling and give reasons why they prefer particular books. Less confident readers have a secure grasp of appropriate strategies to help them. Pupils of all ages enjoy reading the shared texts in the Literacy Hour and can do so with clear expressive voices. One particularly effective feature is the 'Reading Roundabout', which timetables particular types of reading for different days .

53. Standards of speaking and listening are average. In Years 5 and 6 pupils discuss tasks confidently in groups as part of the main activity of the lesson. Most pupils listen attentively and politely during the introductory sessions to the Literacy Hour and answer questions clearly and confidently. Pupils sometimes read aloud during the whole school assembly.

54. Standards in spelling and handwriting are sound. The first part of the session is often used purposefully to develop basic skills in spelling and handwriting. Regular spelling tests are set and pupils correct previous misspellings. There is regular handwriting practice.

55. The quality of teaching is good overall. Over one-half of the teaching is good or better but teaching is occasionally unsatisfactory. The best teaching generally is in Years 5 and 6

where lessons proceed at a brisk pace and are well matched to the varying abilities of pupils. In a very well taught lesson in Year 5 there was a very clear display of how to set out a play script. Regular reference was made to this and pupils could also look at it closely when drafting their own play scripts. There were similar displays in Year 6 classrooms outlining the main features of a newspaper article to assist the pupils' writing. The introductory session was made particularly interesting to the pupils in one Year 6 group by the content of a local newspaper article.

56. Lessons follow largely the pattern of the National Literacy Strategy. Consistently good use is made of learning support assistants to help not only in the main activity part of the lesson but also in the parts of the lesson centring on word or sentence level work. Learning objectives are displayed consistently in all classrooms and planning is sound. One particularly effective feature is the prominence of targets for improvement in pupils' books. This could be made even more effective if the marking of pupils' work more consistently featured targets. Although detailed comments are often given, there are insufficient suggestions on how the pupils could do better.

57. Relationships are particularly good in Years 5 and 6 and pupils are well managed. In the occasional lesson where teaching is less satisfactory it is because a significant minority of pupils do not concentrate sufficiently so that other pupils' learning is disrupted. The management of pupils is less consistently effective in Years 3 and 4.

58. Pupils generally achieve satisfactorily considering their low attainment on entry. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive effective support to make good progress. The learning support assistants give good support and show initiative and flexibility in supporting pupils of all abilities.

59. The Local Education Authority has targeted the school for support and the evaluation, analysis and advice given has had a clear impact on raising standards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have monitored teaching regularly to support the newly appointed co-ordinator. There are sound systems to assess pupils and track their progress. There is a shared commitment to succeed.

60. The standard on entry of pupils to the school is progressively becoming higher and this, combined with the clear strategies already developed provides the opportunity to consolidate achievements and raise standards further. The school has good resources and accommodation. However, the targets set for the Key Stage 2 test results are insufficiently ambitious for this purpose.

MATHEMATICS

61. In the year 2001 end of key stage National Tests, standards overall were well below average when compared with schools both nationally and in similar contexts. The results had risen somewhat since 1998 but fell dramatically in 2001 due to a significant number of pupils scoring poorly in the mental mathematics test. The pupils in that cohort achieved much better results in English and science indicating strongly that they were not achieving their potential in mathematics.

62. By the end of the current Year 6 standards in mathematics, as evidenced by the work seen, are average, which reflects the findings of the last inspection report. The year 2001 national test results showed that boys did less well than girls. However this is not apparent for the pupils currently in the school. The pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language make good progress.

63. Pupils in Year 6 work at levels relevant to their age and ability. They can recall rapidly their times tables up to ten times and understand square numbers. They can calculate the area and perimeters of simple shapes, like a rectangle, and compound shapes. More able pupils are beginning to use formulas to aid their calculations. In Year 5 pupils can count in multiples of 10, 100 and 1000 and can systematically investigate ways of subtracting. In Year 4 pupils can recall their 2, 5 and 10 timetables and are beginning to know their other times table facts. They can record information by tallying and represent the results in pictograms and bar charts. In Year 3 pupils are beginning to know their 2, 5 and 10 times tables off by heart and are beginning to recognise fractions like, $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$, and fractions of numbers and shapes. Pupils are less successful at choosing the right strategy to help them solve practical problems.

