

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S C E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Southampton

LEA area: Southampton

Unique reference number: 116343

Headteacher: Charlotte Bonney

Reporting inspector: David Marshall
27681

Dates of inspection: 25 - 28 February 2002

Inspection number: 196694

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Ascupart Street St Mary's Southampton |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Phil Hand |
| Date of previous inspection: | 19/05/1997 |

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| 27681 | David Marshall | Registered inspector | Information and communication technology Music English as an additional language | What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? |
| 19322 | Judy Bedawi | Lay inspector | | Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' personal development and attendance |
| 22831 | Clive Lewis | Team inspector | Science Physical education Special educational needs | How well does the school care for its pupils? |
| 24805 | Alison Cogher | Team inspector | Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage | |
| 20614 | Donald Kimber | Team inspector | Mathematics Religious education | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 20007 | Trevor Neat | Team inspector | English Equal opportunities | How well is the school led and managed? |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Primary School is a larger than average primary school with 362 pupils in the school and 60 in the nursery. It was originally established in the 19th century, and moved in the 1950s to the present building, which had been built in 1908. At present there are 15 classes from Year R to Year 6, two per year group, except in Year 1, where there are three. In the nursery there are two classes in the morning and two in the afternoon. The area closest to the school is in the centre of a large regeneration zone. According to the 1998 Index of Deprivation, the ward where most of the children live was ranked as the most deprived in the South East Region, and the 49th most deprived in the country. Around 40 per cent of the pupils in the school are eligible to claim free school meals, which is well above the national average. The majority of the city's ethnic population lives in the central area around the school, which has several minority ethnic groups that constitute about half the school's pupils. There are 15 languages other than English spoken by pupils in the school. Half of the children entering the nursery have no English when they start. The proportion of pupils supported through Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) funding is high and well above the national average. Pupil mobility is a feature of the school's population. Attainment on entry to the reception classes is well below the national average. Throughout the school 156 children have special educational needs, around 40 per cent of the school roll, which is well above the national average. There were ten fixed-period exclusions last year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Mary's is an effective school and makes good provision for its ethnically diverse community. Although test results are below national averages, the pupils make good progress because the teaching is good and the work they are expected to do is appropriate and demanding. The headteacher, governors and all staff work together very well and have created a school that provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The overall leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher is an effective manager and is well supported by governors and senior staff in guiding the school and planning for the future.
- Teachers create a good, supportive atmosphere in the school.
- The use and contribution of support staff are very effective.
- Pupils' personal development is good overall. Very good relationships exist between all pupils and between pupils and all adults.
- Very good provision is made for pupils' cultural development and there is good provision for moral, social and spiritual development.
- Relationships with parents are good. The provision in the nursery is good.
- The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for those with English as an additional language, is good.

What could be improved

- The opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in all other subjects and the use of assessment information.
- The balance of the curriculum and the use of available time.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Levels of attendance are poor. The school needs to review its arrangements for tracking and promoting better attendance and punctuality.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in May 1997 the headteacher and staff have worked hard to meet the requirements of the key issues and their overall progress has been satisfactory. There is now a consistent framework for planning for each subject. The headteacher and governors have developed all aspects of subject leadership and expertise in all subjects. The responsibilities of the senior management team have been extended appropriately and the school's teaching and learning policy is being implemented well. Each subject is now effectively managed across the whole school and curriculum planning is now being monitored in the core subjects and for those pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language. The school now has good systems in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics, and the information obtained is used well to guide planning. This constitutes the most significant progress since the previous inspection. The school now provides effective support and advice for its pupils, informed by the monitoring of their academic progress and personal development. The school development plan identifies clear priorities for development. Thanks to this, the good quality of teaching and the determination of the headteacher, the school is well placed to make further significant improvements.

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 | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|--|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 | |
| English | E | E | E | D | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E* |
| Mathematics | E | E | E | C | |
| Science | E* | C | D | B | |

In the 2001 national tests for seven year olds the pupils' results were below the national average in reading and writing, and well below average in mathematics. However, when their results are compared to those of pupils in similar schools, based on the number claiming free school meals, they are above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. Many pupils come into the school with very low attainment in their speaking and listening skills, and in their physical and social development. Although they make good progress, pupils' level of attainment is well below average at the end of the Foundation

Stage. In the last three years the school's improvements at the end of Key Stage 1 in all core subjects of the curriculum have followed the upward national trend.

By the time they leave the school, pupils' results in the national tests are well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science when compared to those in all schools. English is below average and mathematics is average, but science is above average when compared with the results of similar schools. Taking into account the number of pupils with English as an additional language, the low attainment of pupils when starting school, the large number of pupils with special educational needs, and the high number of pupils coming and going from the school, these results show that the school is successful in raising standards and meeting its targets for improvement. New targets, based on the school's own assessment tests and agreed with the local authority, indicate that standards are set to continue to rise.

Inspection evidence shows that pupils are currently achieving their potential in English, mathematics and science, but their overall standards are below average. Levels of achievement in ICT and religious education are improving and are in line with expectations for pupils of this age. The overall achievement of pupils is below expectations in art and design, and satisfactory in all other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | The children and pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy being in school. In the mornings, pupils concentrate and persevere well. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. In the mornings, both in class and around the school, it is generally good. |
| Personal development and relationships | The quality of pupils' personal development and relationships is good. Pupils are very tolerant and at ease within the school's multicultural environment. |
| Attendance | Pupils' attendance is poor and very low when compared to that in other schools, largely due to the very many holidays taken by families during school time and the high level of unauthorised absence. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Nursery and Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good | Good |

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

Teaching overall has maintained the good position recorded at the time of the last inspection. In the early years classes the teaching is consistently good as teachers plan work that is adapted to meet the pupils' very different abilities when they enter the school. As a result pupils make good progress. The overall good quality of teaching enables pupils to make good progress throughout the school. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2, and of the individual needs of pupils, are good throughout the school. This enables them to teach English and mathematics, and the essential basic

skills of literacy and numeracy, effectively and for pupils to learn well. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils, which results in the overall sound behaviour and good learning. Occasionally teachers' planning of the pupils' work is inappropriate because of the lack of suitable assessment and the amount of time available for their lessons. Too often, especially in the afternoons, lessons are too long and lacking in challenge and so pupils make less than maximum progress. In most lessons in the morning class discussions are lively, lessons are consistently of a good pace and pupils enjoy their learning. Questions are well focused and designed to bring all pupils into the discussions. Pupils learn to listen carefully and sustain their concentration for longer periods of time. Teachers relate well to their pupils and manage classes well. The teaching and support of pupils with special educational needs, and for those with English as an additional language, are good and they achieve sound standards in their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. The quality of learning opportunities is good, but the organisation of the curriculum sometimes impedes pupils' learning. For example, their learning is affected by the length of the afternoon session. Some of the lessons last 75 minutes with insufficient variety of activity or approach to maintain concentration. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are good. The positive atmosphere of the school and the very good relationships promote the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs into every aspect of the school's life. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Provision for pupils with English as an additional language and for those from ethnic minorities is of good quality and a strength of the school. Pupils have access to the full curriculum and make good progress. |
| Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The school makes good provision for the development of pupils' personal, social, and health education (PSHE). The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. The provision for their cultural development is very good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school is successfully providing a caring and supportive learning environment for its pupils, whatever their nationality, circumstances or background. Procedures for the monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development are good. The monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory. |

The school works hard to involve parents and has put in place many good initiatives to encourage their involvement. The contribution made by parents to their children's learning is satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The very good leadership of the headteacher is based on a strong determination to continue to raise standards and provide the best quality of education for all pupils. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors, who are led ably by the chairperson, support the school well. They fulfil their statutory obligations and are keen to see standards continue to rise. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The governors are currently re-examining the way in which they gather information about the school through visits to classrooms and links with subject co-ordinators. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school makes good use of the resources it has. Money, staff, equipment and materials are deployed well in the drive to raise standards. The school's educational priorities are furthered well by good financial management. |

There are sufficient staff and resources to meet all requirements of the National Curriculum. The school accommodation is clean, well kept and efficiently used by all concerned. The vision and aim of including all pupils regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, ability or previous school experience are shared by all adults concerned with the school. The way that they have succeeded in integrating all pupils is very good. The governors and headteacher have a clear understanding of how to obtain best value in all purchases made.

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 and are making good progress in school. • Behaviour in school is good. • The teaching is good. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed, and staff are always available and very approachable. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The type and amount of homework. • The information they receive about their children's progress. • The range of additional activities outside lessons. |

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents expressed in the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting. The team does not agree with the parents' concerns over homework or the range of additional exercises. The homework given to pupils is directly related to their work in the classroom and is now good. The additional activities available to pupils make a very good contribution to pupils' overall personal and academic development. Inspection evidence also shows that the quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Newsletters and other information are provided regularly, with some translation if required.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children are first admitted to the school initial assessments show that their attainment is well below that expected for their age, and often very low. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress in their learning as a result of effective teaching. However, by the time they leave the reception class many children have not achieved the planned Early Learning Goals¹ and are not ready to move on to the National Curriculum. By this time they are achieving standards below those expected by the end of the Foundation Stage in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, and personal, social and emotional development. Their standards are also still below those expected in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical and creative work. The nursery and reception class teachers, nursery nurses and support assistants work closely together in planning and assessing pupils' achievements. This helps to promote the good progress the children make.
2. In the national statutory tests for pupils aged seven in 2001, the proportion attaining the levels expected in reading and writing were below the national average. When compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds the reading results were above average, and the writing results were average. Of pupils aged 11 in 2001, the proportion attaining the levels expected in English was well below average nationally, and below average when compared with pupils from similar backgrounds. There was little difference between the results of boys and girls at both key stages. The pupils who are on the special educational needs register make good progress in English and are a testament to how carefully the school now assesses their individual needs in this subject and plans appropriately. Results of tests over the last three years show that the overall trend is upwards at the end of Key Stage 2 and in line with the national trend of improvement.
3. The year 2001 national assessments in mathematics for seven year olds showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected attainment Level 2 was well below the national average. In the year 2001 tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of 11 year olds achieving the expected Level 4 was well below the national average, and for those gaining the higher Level 5 it was below average. Comparisons with schools in similar social circumstances indicate that these results were average for both seven and 11 year olds. Results over the four year period to 2001 show that the school is raising levels of attainment in line with the national trend of improvement.
4. In 2001, the results of teacher assessments in science for Year 2 showed that standards were below average, but well below average when compared with those in similar schools. This was partly because relatively fewer pupils reached Level 2, which is the average level, but mainly because no pupils achieved the higher Level 3. At Key Stage 2, the results last year were close to the national average overall but above average for similar schools. There was little difference between the results of

¹ Early Learning Goals - Planning in the Foundation Stage is geared towards pupils achieving standards known as the Early Learning Goals in six areas of development - communication, language and literacy; personal, social and emotional development; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

boys and girls and the school is raising levels of attainment in line with the national trend of improvement.

5. The target for pupils in the year 2001 national tests, tasks and teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 2 in English was for 71 per cent of pupils to reach Level 4 and above. Those pupils who had been in the school for over a year achieved this target. However, the fact that a large number of pupils joined the school in Years 5 and 6 with poor language skills meant that overall 64 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4. The influx of new pupils also meant that the target in mathematics was not achieved by a similar amount. The target in science, where language skills were not so crucial, was exceeded by 15 per cent. Realistic targets have been set for the next two years and inspection evidence shows that the current cohorts of pupils are on track to achieve them.
6. Pupils achieve well in English as they go through the school, given the very low levels of oral and written English children have when enter. Overall, pupils make similar progress in each year group, although it is in Year 6 that more-able pupils do best. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and those who do not speak English at home make very good gains, especially in developing their spoken English. Standards have risen since the last inspection at the same rate as the national trend of improvement.
7. The speaking and listening skills of pupils are below the level expected of their age group throughout the school. In Year 2, pupils listen to their teacher and to other children fairly well at the beginning of lessons and respond appropriately. In many cases, speech is unclear and pupils lack confidence. Those in Year 6 talk and listen with more assurance. They listen carefully and understand the main points of discussions, but do not question the ideas and views of others. Reading standards at the end of both the infant and junior years do not reach the age-related levels expected. Average pupils in Year 2 read fairly confidently and reasonably accurately. They use picture clues and their knowledge of letter sounds to help tackle unfamiliar words. More-able pupils show greater confidence in discussing what they have read, although they do not relate the content to their own experience. They are mostly accurate and use expression to interest the listener. Average readers in Year 6 are accurate and understand the main ideas in narrative and information texts. They talk about the plot and characters in stories. More-able pupils read fluently, with good levels of understanding. They use well-established knowledge of letter sounds and blends, together with understanding of the context of the passage, to read words they have not encountered before. Although most pupils know about skills such as skimming to find key words, they are not confident in seeking information independently. Attainment in writing is also below the expected levels at end of both infant and junior years. In stories, average pupils aged seven show awareness of the needs of the reader by using speech marks. Their ideas are sequenced effectively and the use of capital letters and full stops is developing. More-able pupils begin to use devices such as exclamation marks. Spelling skills are relatively strong, with many frequently used words written accurately. The shape of letters is fairly well established, but their size is not consistent. By the time they are 11, more pupils undertake imaginative writing and their ideas are sustained, but are often not set out clearly for the reader. For example, one long sentence is used when two would have been easier to understand. More-able pupils develop their ideas in an interesting way, and start to use sophisticated punctuation such as colons and semi-colons to achieve this. However, the vocabulary used by all pupils is limited and few words are used adventurously. Pupils do not write at sufficient length, whether in English lessons or in work for other subjects. Spelling continues as a relative strength. Handwriting is of consistent size by now and most letters are efficiently formed, but in

many cases pupils do not take enough care with it. Standards of presentation of work are sometimes poor.

8. School records show that pupils make good progress in mathematics throughout the school. They enter the school with a wide range of ability, and many have underdeveloped skills in number. Given the low attainment of many when joining the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language, achieve well in mathematics, particularly in their use of numbers. In Key Stage 1, middle and higher-attaining pupils develop a sound understanding of place value, and can order numbers to 100. Many Year 2 pupils using apparatus can add two two-digit numbers, but few can add hundreds, tens and units. Pupils increase their knowledge of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes, and use names such as 'cubes', 'cuboids' and 'cylinders'. Pupils are developing their understanding of time. Many can record daily routines on a chart, and higher-attaining pupils can read the time on the hour. Many pupils can use coins to find the amounts required to buy items, and lower-attaining pupils recognise and add coins to totals of ten pence. By the age of 11, pupils increase their skills of working with numbers, and their understanding and use of four operations. However, many are less strong in their skills of division. Year 6 pupils are quicker at working out calculations mentally, and many are ready to share with the class their strategies for working out calculations. They are more confident in using multiplication than division when solving problems. However, due to insufficient experience of data handling and using graphs, these skills are underdeveloped. Currently there are too few opportunities for pupils to engage in more practical and investigative work in mathematics. Older pupils use calculators to check their work, but otherwise the use of ICT is not fully exploited.
9. Inspection evidence shows that, despite good progress throughout the school, pupils' attainment in science at the age of seven is well below the national average for their age group. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 at the age of 11, attainment is in line with national expectations, and about average when compared with that in similar schools. The school has largely maintained standards at the level they were at the previous inspection. This is despite pupils' poor attainment on entry, the significant movement of pupils in and out of the school, and the high percentage of pupils in the school with special educational needs or English as an additional language.
10. Most pupils in a Year 1 lesson are able, with the teacher's help, to understand the concept of a 'fair test'. In a parallel class, pupils sorting materials into magnetic and non-magnetic groups are able to predict and set out their findings and record their results but do not make their own suggestions of ways to find things out. Most pupils in Year 2 make good progress and can identify major bones and joints in the human body. A significant number of pupils in the current Year 2 have special educational needs and, in addition, a similar proportion have English as a second language – several pupils having only recently started at school after arrival in the country, not having the advantage of **any** previous education. These pupils are, understandably, attaining well below expectations for their age, with most very unlikely to attain expected levels for seven year olds by the end of the current school year. In Key Stage 2 the majority of Year 3 pupils are beginning to recognise the terms 'opaque', 'transparent' and 'translucent', but a significant proportion require adult support to identify materials to place in the appropriate category. In a Year 4 class pupils are able to identify a liquid and a solid, and know that wax and water can be either. A significant minority of pupils are working at Level 2, which is the attainment level expected of Year 2 pupils. Pupils need considerable support to devise a 'fair test'. In Year 6 pupils identifying ways and situations in which bacteria can be spread,

understand that micro-organisms are harmful, but there is no indication of any understanding that bacteria can also be beneficial. A significant number of pupils require help in understanding the set tasks. A significant minority of pupils in the current Year 6 cohort are unlikely to achieve the expected Level 4 in science by the end of the current year and overall attainment in Year 6 is below the national average.

11. In ICT, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education standards achieved by pupils at the end of both key stages are in line with what could be expected for their age. In most aspects of art and design standards are below those expected.
12. Pupils with special educational needs, at all stages of the Code of Practice for special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their abilities and their individual education plans. They achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and against the targets set for them in their individual education programmes. Work for all pupils on the register matches targets set in individual education plans, and their progress is reviewed rigorously and measured against these goals each term. Good support from classroom assistants enables pupils to complete tasks successfully.
13. The attainment and progress of learning of pupils from different ethnic minority communities and of those with English as an additional language are often very good. Those who enter the school with weaker English skills receive very good support appropriate to their needs and with such support make very good progress overall.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy being in school. Their behaviour is satisfactory. The quality of pupils' personal development and relationships is good. Pupil attendance is very low when compared to that in other primary schools, largely due to the very many holidays taken by families during school time and the high level of unauthorised absence, condoned by far too many parents.
15. The youngest children are happy and securely settled into school routines. They enjoy learning and are excited by their discoveries; for example, a child with English as an additional language was thrilled and proud when successfully remembering and saying a new English word. Activities are well planned and stimulate children's curiosity. Children concentrate well when making their own books about the 'Bear Hunt' story, practising early writing skills, or when happily sharing books with their friends in the book corner. They do their best to follow instructions and behave well. The adults around them give firm but gentle reminders when they do not always behave so well. Children are learning good social skills and building positive relationships with other children and adults. One class delighted in teaching their own teacher new words of a song learnt from another teacher. They glowed with pride at seeing her pleasure at their impromptu initiative. The children are receiving a positive start to their formal learning.
16. The older pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. They enjoy lessons. In class discussions, their questions and answers are often thoughtful, enhancing the quality of debate. This was seen to good effect in a Year 6 religious education lesson when pupils met and talked to a Buddhist nun. The school day is long; pupils can, for example, spend all morning doing work based on literacy or numeracy. When they are fresh and alert early in the morning, pupils' concentration, perseverance and attention are often good. They listen well and settle to written work