64. The quality of teaching and learning is currently good and pupils make good progress. The teaching is never less than satisfactory and sometimes it is very good. Teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subject is sound and this is evident in the suitable methods employed and the way basic skills are taught. Teachers are secure in the implementation of the Numeracy Hour, through the well-established three-part lesson structure, which they use satisfactorily. A few teachers use a good range of questions when encouraging the pupils to explain their mathematical thinking but in most lessons there are limited opportunities for pupils to speak about their thinking processes in class when doing mental calculations or when solving problems and this is holding back the pupil's learning.

65. Teacher's detailed day-to-day planning itemises learning activities for pupils and this ensures a good consistency of mathematical work across the year groups and ability sets but this planning does not focus on the expected outcomes for pupils by the end of the lesson. The planning draws upon the National Numeracy Strategy for its learning objectives and these are displayed on the classroom walls for the pupils to see but in most lessons they are not referred to so pupils do not understand the overall purpose of their tasks. Opportunities are often missed to organise the pupil's work to extend the learning opportunities for the most able pupils within the classroom. Frequently these pupils are repeating a version of the main class activity rather than a more complex task at which they could work at their own rate.

66. Year 6 pupils are taught daily in four ability sets and Year 5 pupils are taught in 5 ability sets once a week thus enabling the work to be better matched to their needs. There are good extension activities once a week provided through the 'maths mind stretcher' group for more able pupils from Years 5 and 6. Throughout the school all pupils' work is clearly marked but pupils are limited in their ability to make progress with their learning due to insufficient constructive comments from their teachers. The teaching of lower attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good and good use is made of practical apparatus to help pupils understand better the complexities of the task. For example, interlocking cubes were used to support pupils in Year 3 when they were learning about fractions of shapes.

67. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils who are keen to learn in their mathematics lessons. Sometimes pupils are over exuberant and this limits the progress of the lesson. In group work the pupils collaborate and cooperate in a lively way with each other when completing their mathematical tasks. The use of good quality, informative displays, for example in Year 4 showing bar charts of pupil's favourite pets and sweets, and in Year 6 showing nets for three-dimensional shapes, reinforces the pupils learning and their acquisition of mathematical language.

68. In a very good lesson observed the learning objective was shared with the pupils and very clear and high expectations were set for the outcomes for the pupils by the end of the lesson.

The lesson was taught at a brisk pace with the teachers' questioning focusing on extending the pupils thinking, for example, "Can you explain your thinking to me?" The teacher chose carefully the mathematical language used in addressing the pupils and expected the pupils to respond using the correct mathematical vocabulary. Opportunities were created to extend the able pupils within the class and for them to share their calculating strategies with the whole class. In a less successful lesson observed the learning objective was not shared with the pupils so the purpose of the series of tasks in the lesson was unclear to them and there were limited opportunities for the children to talk about their ways of calculating the answers to sums. The more able pupils in the class were restricted in what they could achieve by the teacher teaching the whole class together when they could have achieved more by working on different tasks at their own rate.

69. Across the whole school curriculum, mathematics is developed satisfactorily. In ICT pupils use the information they have collected during the week in tally charts to draw up pictograms and bar charts of their results. In geography pupils use their mathematical skills to analyse the climate graphs of St. Lucia and consider average temperatures and rainfall.

70. Mathematics is well led. The mathematics co-ordinator, who is a Leading Mathematics Teacher, has a clear vision for the development of the subject and has analysed the recent poor test results in detail. She has been instrumental in the successful introduction of the Numeracy Hour and has provided training for teachers and an evening numeracy workshop for parents. She has led the revision of the long term planning of mathematics using the structure and objectives from the National Numeracy Strategy and this is reflected in the teachers' day-to-day planning. The improvement of standards in mathematics is a key objective of the school's improvement plan and the issue of raising the standards of pupils mental calculating skills has been added since the poor results in the end of key stage national tests in 2001.