- sensibly, making generally good progress. However, many pupils find the need for continual high-level concentration very tiring, so that by lunchtime their ability to concentrate is starting to decline. There is a noticeable difference in the afternoon, when pupils' ability and motivation to learn drop significantly. They have difficulty in following instructions, retaining information and settling to written work. As a result, the quality of learning in the afternoon is less effective, despite the best efforts of the teachers to keep pupils involved and focused on work.
17. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. They generally behave sensibly when moving around the school. In the mornings, behaviour in the classroom is often good. It is sometimes unsatisfactory in the afternoons when pupils are tired and reluctant to work. There is a significant minority of pupils with challenging behaviour. The teachers manage this behaviour well, using good strategies such as individual or class points for 'Golden Time' on Fridays; pupils appreciate this. Teaching assistants are enabled to support pupils with behaviour difficulties, so that disruption to lessons is minimal. Other pupils are very tolerant of those having difficulties. Playground behaviour can be over-boisterous, with many inappropriate 'chasing and catching' games that can lead to incidents of thoughtless behaviour or actions. Activities such as football intrude on quieter activities and younger pupils' play areas. Opportunities for structured play activities are underdeveloped. The school council has been discussing ways to improve the playground facilities. The poor condition and uneven, undulating surface of the playground are the cause of many minor bumps and grazes, and restrict safe play. After wet weather a large part of the playground is unusable because a large 'lake' forms. There are recorded incidents of bullying. The school council is thinking of ways to prevent bullying. Pupils have some interesting ideas; a Friendship Club, a bully 'post box', peer counselling and a poster campaign to raise pupil awareness throughout the school. There has been an increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions since the last inspection. The exclusions involve four pupils, with a history of previous exclusion. This reflects the increasingly complex behaviour that is managed well by the school.
 18. The quality of personal and social development and relationships is good. The staff provide positive role models so that pupils can follow the good examples they see around them each day, as they learn to play their part in the school community. The Breakfast Club is an excellent example of good practice in developing and enhancing pupils' social development. Pupils enjoy a healthy breakfast together in a family atmosphere and this increases their ability to communicate with others in different social situations. Pupils are generally very tolerant and at ease within the school's multicultural environment and share each other's different cultures happily. The innovative weekly 'Culture Club' promotes different traditions through dance and music, with many staff and pupils of all nationalities being involved. It provides an excellent opportunity to raise the status of different cultures and enhances pupils' self-esteem and confidence as they perform to an enthusiastic audience. Staff are quick to stem any unacceptable language or behaviour when a very small minority of pupils sometimes use racist or sexist language in the school, and make it clear that such attitudes are not tolerated.
 19. The responsibility given to pupils and their use of initiative are good. They accept responsibility with maturity and a strong sense of community. Younger children and pupils are encouraged to become independent and enjoy, for example, helping to tidy the classroom and put equipment away. Pupils are given more responsibility as they get older. The 'Playground Saints' wear special yellow baseball hats and support younger pupils in the playground. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy the 'Buddy' system which enables them to help children in the reception class with their reading. The school has an unusual extension of the buddy system; the main receiving secondary

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school pairs up with buddies who come to St Mary's to help prepare Year 6 pupils who will be moving on to their secondary education. There is a very good school council with representatives from the reception classes upwards. A Year 6 pupil chairs it, with a Year 1 pupil as vice-chair; this works very well. Notes are kept and matters are followed up. All members of the council take their duties seriously and ensure that their fellow pupils' views are heard and that the council's work is clearly reported back so that all pupils are kept informed.

20. Attendance is very low in comparison to that in most other primary schools and has declined over the last year. An important factor are the large number of holidays taken by families during school time. A considerable percentage of these holidays happen when families from countries including Pakistan, India and Bangladesh take long holidays, lasting several weeks. However, many other families of different nationalities also take term-time holidays that can be long or short, building up over time. The level of unauthorised absence is also very high. Too many parents of all nationalities are keeping their children off school and are not fulfilling their responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. A significant number of pupils also arrive late in school, missing vital parts of numeracy and literacy lessons. The very poor attendance is having a significant detrimental impact on pupils' ability to learn and on their achievement and attainment, because they are not attending often enough; when they do attend they have usually forgotten previous learning. This means that the pupils who are punctual and good attenders are also penalised because teachers have to repeat missed work, so that overall progress in learning is slowed.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching is good overall. A significant number of lessons observed were very good or excellent in different classes. Only two were unsatisfactory. This maintains the position noted at the time of the last inspection. The overall good quality of teaching enables pupils to make good progress in their learning throughout the school. The majority of pupils are interested in their work and work hard, responding well to the individual targets set by their class teachers. Their ability to use language and recall mathematical facts improves a great deal; for example, as a result of the effective way the national strategies have been introduced. They acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding effectively through the provision of a good range of interesting activities.
22. The previous inspection report identified the need for the headteacher and staff to consolidate the effective teaching throughout the school. The school has successfully addressed this issue. The role of the co-ordinators of different subjects has been consolidated so that they can now monitor the teaching in their subject and better ensure its effectiveness.
23. The significant number of very good or excellent lessons observed during the inspection were almost invariably held in the morning session. Of these 26 lessons, 23 were held before lunchtime. They were predominantly lessons in literacy and numeracy or lessons taken by outside specialist teachers who were in the school in the morning. The very few unsatisfactory lessons were all held in the afternoon. The overall judgements for lessons taking place in the morning were significantly better than those held later. Teachers manage pupils very effectively, even when their behaviour is challenging, but more time is lost in the afternoon through the application of the school's behaviour policy because of the number of pupils who find it increasingly difficult to persevere and concentrate. The need for the school to

- address the length of the school day and prepare shorter lessons that engage pupils' attention throughout the day is a significant issue.
24. Teachers throughout the school present good role models, and the most effective teaching ensures that other pupils are also used as good role models. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils throughout the school. They attempt to use praise to modify behaviour and reward good work. Instructions given to pupils are very clear, and teachers listen carefully to their replies and questions, and show they value them all. This was particularly evident in the lessons taken by the part-time music teacher, who inspired pupils to sing in ways of which they clearly did not believe they were capable.
 25. All teachers are aware of the differing needs of pupils, and try to match work accordingly. Pupils of high prior attainment are well catered for with appropriate extension activities. This was evident in a Year 1 literacy lesson where the more-able pupils were using a word bank independently for a series of extension tasks that took them to a much higher level of understanding. The other pupils had appropriate tasks for their level of attainment and were effectively supported by the teacher and support assistants, and the bilingual assistants if English was not their first language. As a result all pupils made very good progress.
 26. The good teaching in the early years' classes is based on thorough planning which identifies what individual pupils are to learn to achieve the Early Learning Goals. Groups of pupils of very differing prior attainments begin their work on the National Curriculum at the appropriate time due to the careful use of assessment. The range of activities is always good and pupils are always on task and appropriately challenged. The fact that within one session the pupils were able to learn a new song, plant seeds, write their own names in a variety of materials and make individual models, is testament to how carefully these sessions are planned. It was evident how much the pupils enjoy them.
 27. The good teaching at Key Stage 1 reflects the overall good subject knowledge across most of the curriculum. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson the teacher's use of different teaching methods was impressive and kept the pupils' attention well. The use of teaching aids such as a 'counting caterpillar' is typical of the care taken at this key stage. Planning is successful and pupils are always learning at an appropriate level, despite their very wide range of prior attainments. Pupils of all abilities are given good support that results in their good progress. Classroom organisation is good and all activities selected are appropriate to the identified aims in the plans. The way that a Year 2 teacher captured pupils' attention so effectively in a physical education lesson by being able to demonstrate what she wanted them to achieve was exemplary. The aims of the lesson were achieved well as a result.
 28. The good teaching at Key Stage 2 is also characterised by good subject knowledge and understanding, and clear planning, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics. In a series of lessons in Years 4, 5 and 6 the aims were made clear throughout and so the pupils always knew when they were succeeding. The clarity of this achievement meant that pupils were often heard to complain when they moved away from their word tasks in literacy lessons to group work. They wanted to continue with the more structured tasks as they were always aware of their success and enjoyed it.
 29. Throughout the school, teachers have appropriately high expectations of pupils, and class discussions in the mornings in particular are lively and challenging. Questions are well focused and designed to bring all pupils into the discussions. This helps all

pupils to make quick progress towards the particular lesson aims. Teachers use a good range of methods and groupings that are well matched to the lesson's purpose. The quality of whole-class teaching in the literacy and numeracy sessions is generally good. Teachers lead these discussions well, introducing new ideas with care and clarity. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson the teacher used open-ended questions about the crow and swan characters to elicit the required responses from all pupils. She had clearly taken a great deal of her own time to make sure she knew what was appropriate to ask. She was therefore able to move the discussion on to the wall display of words such as 'envious', which the pupils found compelling. She had made optimum use of the time available, and the pupils groaned when they were told they had to move on to their next lesson.