71. The school has clearly identified the two main issues for the school to develop, namely providing more opportunities for pupils to explain how they work out mental calculations, and focussing teaching more closely on areas of recognised weakness in mental mathematics sessions. As yet there has been insufficient emphasis and urgency put on the need to address these issues and there is no clear formal action plan with success criteria. The mathematics co-ordinator and senior staff have a satisfactory monitoring programme for observing mathematics teaching. The outcomes of this monitoring are used to inform the teacher's day-to-day planning of lessons. Satisfactory assessment activities are used to assess pupils' progress within classes and year groups through the use of class based half termly assessments and annual tests. Good quality resources are well used to support the pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

72. Standards in Year 6 are average. This is not as good as they were during the previous inspection. Since then, the school has placed most emphasis on raising standards in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, this judgement is an improvement on pupils' attainment in science in the 2001 Key Stage 2 national tests, when standards were below average compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. This was because fewer pupils than are found nationally managed to reach the higher National Curriculum Level 5. Standards have been rising steadily over the past four years and this improvement is due to the school's successful adoption of national guidelines and to teaching, which is mainly good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well, though the progress of gifted and talented pupils is not more than satisfactory. Boys and girls attain equally. Most of the pupils enjoy their science lessons and they participate enthusiastically in practical investigations.

73. By the age of eleven, the pupils have a sound understanding of the scientific principles of prediction and fair testing, as they carry out investigations into topics, such as the way in which light travels in straight lines, how shadow size is affected by an object being moved, the insulation properties of certain materials, the conditions necessary for healthy plant growth and the absorption qualities of different types of paper. They know about the structure of the human eye and the effect of forces, including gravity and magnetism. In work linked to geography, the pupils know about the flora and fauna of the tropical rain forests. They use their literacy skills soundly to record findings of investigations into topics, such as healthy diets and the function of the human skeleton. They use their mathematical skills soundly to record some of their findings graphically, for example accurate bar charts of shadow size.

74. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. It is particularly good in Years 4 and 6. No lessons were observed in Year 5. All the teachers emphasise the need to develop the pupils' skills of scientific enquiry through practical investigations. Lessons move along briskly. The teachers monitor progress carefully, although the quality of marking of pupils' work is variable. Some comment is helpful in guiding the pupils on how to improve: "How would you improve the investigation?". In two Year 6 lessons, the teachers used overhead projectors well to illustrate how scientists use numbered classification keys and branching keys to identify and group plants and animals. They encouraged the pupils to make careful observations in using the keys and this helped them to group various pond creatures and other items. They learnt that the questions they devised had to be answered 'yes' or 'no'. In a good lesson in Year 4, the teacher made useful links with mathematics and design technology and this helped the pupils to understand the effect of the friction from different surfaces on the distance travelled by buggies that they had made. She encouraged the pupils to use correct scientific terms, such as 'hypothesis' and 'friction' and this reinforced their ability to talk about and to record their findings. In another lesson in Year 4, groups were less well organised and pupils stood for too long waiting for an opportunity to carry out their investigation. This led to a waning of concentration and interest. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher emphasised the use of relevant vocabulary, such as 'force' and 'attract', and this helped the pupils learn about the magnetic qualities of various materials. Another lesson in Year 3 was less successful, because the teacher's class control was insecure at times and the pupils were unsure about the work that they had to do. Throughout the school, the teachers make insufficient use of information and communication technology to enhance teaching and learning and this is recognised in the subject manager's action plan.

75. The newly appointed subject manager has made a satisfactory start in coordinating the subject, but she realises that much now needs to be done to develop her role. The subject policy is due for review, though the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Planning is soundly based on guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing the pupils' progress, but generally the teachers do not make enough use of this to plan subsequent work. There is no whole school sampling of pupils' work, which might help the teachers to agree on examples that illustrate National Curriculum levels of attainment. The co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the subject's performance, for example through some monitoring of teaching. There are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning, but their storage is unsatisfactory. Learning is enhanced by the existence of a woodland area and pond. Through encouraging collaborative work during practical investigations and through making the pupils aware of the need for conservation of the environment, the subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

ART AND DESIGN

76. By the end of Year 6 standards in art are satisfactory which reflects the findings of the last inspection report. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys or girls.

77. By the end of Year 6 most pupils have developed a satisfactory awareness of the use of tone, colour, shape and texture. They produce a wide variety of work in art and design, such as observations of the natural and man-made environment, portraits, prints and decorative patterns. Most pupils can explain the effects they are trying to create but do not always know the correct technical vocabulary to use to describe their artistic efforts. They know about artists from the past, such as Turner, and can satisfactorily use some of their techniques. In Year 5 pupils have sketched leaves and in Year 4 colourful logos, based on the work of Andy Warhol adorn the classroom walls. In Year 3 the range of work includes wax resist pictures of fire works, pastel portraits and explorations of colour mixing and brush techniques.

78. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils make good progress. The teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good. In each lesson the productive atmosphere and clear sense of purpose helps to promote learning. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is sound and this is evident in the methods employed. Teachers encourage the pupils to use appropriate artistic vocabulary by using it themselves. Teachers skilfully use questions to encourage the pupils to evaluate their work and reflect upon ways to improve it. In a good lesson observed the teacher briskly introduced the purpose of the task to the pupils and frequently checked with pupils their understanding of the need for the logo design. A good range of stimulating logo designs was available for the pupils to evaluate before they started their own sketches. The teacher encouraged the pupils to consider carefully the choice of medium for their final designs.

79. Although pupils' work is satisfactory, teachers' planning focuses too much upon the teaching activities rather than the development of key skills and the links with other areas of the curriculum. The policy and curriculum guidance need to be revised to support the teaching of key skills and knowledge. There are unsatisfactory assessment arrangements but the co-ordinator has begun to monitor the standards of teaching and learning through evaluating the pupil's work in sketchbooks and art portfolios. The co-ordinator has identified the need to audit the satisfactory art resources available to the teachers and pupils so that a purchasing plan can be established to update them. Teachers display the pupil's work in a visually pleasing manner. It is well mounted and enhanced with a satisfactory range of artefacts, books and pictures. The pupil's artwork is used to enhance other subject displays, such as, the Butser Hill Ancient Hill Farm visit. Individual examples of pupil's artwork can be seen and appreciated along the corridors and in the public places within the school building. The mosaic created by the pupils during a local artists residency at the school makes a vibrant visual impact in the school hall. The pupils collaborate well with each other and cooperate well together when sharing resources during lessons and this makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection, and continue to match national expectations. Pupils have a wide variety of experiences of designing and making objects, incorporating learning in other areas of the curriculum as they do so. The link to other subjects places appropriate emphasis on developing and planning ideas, which are key skills in the build up of pupils' learning. For example, Year 4 pupils made 'buggies' from cans and wood, powered by rubber bands, which they were able to use effectively in their science experiments on friction and forces. Year 5 children have made Tudor houses for their history topic, carefully considering how best to ensure a roof would fit on a building through accurate

measurements and careful cutting out of components. Year 6 pupils were then able to use this knowledge of manufacture when they designed and made sail boats for their Invaders and Settlers topic. Such activities give a real sense of purpose to the subject, and pupils are very proud of their achievements.

81. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, where pupils were asked to evaluate different commercially produced money containers. This involved developing teamwork and making joint decisions, enabling pupils to share ideas and think carefully about the merits of an object. Pupils across the school are also asked to evaluate their own work, but as yet that process is generally limited to consideration of the final appearance and the difficulties encountered in manufacture. Improvement is not regularly linked to fitness for purpose. Key features of design and construction are therefore missed, as the focus is often sharply on how a product looks rather than how well it works.

82. Teachers record pupils' experiences at the end of the year, but there is no systematic assessment of pupils attainment at present. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator has developed a range of documentation for future consideration. He has been able to share his expertise informally with the staff but, as yet, teachers' subject knowledge across the school is varied. This is currently reducing the value of many of the good learning opportunities offered. There is a good range of tools and equipment, which is easily accessible to pupils in all classes.

GEOGRAPHY

83. By the time pupils leave the school standards are satisfactory which reflects the findings of the last inspection report. Pupils make satisfactory progress and there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys or girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress.

84. By the age of eleven most pupils are confident in their map reading skills and most can use 6 figure co-ordinate references to locate map features. Pupils in Year 6 know the location of the Amazon rainforest and know that it is substantially different to Britain in both its climate and topography. They know the range of activities that take place within the rainforest, like mining, ranching and road making. They discuss well issues surrounding deforestation including the effects of carbon dioxide emissions, animal habitats and changing tribal practices.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and this promotes sound progress. In a Year 6 lesson the teacher satisfactorily managed seven mixed ability groups that explored issues related to rainforests. Whilst watching a video pupils, in groups, took detailed notes that they successfully used to feedback the key information points to the whole class. A few pupils related the group discussion to their own personal experiences, for example, the link between beef ranching and a "fast food" restaurant's products. In a Year 5 lesson observed the teacher used a good range of geographical vocabulary, like 'climate' and 'temperature' and made good links with other National Curriculum subjects. The link with other subjects enabled pupils to see that their learning within geography was not an isolated learning experience but part of a broader curriculum, as when they used their mathematical skills to analyse climate data.