30. There is a good school policy for marking written work that encourages the frequent use of feedback to pupils, which is related to the learning objectives of the lesson. The way that the teachers of the younger pupils were observed discussing their results with them rather than just writing in their books was very effective. There is good practice in the marking of writing where this approach is carried out regularly. Pupils are not left in any doubt about how well they have done and how they can improve. However, the policy is not always implemented consistently across all subjects and classes. Homework is used appropriately and effectively to support pupils' progress throughout the school.
31. Teachers meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs with good support and differentiated tasks matched to their needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) liaises with teachers and support staff appropriately. Learning support assistants work well with class teachers, are informed of lesson content in advance of lessons, contribute well to the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress and provide them with an appropriate blend of help and challenge. Support for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is good and pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated into the school community.
32. The effective teaching of pupils with English is an additional language, particularly those at the early stages of learning English, enables them to make very good progress, due to the number who receive effective support. Where additional staff are able to support pupils in small groups, in or out of the mainstream classroom, the support is always good. The school has made sure that these staff have appropriate qualifications and relevant experience of teaching English as an additional language. As a result they employ some effective techniques. Younger pupils, and those who have recently arrived in the school, derive great benefit from sessions where a learning support assistant has been given responsibility for working specifically with them. Class teachers are very aware of the specific needs of pupils who are learning English. Their interaction with pupils and the work they prepare reflect this awareness. Where English as an additional language pupils have come from troubled areas of the world or their learning is hindered by difficult social circumstances, teachers and support assistants demonstrate a high level of expertise in helping them to settle to their work. This is achieved through establishing very positive relationships and a reassuring atmosphere.

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

33. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in all key stages. The quality of learning opportunities is good, but the relevance of the curriculum is sometimes unsatisfactory, and as a result curriculum organisation occasionally impedes pupils' learning. There are also times when pupils' learning is affected by the length of the

afternoon session. Also, in some of the lessons lasting 75 minutes, there is insufficient variety of activity or approach, to maintain concentration.

34. At the time of the previous inspection key issues relating to the curriculum concerned the need to develop a systematic and consistent framework through out the school for the planning and the delivery of the curriculum, and to provide progression in their learning for all pupils. The school has been successful in meeting this need. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been implemented effectively, and are improving pupils' basic skills, although the use of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects is the main focus for the school's planning review. In many other subjects, schemes of work draw upon curriculum guidelines from the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and the school is in the process of evaluating these. Physical education draws upon a commercial scheme, and local education authority guidelines are used in planning history in Key Stage 1. The school recognises that opportunities to exploit cross-curricular links between subjects are not always taken, and the use of ICT across the curriculum is underdeveloped.
35. Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are good. A detailed and comprehensive register of special educational needs is kept by the SENCO, and appropriate individual educational plans are provided for pupils on the register, written by class teachers and learning support assistants. The provision of additional support for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is of good quality. Although there is some withdrawal of pupils for support, this is appropriate and kept to a minimum. Teachers are aware of the need to ensure that pupils do not miss any lessons regularly and 'rotate' withdrawal from lessons regularly so that pupils do not miss the same lesson on a weekly or daily basis. Wherever possible, withdrawal during literacy and numeracy lessons is for small group or 'booster' lessons in the same subject as the lesson pupils are withdrawn from. However, due to the wide range of additional support groups being taught outside classes during the school day, occasionally pupils miss the teacher's 'exposition' and arrive midway through the lesson. Occasionally, having heard all about the tasks they have to undertake, pupils have to leave just as they begin. Teachers are careful to make sure that pupils make up any work they might have missed in this way. The positive atmosphere of the school and the very good relationships promote the effective inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in every aspect of school life.
36. The school makes good provision for the development of pupils' PSHE. The PSHE scheme of work has recently been developed. It includes aspects such as citizenship, developing a sense of responsibility and fairness, and children's rights. Sex education, which is covered in the context of relationships and in science, is discussed appropriately with parents. Drugs awareness is introduced as part of a 'Getting it Right' programme. It is linked with the study of medicines, and benefits from a contribution by the Hampshire constabulary.
37. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. This is contrary to the view expressed by a small minority (17 per cent) of parents' questionnaires that suggested that there were insufficient opportunities for these activities. During the year, 'after school' clubs, some run by teachers and some by outside agencies, include football, Kwik cricket, rounders, kabadi, an art club, a French club, a culture club, Junior Club, a breakfast club, recorders (beginners and advanced) choir, and an ICT club. During the dinner hour, school meal supervisory assistants run gardening, Indian dance, craft, and Keep Fit clubs. Pupils join in these clubs enthusiastically.

38. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers' planning identifies the need to provide for different levels of work to match the abilities and needs of pupils throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by learning support assistants, and with their individual education plans. To support those pupils for whom English is not their first language there are language support and bilingual learning support assistants, who are based in the school. In addition the school provides support for pupils with other languages, such as Farsi, Somali and Albanian, when these are needed on an irregular basis. Teachers attempt to rotate lessons so that those pupils who are withdrawn from the classroom do not always miss the same lessons. Ramps at the back of the school now provide wheelchair access, although this is restricted to the ground floor.
39. The contribution made by the community to pupils' learning is good. There are a number of well-established links, such as that with the Southampton Football Club immediately behind the school. Players visit and pupils often receive free tickets to matches, including internationals. The weekly Junior Club is run by the Southampton Children's Play Association and provides many play and creative activities. The breakfast club was originally set up to help the children of working parents, but now many more children also attend. The school works closely with the local authority on initiatives such as the Emotional Literacy Training for staff and with other schools in the area involved in the national 'Healthy Schools' programme, and has many ideas for including the local community; the co-ordinator would like to see youth clubs involved. Southampton Institute has donated £1,000 for improvements to the roof-top playground, and pupils helped to secure money for benches and tables on the field picnic area.
40. Many visitors are welcomed to the school and extend pupils' knowledge; for example, of different religions and cultures, or personal safety. Pupils visit the local area regularly to support work in class. Year 6 pupils go on residential visits to Arundel. Pupils' understanding of the needs of the world community is extended through fundraising; examples include the Gujerat earthquake and 'Jeans for Genes'. The local community also benefits from the school facilities; there is access to the large playing field outside school hours.
41. The school enjoys good links with other educational institutions that enrich pupils' learning experience in many ways. Cluster arrangements with other junior and infant schools help staff in developing their subject knowledge and in curriculum planning. The dance teacher from the secondary school has visited to work with top junior pupils, and pupils from the school meet with Year 6 pupils for 'peer mentoring'. The school receives students from the City College for their work placements. Students at Southampton Institute raised money for the school during Rag Week.
42. The school makes good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a similar judgement to that of the previous inspection. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good and reflects the multicultural nature of the school and the community links that have been developed. Members of staff value individuals and help them understand school rules and acceptable ways of conducting themselves. The school council meets regularly and provides pupils with opportunities to contribute further to school life. This term the school council is looking at bullying and discussing areas of concern to their classes; the aim being to come up with a number of strategies to deal with issues that involve bullies.
43. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to further their spiritual awareness are good overall. All collective acts of worship start with a theme each week and in the week of inspection it was based on 'waiting'. The

headteacher introduced the time of Lent as a period of waiting in the Christian calendar and referred to the time of Ramadan and waiting for the celebration of Eid, thus reflecting the multicultural nature of the school. There was a period of quiet thinking and reflection when those who wanted to pray were invited to. The theme of waiting was further developed in the junior assembly when pupils learned to sing a new chorus entitled 'Spirit of Peace, Come to our Waiting World'. This assembly brought to the fore the power of music within the development of spirituality, and during a period of stillness the teacher quietly played the guitar after inviting the pupils to think of a period of waiting in their own faith. There are times when children respond with awe and wonder to something that impresses them, such as the time when pupils in Year 4 cry out in appreciation when looking at the colourful paintings they have done. This also helps to promote pupils' self-esteem by displaying their work and showing that it is valued.

44. The school's approach to pupils' moral development is good. Teachers are good role models and this positive approach is combined with a focus on clear values to which pupils respond positively, and subsequently results in high standards of behaviour and acceptable conduct. This approach leads to pupils developing a clear awareness of the difference between right and wrong. They are generally well disciplined and by their actions help to create an orderly school. This is enhanced by the school's code of behaviour with rewards and sanctions to encourage good behaviour and modify unacceptable attitudes. During the Monday assembly, certificates were awarded for punctuality and best attended classes for the week, and also to pupils who had been sensible on the stairs and in keeping classrooms tidy. In one class there was a 'Nice things and nasty things people say' tree, reminding pupils to respect others' feelings by showing the kinds of unkind things people say and also reminding them how much more helpful it is to make kind remarks to others. Another class had a reminder 'to make and keep a friend through mutual trust and caring'. To demonstrate the multicultural nature of the school the football team took a strong line on racism when they designed a poster to 'kick racism out of football', which was reported in the local paper with an accompanying photograph.
45. The provision for encouraging the social development of the pupils is good. The school values its pupils and encourages them to integrate well both at work and at play. For example, older pupils look after younger pupils, and some pupils take on specific responsibilities, such as acting as monitors to open doors and operating the overhead projector. In the classroom there are opportunities to work together in pairs or groups and pupils are encouraged to take a pride in keeping their classroom tidy and to undertake various tasks, such as giving resources out and putting them away at the end of the lesson. There is a structured reward system where pupils are able to gain table points for jobs such as packing away quietly and quickly, keeping the table tidy and working together sensibly. Other merit points or stars help pupils build up for Golden Time at the end of the week, when they can choose their own activity. The school has been very involved in the local community with projects organised by Cultural Services. These include a history and geography study of the River Itchen undertaken by Year 6 and a Year 4 project, 'My Place and Me', in which they worked with an artist to represent features of the neighbourhood. Pupils also invited local residents into the school to interview them to find out how the area has changed in their living memory. The Field Playground project, organised by Community Action, has benefited from the participation of the pupils with their collective views on what constitutes safe playground equipment, and this resulted in a successful bid for a community safety grant that has transformed the play area. Pupils' awareness of people outside the school community is further enhanced through visits outside and receiving visitors to the school. For example, visitors to the school include the 'Getting it right' police liaison officer, the school nurse and the 'Learn not to burn' fire

crew. A residential visit has been undertaken by Year 6 to Brownsea Island, thus enabling pupils to gain valuable experience of learning to live in a social environment other than their home.

46. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. They start to understand their own cultural background from nursery rhymes, poetry, stories, music and historical studies about the Tudors and the Victorians. Painting and music help them to develop a greater awareness of beautiful things, as does the beauty of the world about them. Pupils are able to explore different cultures through the many displays around the school. Above the main desk in the entrance hall there is a display of Chinese lanterns and fans, multifaith posters and displays of festivals of different religions, including information, and instructions written in the languages spoken by pupils in the school are all around. All pupils have the opportunity to join a variety of clubs that include the French club, needlecraft and Indian dance clubs. A popular club is the culture club, where pupils can take part in chappatti and samosa making, Indian and Sari dressing, storytelling and flag making. The infant library was opened at Divali to celebrate the introduction of the first dual-language books.
47. Visits to local galleries to take part in workshops have been undertaken; for example, to the exhibition of sculpture in the John Millais Gallery and to the display of Asian art, where pupils in Year 4 met the artists and learned how they had developed the ideas behind the paintings. In addition, the opportunities to understand the diversity of multicultural British society are very varied, as seen in the study of diversity by Year 5 and the emphasis they place on their belief that everyone is equal. Finally, every year in the summer term there is an International Day when the school celebrates its multicultural nature, and this incorporates activities such as Mexican weaving and music making.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school is successfully providing a caring and supportive learning environment for all its pupils, whatever their nationality, circumstances or background. Procedures for assessment and the monitoring of pupils' academic performance are good in the core subjects of English and mathematics. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good. The monitoring of behaviour and measures to prevent bullying are satisfactory. The monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory.
49. The school has good systems in place for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and the data obtained is used well to guide planning. This constitutes significant progress since the previous inspection, when assessment was a key issue for development. The school provides good, effective support and advice for its pupils, informed by the monitoring of their academic progress and personal development.
50. Much useful assessment is done on a short-term, day-to-day basis, by teachers and, in the best cases, by learning support assistants, who make notes on pupils' responses during lessons. The school undertakes all legally-required formal assessments of its pupils. Baseline assessment provided by the local education authority is undertaken, both on pupils' entry to the school and at the end of the reception year. The statutory end-of-key-stage national tests in English, mathematics and science are undertaken at the ages of seven and 11. In addition to this required testing, the school undertakes 'optional' mid-key-stage tests at the end of each year and regular assessments in the core subjects throughout the year. At the end of each school year, teachers make forecasts of pupils' likely levels at the end of the following year. Then a 'tracking sheet' is kept for each pupil which tracks progress in

- reading, writing and number and includes forecasts of attainment and actual attainment, and further projections as the pupil moves through the school.
51. The significant amount of information now gained from testing is used well to identify and support pupils with special educational needs. Pupils 'causing concern' are identified early, in the nursery, so that children in the reception class can be placed on the register and provided with appropriate additional support. Pupils are provided with 'group targets' for mathematics and English, based on assessment data. The school has begun to analyse the results of the end-of-key-stage tests; subject co-ordinators look at pupils' responses to test questions carefully to identify common errors and weaknesses and to identify trends. Among the practical results of this analysis has been the very well targeted provision of additional support for pupils with English as an additional language. There are also 'extension' groups for pupils in Year 2 to help them reach Level 3, extra help with 'Springboard Maths' materials for children needing support in numeracy, additional literacy support in Year 1 and the employment of an additional full-time teacher to support these additional groups.
 52. Procedures for monitoring and supporting academic progress are good. In the great majority of lessons, pupils are made aware of the learning objectives, and pupils with special educational needs are given, and made aware of, individual targets for their learning. There is good use of assessment procedures to identify pupils with special educational needs. The data obtained is used to provide well-targeted support for pupils with particular learning and behavioural needs through the provision of 'speech therapy' sessions, 'social skills' groups and 'anger management' groups, for example, in addition to a range of 'booster' literacy and numeracy groups.
 53. The SENCO has only recently taken over the role and has begun to make changes to the school's systems, most significantly transferring responsibility for writing and reviewing the individual education plans for pupils from the SENCO to class teachers and learning support assistants. The school has, ahead of statutory requirements to do so, adopted the recommendations of the new 'Code of Practice for SEN'. The co-ordinator maintains a detailed and comprehensive register of pupils with special educational needs, and there are appropriate procedures for placing pupils on the register. The school meets the requirements outlined in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need, although the school has a number of pupils with significant learning and behavioural needs who do not yet have a Statement of Special Educational Need.
 54. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well. They work closely together to support pupils who need any additional help, perhaps in learning the English language, or due to a special need, or to overcome behaviour difficulties. The good support and attention these pupils receive enable them to make good progress in their learning.
 55. The monitoring of behaviour is satisfactory. The behaviour policy is appropriate but gives more detail about sanctions than rewards. The recent introduction of gaining individual or class points towards weekly 'Golden Time' for free pupil choice is proving effective and popular with pupils. The staff manage pupil behaviour well using many different strategies that include calming exercises and names written on the board. There are some recorded incidents of bullying; the anti-bullying policy is being reviewed and pupils, through the school council, are being consulted about ways to lessen bullying and raise pupil awareness. The school does not have a policy on physical restraint, even though this is sometimes used to keep from harm a very few pupils who are experiencing extreme difficulty in controlling themselves. Nor has there been any training for staff. Written records relating to behavioural, racist or

- physical restraint are kept, but not in a systematic manner. This hinders the clear monitoring of individual pupils' progress when they are having behaviour problems.
56. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good. Their personal and social development have a high priority in the school; each child is valued. Staff take time and care to understand and develop good relationships with the pupils. This enables pupils to trust and approach staff easily if they have any worries; staff are able to give pupils helpful and clear guidance as a result. The new co-ordinator for personal, social health and citizenship education is reviewing the policy and expanding the formal teaching programme. All classes now have planned Circle Time discussions that help pupils to have a better understanding of others' opinions and feelings. Pupils are currently learning about 'Healthy eating' and this links in very well with the Healthy Schools initiative. Pupils are now enjoying eating fruit at break time, although they do not always remember to put the remnants in the litterbins. Pupils having difficulties are given targets for improvement and can be offered support through outside agencies. Pupils are encouraged to write about their progress in their annual school reports and teachers also provide helpful summaries.
57. The monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory and has declined over the last academic year. Registers do not comply with statutory requirements because pencil is used for marking, non-standard marks are used and unauthorised absence is not accurately recorded. The format of registers provides no space to record totals of authorised or unauthorised absence. A new education welfare officer has just been allocated. There are weekly meetings to discuss the many problem cases and letters are sent, but waiting for a response often takes time. In the most serious cases the home-school liaison officer will visit families and works hard to change parental views on attendance. There is some success for a few families. So far none have been taken to court for poor attendance. Getting families to change holiday plans is difficult, despite the school's firm policy of non-authorisation after ten school days. However, the holidays and unauthorised absence condoned by parents have a very detrimental effect on children's achievement, attainment and chances of doing well at school. The progress that all pupils make in class is also slower because teachers have to repeat missed work. Too many parents are not recognising this or their responsibility to ensure that their children attend regularly and on time. The monitoring of attendance is time-consuming for staff, and the school has not been able to give the promotion of attendance and punctuality the time it needs to secure a real parental change in attitudes, so that school attendance can improve.
58. Arrangements for child protection are good. The designated person is knowledgeable and very experienced. Local authority guidance is followed and school policy is based on this; both are due to be updated to reflect new child protection guidance. The designated person has recognised the need for staff training to be updated to cover the new guidance. A considerable number of pupils are either on the 'at risk register' or are 'looked after' or receiving support. The looked after pupils have personal plans, as is required. There is a high level of confidentiality regarding information and access to files, kept separately and securely, to protect children's interests. The school tries to gain external support for families having difficulties as much as it can and tries to ensure contact with the same personnel to ensure continuity. Arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory. There are trained first-aiders, a medical room and the proper keeping of accident records. Required tests and checks, including fire drills and risk assessments, are undertaken.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