86. Satisfactory opportunities are used within ICT for pupils to design their own maps. Pupils use their mathematical skills to examine temperature and rainfall data to establish the differences in temperature and rainfall averages between St Lucia and Britain. Teachers create attractive, interactive, well resourced displays which stimulate the children's interest in geographical locations, such as St Lucia.

87. Teacher's planning is satisfactorily based upon units of teaching within the scheme of work. This scheme of work has recently been amended to involve more links with ICT and to reflect the changes to the National Curriculum. Teachers mark the pupils work regularly but not all of the marking is very helpful in giving the pupils ideas on how they might improve their work. There is a satisfactory range of resources and these are enhanced by visits locally and further a field, including such places as Selbourne and Hind Leap Warren. Year 6 pupils participate in orienteering during their residential visit and this enhances their map reading skills.

88. The geography aspect of the school improvement plan clearly identifies the need to revise and rewrite the geography policy and update the curriculum guidance for staff to support the development of their subject knowledge. There are satisfactory assessment activities and the co-ordinator is developing monitoring activities to assess standards of teaching and learning through examining a sample of children's work once a unit of work has been completed. The children are also encouraged to evaluate their own work by reflecting back upon the knowledge and skills developed during their geographical studies.

HISTORY

89. The evidence from the scrutiny of work and the school's planning is that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with schools nationally. This is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection. No teaching could be observed due to history not being timetabled in this half term.

90. By Year 6 pupils' work shows satisfactory coverage of Ancient Greece, the Victorians, the Tudors, Invaders and Settlers and of their local study. The work shows an understanding of different cultures, beliefs and ways of life and knowledge of significant events and people of the times. Pupils have developed skills in using a range of sources, extracting and organising information and these activities have developed other skills such as those of literacy and writing. For example, other than books and worksheets, pupils use CD-Rom and visit websites. A particularly strong feature of the history curriculum is the opportunity to enrich the learning experience through visits, artefacts and drama. Pupils have visited the Imperial War museum, the Farnham Museum and the Butser Hill ancient farm. The latter provided an opportunity for combined work in design and technology and is very well displayed. Pupils also enjoy handling artefacts from topic boxes that are taken out on loan, wearing costumes, listening to visitors and watching dramas.

91. Pupils, in talking about their work, demonstrate an enjoyment of history. By the time they are in Year 6 they know significant differences between the modern age and previous eras. They understand that progress and change are not the same and that history is about opinion as well as fact. They can name important discoveries, such as those of gravity and the harnessing of power, and can identify social changes, for example the growth of human rights in respect of those of Afro-Caribbean descent. Pupils view the importance of history as being that we gain a better appreciation of what we have and that we can learn about, and from, the past.

92. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met with balanced coverage of content and skills. The co-ordinator has been instrumental in ensuring improvements in the resources, planning and management of the subject. There is still insufficient monitoring to enable finer planning for progression in skills and their assessment. The tasks planned are not sufficiently varied to match the different abilities of children. The new planning for a simply structured form of assessment is well suited to this purpose.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

93. Standards attained by the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are average. A few pupils are on course to attain level 5 by the end of Year 6 and pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. This is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection.

94. In Year 6 pupils have learned how to use computers for the gathering and interpretation of information, knowing the importance of framing questions correctly. For example, in their topic about global issues, pupils used a CR-Rom. They learned how to use this resource, entering search criteria and using their reading skills to scan text for meaning that they then wrote down for later discussion. In year 5 most pupils had learned how to enter comparative data about the temperature and rainfall of Britain and St Lucia onto a database. Then, in pairs, they made decisions about the type of graph they should turn this information into so that it would be clear others. In Year 3 pupils demonstrated using the computer to control rotation and direction using a programmable floor robot. Pupils throughout the school showed confidence in using computers and a facility to log on and operate the keyboard and mouse controls to open programs and select, enter and retrieve information.

95. Children talk about their work and describe how they use information and communication technology and how it is used more generally and why. They describe how microchips can be found in many goods including cars, remote controls, mobile 'phones and washing machines. They recount the programs they have used in school such as Pendown, Talking First Word, Microsoft Word, RM Colour Magic and the control program Dart. They are familiar with the Internet and the school's system to protect them from undesirable material. A few pupils have used scanners and digital cameras but more have used computers for homework, recreation and for e-mail. They are positive about the technology and see its use as a means to learn, have fun and, in the case of e-mail, save money.