59. The school works hard to involve parents and has put in place many good initiatives to encourage their involvement. Parents are valued and made very welcome when they visit the school for any reason. Many groups have been set up to benefit parents, carers and their children. There is a home-school liaison officer who is involved in many parent-focused activities, including a Mother and Toddler Group. Home visits are made by Foundation Stage staff before children start school, and the liaison officer also visits families who are having attendance related difficulties. Parents who do not have English as a first language find contact through the home-school officer particularly helpful because of her knowledge of some of the community languages, and this strengthens home-school relationships considerably.
60. The Friends of St Mary's Association has only been established for about a year. It has already made a significant impact on the school, both financially, through successful bids to provide equipment for basketball and fund the popular parents cookery club and first-aid classes, and through fundraising and holding events like Bingo Nights and table-top sales. It also has its own newsletter promoting the school and forthcoming events. Parents are very supportive of the Friends, and events are well attended. Other parents help out on trips and a few are employed in the school; for instance, as teaching assistants or midday helpers.
61. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Newsletters and other information are provided regularly, with some translation if required. There are a few minor omissions in the annual governors' report and the prospectus; nonetheless they are both very useful and reader friendly documents. Parents have formal opportunities to meet staff to discuss pupil progress, and can have an informal chat at other times, such as the end of the school day. The quality of pupil reports is satisfactory. All subjects are reported on but tend to say what has been taught and what the pupil can do, rather than focusing on targets to improve individual progress. Some clear targets are set, but this is not consistent across the school. Foundation Stage reports have headings related to the areas of learning, but are then further sub-divided into National Curriculum subjects. There is good practice in the use of pupil self-assessment of individual progress, but no space for parents to make comments about the reports. The results of national tests are properly reported.
62. The contribution made by parents to their children's learning is satisfactory. Parents are invited to meetings about, for example, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The Parent Numeracy Group is particularly effective in helping parents to understand the new ways of working in mathematics, so that they can be of more support when their children are doing homework. Parents who do attend this group thoroughly enjoy it. Homework is provided regularly, is based on numeracy and literacy, and includes regular spelling tests. Pupils are expected to write their homework down and complete it properly. Younger pupils and children take home book bags.
63. Parents' views of the school are satisfactory, although only a few attended the pre-inspection meeting. During inspection week, parents spoken to informally were pleased with the school, the approachability of staff, and the leadership of the headteacher. Their children enjoy school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. The vision, enthusiasm and commitment of the newly appointed headteacher impressed the original inspection team. The team for the current inspection is of the same mind. The very clear educational direction given by the headteacher has allowed the school to achieve praiseworthy results despite the many difficulties it faces. Her very good leadership is based on a strong determination to continue to raise standards and provide the best quality of education for all pupils. Much of the headteacher's energy has been put successfully into building an effective team of teachers and senior staff. She manages the school very well. A particular strength of the headteacher's work has been the development of the role of senior staff and the subject co-ordinators, both of whom contribute well to the school's performance. The highly appropriate aims of the school, particularly those concerning the understanding and tolerance of the beliefs and cultures of others, are reflected very well in its everyday life. There is a well-developed commitment on the part of all members of staff to improvement, and the school is well placed to continue to raise standards.
65. The governors, who are led ably by the chairperson, support the school well. Those members who are well established have a good understanding of the areas in which the school does well and those in which more development is needed. They are keen to see standards continue to rise and know the vital part that good quality teaching plays in bringing that about. Some problems in recruiting and retaining governors, especially parent governors, have increased their workload. Governors are currently re-examining the way in which they gather information about the work of the school through visits to classrooms and links with subject co-ordinators. Despite these difficulties the governing body plays an effective part in shaping the direction that the school takes. It fulfils its statutory obligations, with the exception of missing a few items from the information it should provide for parents.
66. Since the last inspection, clear improvements in leadership and management have been made in the few areas of significant concern. The monitoring, review and evaluation of the curriculum and teaching are now firmly established. For example, there is a systematic programme of lesson observations by senior staff and advisers from the local education authority. The benefits of this rigorous evaluation and development of teaching have yet to be seen in the overall quality of classroom practice because of the large turnover of staff in the last few years. The school is endeavouring to enable as many subject co-ordinators as possible to check how well teaching and learning are developing in their own subjects.
67. The implementation of the school's policy for managing the performance of staff also contributes well to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Senior staff members act effectively as team leaders to monitor the achievement of the objectives set for individual teachers. Overall, the strategy for managing performance is good, but the periods over which the headteacher's and teachers' objectives are expected to be achieved are different. This makes it difficult for governors to ensure that the two sets of targets relate closely to each other and serve the school as well as possible.
68. The planning to improve the school's performance is of good quality. A suitable number of appropriate objectives, clearly aimed at raising standards, are identified. The lack of features such as success criteria, noted in the last report, has been addressed well. The school analyses pupils' attainment, including the standards they achieve in the national tests, closely and to good effect. For example, a particular weakness in how pupils use tenses when they do not speak English at home was

identified and action taken to help them. Checks are made on how well boys and girls, and pupils of different racial heritages, learn, but not those pupils who stay at the school throughout their primary school years. Work has begun in using a special computer program to improve this analysis. The progress made by pupils as they pass through the school is checked carefully. Targets agreed by the governors with the local education authority are in place and are appropriate to ensure that the school continues to make good progress.

69. The school makes good use of the resources it has. Money, staff, equipment and materials are deployed well in the drive to raise standards. The school's educational priorities are well supported by good financial management. The weakness found at the time of the last inspection concerning the link between financial and improvement planning has been addressed successfully. A recent problem was created when the school was given information about how many pupils to cater for and did so. The fact that many fewer pupils then came to the school than had been anticipated could not have been anticipated by anyone. This resulted in the school going into deficit. The school has done well to recover in such a short time from the debt it incurred. The recommendations of the most recent auditors' report, which were of a minor nature, have been implemented appropriately.
70. The problems with the use of money intended to provide for pupils with special educational needs, identified in the last report, have been resolved very effectively. Other funds that are given to the school for specific purposes, such as helping pupils who do not speak English at home, are used wisely. The governors are suitably involved in drawing up the budget and make regular checks on how the school spends its money, but rely heavily on the chairperson for this information.
71. The school applies the principles of best value - comparison, challenge, competition and consultation - very well. As in a recent visit to a similar school in Birmingham, it tries to judge how well it is meeting the needs of its pupils, compared with others in similar circumstances. Senior managers check the level of challenge that pupils are offered and, if necessary, increase it by changing curriculum targets. The results of similar schools, within the local education authority and beyond, are examined closely and used to fuel the conviction: "If they can do it, so can we". A recent parent questionnaire resulted in 135 replies. Pupils are also consulted widely through the school council.
72. The use of new forms of technology, including computers, is well established in general and financial administration practices. Much time is saved through emailing and keeping records electronically. The administrative staff members work efficiently with the headteacher to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the school.
73. The good achievements of pupils in relation to the difficulties they and the school face, the good quality of education, and the relatively modest costs incurred, lead the inspection team to judge that the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. In order to build on the achievements already being made, and to raise pupils' standards further in all subjects, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) ensure that the curriculum being offered to all pupils is relevant and appropriate by:
 - (a) enhancing the opportunities for the use of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects;
 - (b) including assessment opportunities in all subjects so that pupils have the best opportunity to build on the progress they have already made;
(Paragraphs 7, 34, 111, 125, 133, 137, 142, 147, 162)
 - (2) further consider the arrangements of the school day by reorganising the timetable, particularly in the afternoon. Lessons should not be too long to ensure that the time made available for all subjects reflects the pupils' ability to concentrate;
(Paragraphs 16, 23, 33, 81, 100, 116, 154, 155)
 - (3) modify the planning of the curriculum so that the use of ICT is included all subjects;
(Paragraphs 8, 34, 90, 97, 107, 115, 122, 126, 136, 138, 145, 151)
 - (4) improve pupils' attendance by instigating a more rigorous approach to identifying and tracking absence and punctuality.
(Paragraph 20, 57)

ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

75. Since the previous inspection substantial measures have been put in place to meet the differing needs of minority ethnic pupils within the school. The school has appointed a new co-ordinator, funded through the EMAG, to support the achievement of minority ethnic pupils across the school. There are now procedures in place to track, measure and analyse standards attained by pupils from different ethnic minority groups, and for the many pupils who are learning English as an additional language a system of assessment and measuring progress in English language acquisition is in use. This is having a very positive effect on raising standards of achievement.
76. The English as an additional language/EMAG co-ordinator has devised her own action plan that forms an integral part of the school's development plan. Her first task was to carry out an audit of existing provision to identify strengths and weaknesses. She now has in place a system of working collaboratively with class teachers in order to raise the profile of English as an additional language pupils and meet their distinctive needs. This audit also showed where additional support was needed and as a result the school has appointed four new bilingual assistants. These assistants now support those who speak Punjabi, Urdu/Pushto/Kutchi, and Bangla.
77. Pupils with English as an additional language are assessed on entry to the school or soon after. The need for support is prioritised according to the relevant stage of English language acquisition. English as an additional language pupils gain appropriate access to the curriculum through effective partnership teaching in lessons. The co-ordinator plans and prepares some teaching materials that are suitably adapted to meet the needs of ethnic minority and bilingual children in specific areas of their learning. She liaises with class teachers and support assistants before the lesson and evaluates effectiveness at the end. Progress is regularly monitored and this in turn further informs planning and target setting. The quality of support provided is effective and results in the pupils consolidating learning and making good progress.
78. The previous inspection highlighted the fact that the school did not systematically plan to celebrate the rich cultural diversity within the school and the community. This is being rectified by a strong commitment from the headteacher and the English as an additional language/EMAG co-ordinator. Multicultural education has been introduced into many aspects of the school in order to enrich the curriculum. An impressive feature in the entrance is the school's 'Welcome' poster that represents translations in different mother tongues spoken by children in the school. This is a good start to developing closer links with parents from the community, and further celebrating the languages spoken.
79. There is no doubt that the school values, respects and celebrates the wide range of cultural diversity within the school. The staff are good role models who help all pupils to feel valued and comfortable in the school. This goes a long way towards promoting the confidence and self-esteem of pupils, particularly those from minority ethnic groups.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 97 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 21 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 3 | 23 | 41 | 28 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 3 | 24 | 42 | 29 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 60 | 362 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0 | 157 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 1 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 10 | 146 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 182 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 108 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 106 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % | Unauthorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.3 | School data | 4.3 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 | National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2001 | 19 | 21 | 40 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 12 | 15 |
| | Girls | 19 | 20 | 20 |
| | Total | 32 | 32 | 35 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 80 (82) | 80 (73) | 88 (86) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 15 | 12 |
| | Girls | 20 | 20 | 17 |
| | Total | 33 | 35 | 29 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 83 (84) | 88 (82) | 73 (84) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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 | 22 | 18 | 40 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 12 | 11 | 18 |
| | Girls | 13 | 10 | 17 |
| | Total | 25 | 21 | 35 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 63 (55) | 53 (41) | 88 (95) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 9 | 10 | 13 |
| | Girls | 10 | 8 | 14 |
| | Total | 19 | 18 | 27 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 48 (41) | 45 (41) | 68 (45) |
| | 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 | 21 |
| Black – African heritage | 1 |
| Black – other | 1 |
| Indian | 63 |
| Pakistani | 32 |
| Bangladeshi | 26 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 140 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 5 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 1 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 9 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 17.7 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 22 |
| Average class size | 26 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 25 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 515 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 2 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 26 |
| Total number of education support staff | 2 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 30 |
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 13 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 2000/2001 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 996,302 |
| Total expenditure | 1,021,905 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,382 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | -25,603 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | -23,699 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|------|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 11.9 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 13.9 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 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 | 385 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 35 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 66 | 31 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 46 | 49 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 46 | 51 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 26 | 49 | 14 | 8 | 3 |
| The teaching is good. | 63 | 29 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 37 | 43 | 14 | 6 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 66 | 26 | 6 | 3 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 66 | 29 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 43 | 46 | 6 | 0 | 6 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 63 | 29 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 54 | 40 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 34 | 43 | 14 | 3 | 6 |

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

80. Children are admitted into the nursery in the term after their third birthday, and into the reception classes in the September of the year in which they are five. They are assessed termly, in both the nursery and reception classes, to find out what they can and cannot do. The results of these assessments show that children's attainment when they start school is well below the levels expected for their age. A significant number of children have English as an additional language and are at the early stages of language acquisition in English. The learning environment created in both the nursery and reception classes is positive and caring. Children feel safe and secure, and settle very quickly into the daily routines. They respond with enthusiasm to activities and the help they are given by teachers and support staff. All children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. However, only a minority are likely to attain the levels expected by the end of their reception year, particularly in the areas of communication, language, literacy and mathematics.
81. Teaching is good throughout the Foundation Stage, with some very good features. Teachers have a good understanding of the curriculum for children this age, and of how young children learn. They are competent in teaching basic skills and use a range of teaching strategies. Teachers are skilled at asking open-ended questions and encouraging children to think for themselves. Lessons move at a good pace and activities are usually well matched to the children's learning needs. Where lessons are overlong, or there is insufficient structure to an activity, children quickly lose interest and the learning that occurs is not as good as it could be. In the most productive sessions there is a clear focus for the activity, and children are well supported by adults. As a result, children's interest is maintained and their learning is good. Children with English as an additional language make good progress in learning to speak English. Bilingual assistants provide very good support for these children. Teachers plan effectively for all areas of learning and for the inclusion of all children. Planning in the nursery and reception classes is not yet fully co-ordinated to ensure continuity of provision as children move through the Foundation Stage.
82. Teachers use assessments continuously to monitor children's progress and inform their planning. Whilst the assessments carried out in the nursery and reception classes are comprehensive, they are not yet sufficiently linked to provide a continuous system for tracking children's progress. Overall, resources are used well to support children's learning. However, the organisation of sessions does not always maximise the learning opportunities planned for. This is particularly evident in the use of the outdoor learning environment and the shared reception class area. Relationships are very good. Teachers and support staff work very well as a team and provide very positive role models for the children.
83. The nursery and reception classrooms are well organised to cover all areas of learning. They are bright and stimulating, and provide many opportunities for children to interact directly with their environment. Children's work is well displayed and labelled to support their learning. Labelling in languages other than English supports the learning of children with English as an additional language, and promotes the cultural awareness of all children. Resources are good overall. Whilst the physical environment for outdoor play is satisfactory, the lack of a covered area results in it not being used when it is raining. In addition, the current organisational arrangements

do not allow for it to be used freely by children in the nursery, and reception-age children have very limited access.

84. Parents are provided with good support. The induction programme for the nursery includes a home visit, and an interpreter is available for those parents who do not speak English. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to the 'Cottontails' mother and toddler group before they are admitted into the nursery. Parents are provided with information each half term about the work their children will be involved in. They are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning by sharing books with them.
85. The recently appointed co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has a well-defined vision for the improvement of the overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

86. Many children start school with underdeveloped skills in this area of learning. When they start in the nursery many children play alone or alongside others. Activities which encourage co-operative play are a regular feature of daily routines. Children's skills in this area of learning develop well because teaching is good. Through the direct involvement of adults, children learn to take turns, share and play co-operatively. For example, in the nursery 'Café' adults help children to act out the roles of chefs, waiters and customers. Relationships are good and teachers expect children to behave well and work hard. Children are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants, who take every opportunity to praise them for their effort and achievement. All adults act as good role models. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with sensitively by staff, and children learn how their behaviour affects others. Most develop good levels of self-control, and learn to work and play together constructively. Through focused, adult-led activities children develop increasing independence and the ability to concentrate for extended periods of time. However, as a result of the way activities and sessions are organised and staff are deployed, opportunities to develop these skills are sometimes missed. Some children spend only fleeting moments engaged in activities and gain little from them. Children have well-developed self-help skills, and will seek the assistance of adults only when they really need it.

Communication, language and literacy

87. When they start in the nursery most children have skills in this area of learning that are well below those expected for their age. They have only limited knowledge of books and writing. They use a limited vocabulary and talk using single words and short phrases. All children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress overall. Bilingual support staff provide very good support and children learn to speak English quickly. However, despite the quality of the teaching and support they receive and the good progress they make, most children are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year.
88. Activities are carefully planned to develop children's skills in speaking and listening, and to encourage them to learn about books and the sounds that letters make. Children's speaking and listening skills develop well because the activities planned support their learning in this area. They respond confidently to their teacher's questions and learn to take an active part in conversation. Every opportunity is taken by all staff to help children develop and use appropriate vocabulary. For example, in the nursery children learn the names of parts of flowers, and in the reception classes

they learn to name objects and materials used when sowing seeds. They are provided with many opportunities to develop their writing skills. However, some of the activities lack sufficient structure and focus to ensure that children learn significantly from them. This is particularly the case when they are working independently. In the nursery opportunities to help children practise writing letters and their names are not fully pursued in role-play situations. In the reception classes, sessions to promote literacy skills are sometimes overlong and children lose concentration. By the end of their reception year most children are able to form recognisable letters, but few are able to write words for themselves. Children in the reception classes are beginning to link letters to the sounds they make. They enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. They know how a book is organised and that print carries meaning. Children take books home regularly, but the support they receive from home is very variable. Teachers work with small groups and individual children on appropriately focused tasks. Only a minority of children are likely to reach the expected level of skill in reading by the end of their reception year.

Mathematical development

89. Children have only limited mathematical skills when they are admitted into the nursery. All children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress overall. However, the majority are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children have access to a range of activities to support their learning. Many of these activities are very practical and give children good opportunities to consolidate and develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding. Children learn to count and use mathematical vocabulary through stories and number rhymes. For example, when singing the rhyme 'Five Currant Buns', children in the nursery counted accurately and learnt to recognise a 1p coin. Role-play areas organised as a 'Post Office' and a 'Garden Centre' are used to further support children's learning in this area. Many opportunities are provided for children to sort and match objects. They develop an understanding of pattern through colouring and working with practical apparatus. Teachers and support staff use an effective range of questions to help children understand mathematical vocabulary and solve simple problems. Children in the reception classes begin to understand addition through combining two groups of objects.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

90. The activities planned for this area of learning have a very positive effect on the development of children's knowledge, understanding and skills. Good provision is made in the nursery and reception classes for developing children's awareness of the world around them. They have many opportunities to explore the natural and man-made world. For example, children in the nursery make miniature gardens in seed trays using compost, moss, stones, shells and twigs. Children in the reception classes sow seeds and investigate what plants need to grow. Teachers' skilful questioning encourages children to look closely at similarities and differences and give reasons for events. Interactive displays encourage all children to use their senses to investigate objects, and use equipment such as magnifying lenses. They assemble and join materials in a variety of ways using simple tools and techniques. In the reception classes, children begin to develop an understanding of different environments. They sort clothing and equipment for journeys to hot and cold climates. The cultural development of children is well supported through stories and assembly themes. Friendship, tolerance and equality are strongly promoted by all adults through focused topics and their day-to-day interaction with the children. Children have access in the nursery to a range of information and technology

equipment. They confidently operate tape-recorders and are learning to control a computer by using a mouse. In the reception classes, children are unable to continue to develop their skills in the use of ICT as they should, because there are insufficient computers of good quality. In addition the programs available to support children's learning are very limited.