96. Pupils respond to the subject with enthusiasm, mostly working with a good amount of effort and concentration. They know what they can do and when to ask for help. Their behaviour is mostly good, with good relationships and collaborative working. Pupils are paired variously by friendship, opposite gender and by the more able working with the less able. Each type of pairing is successful, promoting equal access for boys and girls and aiding those with special educational needs. Pupils show respect for each other and for the equipment.

97. The overall quality of teaching is good. Where it is consistently so, teachers show good subject knowledge and set clear objectives for the lesson, although these objectives are not sufficiently refined to match different tasks to different ability levels in the class. Pupils make the best progress with those teachers, who carefully explain tasks, question them carefully and spend time reinforcing and checking what they have learned. In the better lessons, pupils are managed with quiet authority and an expectation of a low threshold of noise. Teachers are prepared to wait for quiet, to use pauses and variations in pace and often use humour as well.

98. The co-ordinator has devised a plan for the teaching of skills and their assessment throughout the school in a 'Policy into Practice' document. This provides a framework for the teaching of information and communication technology across the curriculum, especially in each of the half-termly topics. This plan enables the accurate assessment of pupils and thereafter the appropriate matching of tasks to pupil ability. The co-ordinator has some management time on a fortnightly basis to develop and monitor the subject and intends to modify the plan in the light of discovering that pupils are acquiring skills at a faster rate than was envisaged. This term, staff have been asked to provide samples of work for those

children working above, below and at the average for their class. These samples will then be compiled to form a portfolio of work for moderation purposes that will relate assessments to the national curriculum levels.

99. The governors and the headteacher have supported the development of resources for the subject. There is a newly opened computer suite that is supplemented by a computer base for Year 6. The building has been wired for networking and there are plans to link the computers based within classrooms. These developments have been supported by of training and benefit from the co-ordinator being an accredited trainer under the New Opportunities Fund scheme. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

MUSIC

100. Attainment in music has deteriorated significantly since the last inspection, when it was considered to be good overall. Current standards are below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2.

101. Appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding are of a low standard for the oldest pupils but the school has begun to address this by the appointment of a new co-ordinator, and by the involvement of the county music service to give targeted and specific teaching and support. This is having a marked impact on the year groups and individual pupils already benefiting from this input, for example Year 3, and the pupils across the school who learn to play musical instruments.

102. Too many pupils are not tuneful singers, and many take no active part during singing in assembly, in spite of the enthusiasm displayed by staff and choir members, and the guidance over techniques given by teachers during hymn practice sessions.

103. Year 6 pupils are unable to name the instruments they are playing, such as chime bars, and confuse xylophones and glockenspiels. They do not know how to use percussion instruments correctly and for best effect without specific guidance from their teacher. Many are unable to sustain a simple pulse, or to use appropriate vocabulary such as 'pitch' and 'tempo'. They are unable to identify famous composers, or to talk about different kinds of music in an informed way.

104. Pupils in Year 3, however, can use and understand technical language, such as 'crescendo' and 'dynamics', finding examples in the weather music they listened to and interpreting it appropriately in their responses. They have experience of a wide range of untuned percussion instruments, which are named for them. They are able to prepare to compose an accompaniment to the song they are learning, giving them valuable opportunities to build up their knowledge and understanding throughout the lesson.

105. The county music teacher is allocated sessions during half a term for each class, when appropriate aspects of the National Curriculum for music are addressed. Some assessments of pupils' learning are recorded during these lessons. Class teachers then take on the teaching of music, but teachers' subject knowledge is very varied across the school, and learning is therefore often limited, making longer-term progress unsatisfactory. Planned work for Year 6, for example, assumes the development of key skills, but because the work is not building on prior attainment the effectiveness is limited. When pupils with special educational needs have a learning support assistant, they often make better progress than their classmates because of the individual attention to their learning and the example set by an adult they can copy.

106. Although the school is developing new schemes of work for music, it has not taken account of pupils' previously impoverished experiences. Musical performances have a high profile in the school, with a small ensemble group playing in assembly, choir visits to various local venues and annual school shows, giving some pupils very good opportunities. However, for the majority of pupils, dependent on ordinary class lessons, music makes a limited contribution to pupils' imaginative and creative development.

107. The newly appointed co-ordinator is aware of the need to improve teachers' expertise, and to ensure that lessons build steadily and consistently on what pupils already know and can do. He plans to provide a wider range and variety of opportunities to make and enjoy music, and to develop a system for recording pupils' progress from year to year. Resources are satisfactory, and the designated music room is an advantage. Better use could be made of it to enhance pupils' learning, for example by labelling displays of instruments with names.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108. Standards are above average in physical education by the time the pupils leave the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Able pupils played very capably in games and pupils with special educational needs responded to the extra support given. This is an improvement on the last inspection report when standards were average. Year 5 pupils are able to demonstrate good skills in gymnastics. They can hold balanced positions for an appropriate period of time and link movements together to form effective sequences. They can follow, match and mirror each other's movements accurately when working in pairs, starting and finishing in controlled positions.

109. The standard in games is also good. Pupils follow a balanced programme of activities and play well in football, hockey and netball. Year 6 pupils are able to pass in a number of ways in netball with equal accuracy and catch the ball in the correct style.

110. The teaching is always at least sound and often very good in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are used effectively to demonstrate skills in all lessons. In a very well taught lesson in Year 6 the teacher enhanced the pupils' learning by his clear guidance and positive manner. His excellent subject knowledge, combined with very good relationships, ensured pupils were highly motivated to improve their skills in netball on a cold, wet afternoon. All lessons are characterised by good organisation and planning.

111. The school offers a very wide range of sporting activities additional to lessons, including training for boys and girls in netball and football, gymnastics, general fitness and fun sports. The sixth year team has won the Aldershot School Kwik-Cricket festival for the last two years. The school also provides a residential week of outdoor and adventure activities at Hindleap Warren for pupils in the final year.

112. The subject meets all statutory requirements and the co-ordinator provides good leadership. His very good teaching is a model for other teachers and he has introduced an assessment process. The school benefits from good resources and accommodation.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

113. Standards in Year 6 are satisfactory and meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well. The progress of gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards

religious education. They participate constructively in discussions and they show respect towards the minority of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

114. By the age of eleven, the pupils are aware of the role the Church plays in the Christian calendar. They are able to discuss how and why people of different faiths, including Quakers and the Salvation Army, pray. They discuss their ideas of God and use their literacy skills well to write poems about this. They think carefully about the words of some of the hymns they sing in assemblies and about the words of the Lord's Prayer. The pupils have a sound understanding of the signs and symbols of various faiths and of aspects of Islam, Judaism and Hinduism.

115. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good. There is evidence that much learning takes place, suitably, through drama and role play. In a very good Year 5 lesson, the teacher took up the offer of a Muslim pupil to tell the story of Mohammed. This had a dramatic effect on learning. The other pupils were fascinated, listened intently and were eager to ask questions. The teacher then read the story from a book, asking the Muslim pupil for help with some pronunciations. He encouraged the pupils to think of the similarities between Islam and Christianity, which the story illustrates, and this furthered the pupils' understanding of how the Qur'an was produced. The teacher matched the ensuing written tasks well to three broad ability groups and ensured that literacy skills were also well developed. He made sure that key vocabulary, such as 'Allah', 'prophet', 'meditate' and 'truthful', was clearly displayed and this helped the pupils as they learnt about the meaning of 'Islam' and 'Muslims'. In a Year 4 lesson, expressive reading by the teacher helped the pupils in their knowledge of the miracles of Jesus, as exemplified in the story of the feeding of the five thousand. The teacher used questioning skilfully to help the pupils' understanding. She made effective links with literacy, as the pupils had to write the story from the viewpoint of different characters in it. The weak literacy skills of many pupils, particularly spelling, hindered their progress. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher gave a clear explanation of what a proverb is and this helped the pupils in their understanding of the meanings behind some of the proverbs of the Old Testament. She valued the pupils' oral contributions and this helped to develop their confidence. Good questioning helped them as they wrote some sound proverbs of their own, though, again, weak literacy skills were apparent in many pupils' work. There is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning.

116. The subject manager provides good co-ordination. A clear draft policy meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and planning incorporates guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' progress, but information gained from assessment is insufficiently used to plan subsequent work. However, the subject manager is compiling a useful whole school collection of samples of pupils' work to help colleagues in the accuracy and consistency of their assessments. The subject manager monitors planning, but not teaching. Resources for teaching and learning are very good, with an excellent range of easily accessible religious artefacts. Learning is enhanced by visits to local churches and by the use of visits by clergy. In encouraging respect for other faiths and cultures, the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.