Physical development

91. Most children are likely to achieve the expected levels in this area of learning by the end of their reception year, and all children make good progress. They move confidently around the classroom and the outdoor play area. Nursery children control wheeled toys, steering them accurately. Both the nursery and reception classes have regular access to a hall which allows them to practise the skills of climbing and moving over, around and through large apparatus. The outdoor play area is secure and contains a range of good quality equipment. The area is not covered, which restricts its use to days when the weather is fine. In addition, the current organisation of the day limits its use to set times for the nursery children, and reception children rarely use it. Insufficient use is made of this area to promote children's imaginative and co-operative play in the nursery and reception classes. Throughout the Foundation Stage children use a range of drawing, writing and painting equipment with increasing skill. They have access to tools from the beginning of their time in the nursery. They become increasingly competent in the safe and effective use of hammers, scissors and applying glue.

Creative development

92. Children's attainment overall is below the expected levels in this area. However, they all make good progress because they experience a range of activities to support their learning. They explore colour, texture, shape and form, and work in two and three dimensions. In the nursery, children learn about colours by looking at and drawing spring flowers, and in the reception classes they blend pastels when drawing fruit. Through painting, printing and collage work children learn to express themselves, use their imagination and learn about design. They learn how to manipulate and mould malleable materials, and make models from found materials and construction toys. A good range of small toys and well-resourced role-play areas support children's imaginative development. For example, children in a reception class put up colourful tubs of flowers to sell in the 'Garden Centre'. When supported by an adult this type of play successfully promotes not only children's imaginative development but also their social development and communication skills. Teachers and support staff are skilled at using open-ended questions to guide children's thinking, and help them develop story lines for their imaginative play. Children have regular access to musical instruments and learn to sing familiar songs from memory. In the reception classes they learn to use their imagination to express their ideas and feelings through dance. For example, they creatively act out the story of a seed beginning to grow.

ENGLISH

93. Standards have risen since the last inspection at roughly the same rate as the national trend of improvement. The results of the most recent national tests show that standards overall are well below the average for all schools. Generally, pupils work below the level expected of their age group. Information held by the school indicates that, because there are more disadvantaged pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 than last year, the school's results will 'dip' in the 2002 national tests. Inspection evidence reflects this. By the end of the infant years the differences between the performance of boys and girls largely conform to the national picture. However, over

- the last five years the results of the boys at the age of 11 have improved and they have done slightly better than the girls.
94. Given the circumstances in which the school works, and the low levels of oral and written English children have when they join the school, pupils achieve well. Overall, pupils make similar progress in each year group, although it is in Year 6 that more-able pupils do best. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and those with English as an additional language make very good gains, especially in developing their spoken English.
 95. The speaking and listening skills of pupils are below the level expected of their age group throughout the school. In Year 2, pupils listen to their teacher and to other children fairly well at the beginning of lessons. They respond appropriately. In many cases speech is unclear and the pupils lack confidence. Those in Year 6 talk and listen with more assurance. They listen carefully and understand the main points of discussions, but do not question the ideas and views of others.
 96. Reading standards at the end of both the infant and junior years do not reach the age-related levels expected. However, the results gained by seven year olds in the national tests were well above the average for schools of a similar type. Average pupils in Year 2 read fairly confidently and reasonably accurately. They use picture clues and their knowledge of letter sounds to help tackle unfamiliar words. More-able pupils show greater confidence in discussing what they have read, although they do not relate the content to their own experience. They are mostly accurate and use expression to interest the listener. Average readers in Year 6 are accurate and understand the main ideas in narrative and information texts. They talk about the plot and characters in stories. More-able pupils read fluently, with good levels of understanding. They use well-established knowledge of letter sounds and blends, together with an understanding of the context of the passage, to read words they have not encountered before. Attitudes to reading are reasonably positive, but relatively few read regularly at home to adults or to themselves. Not many belong to the city library. Classes visit the school library regularly to select fiction books for reading in class and at home. However, visits to learn how to use the library to find information are not sufficiently frequent. As a result, although most pupils know about skills such as skimming to find key words, they are not confident in seeking information independently.
 97. Attainment in writing is also below the expected levels at end of the infant and junior years. In stories such as one about 'The day Meanies came to school', average pupils aged seven show awareness of the needs of the reader by using speech marks. Their ideas are sequenced effectively and the use of capital letters and full stops is developing. More-able pupils begin to use devices such as exclamation marks. Spelling skills are relatively strong, with many frequently used words written accurately. The shape of letters is fairly well established, but their size is not consistent. By the time they are 11, pupils write in a variety of genres. They undertake imaginative writing in pieces such as 'The horrors of being a sock'. Their ideas are sustained, but are often not set out clearly for the reader. For example, one long sentence is used when two would have been easier to understand. More-able pupils develop their ideas in an interesting way, and start to use sophisticated punctuation such as colons and semi-colons to achieve this. However, the vocabulary used by all pupils is limited and few words are used adventurously. Pupils do not write at sufficient length whether in English lessons or in work for other subjects. Spelling continues as a relative strength. Handwriting is of consistent size by now and most letters are efficiently formed, but in many cases pupils do not take enough care with it. Standards of presentation of work are sometimes poor. The use

- of ICT is limited to the learning of word-processing skills and does not include opportunities for independent writing or the reinforcement of word or sentence work.
98. Teaching is good across the school and is the main reason why pupils achieve as well as they do. More than a third of the lessons seen were very good and all were at least satisfactory. The good quality of the teaching is evident in the progress made by the large proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
 99. The skilful management of pupils, some of whom have serious behavioural problems, ensures that classes apply themselves effectively and the great majority behave well. Teachers are often clever in choosing good ways to interest pupils and get across the main teaching points. This was clear in a lesson for Year 2 in which the teacher took items such as a swimsuit and sunglasses from Leonora's suitcase' to teach pupils about compound words. Basic literacy skills are taught well. The very good demonstration by teachers of reading stories shared with the class, such as 'The Snow Lambs' in Year 1, contributes strongly to this. Good questioning is a feature of much of the teaching. In a lesson observed during the inspection, the teacher's use of questions such as "How do you know?" helped pupils in Year 6 to deepen their understanding of how to analyse descriptive texts.
 100. The good relationships between teachers and their classes generally result in pupils being attentive and productive. In the best lessons they are keen to contribute. Frustrated cries of, "Oh, Miss!" were heard from those not chosen to answer in a Year 6 lesson. Where learning is less successful, teachers do not check the progress made by groups not lead by an adult and not enough praise or incentives are used to promote good behaviour all the way through the lesson. A minority of the pupils find learning a struggle. They do not concentrate for long enough to learn well. English lessons often last too long. For example, some for six year olds go on for an hour and a quarter. This makes it difficult for pupils to apply themselves effectively to the tasks they are set.
 101. It is too soon to judge the effect of the work of the two co-ordinators, since one has only been in post since September and the other for just a few weeks. Since the last inspection the National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented, a new handwriting programme has been introduced and valuable planning to promote writing skills in each year group has been drawn up. Overall, work in other subjects contributes satisfactorily to the development of literacy skills, although more demands could be made of pupils to write at greater length, especially in science.

MATHEMATICS

102. In the national tests in 2001 for seven year olds, pupils' attainment was below the national average, but in line with the average for similar schools. For 11 year olds, the school's performance was well below the national average, and below that of similar schools. There were no marked differences between the performance of boys and girls. The trend in these results for the period 1998 to 2001 shows a steady improvement in attainment at the end of both key stages, with a marked rise following a 'dip' in 1998. Although the performance of seven year olds and 11 year olds has consistently been below the national average, the gap between the school and the national average for 11 year olds has narrowed. Current inspection evidence indicates that standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. However, many pupils enter the school with low ability in number, and they make good progress throughout the school.

103. At the time of the last report in May 1997, standards for seven year olds and for 11 year olds were judged to be broadly in line with national expectations. The progress of all pupils was satisfactory by the end of both key stages. Overall standards have improved as pupils are now making better progress.
104. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented. Test results have been analysed and the information used to identify pupils who will benefit from additional help. The analysis also shows which topics need greater coverage in teaching. Other assessments help to provide individual targets for pupils.
105. School records show that there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Children have entered the school with a wide range of ability, and many have underdeveloped skills in number. Given the low attainment of many when joining the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language, make good progress in mathematics, particularly in their use of numbers.
106. In Key Stage 1, middle and higher-attaining pupils develop a sound understanding of place value, and can order numbers to 100. Many Year 2 pupils using apparatus can add two two-digit numbers, and a few can add hundreds, tens and units. Pupils increase their knowledge of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and use names such as 'cubes', 'cuboids' and 'cylinders'. Pupils are developing their understanding of time. Many can record daily routines on a chart, and higher-attaining pupils can read the time on the hour. Many pupils can use coins to find the amounts required to buy items, and lower-attaining pupils recognise and add coins to totals of ten pence.
107. By the age of 11, pupils increase their skills of working with numbers, and their understanding and use of four operations. However, many are less strong in their skills of division. Many Year 4 pupils demonstrate their increasing understanding of place value by working with numbers up to 1,000 and over. Measuring skills are applied to length (centimetres), and to degrees of angles. Year 6 pupils are quicker at working out calculations mentally, and many are ready to share with the class their strategies for working out calculations. They are more confident in using multiplication rather than division when solving problems. They have insufficient experience of data handling and using graphs, although these are sometimes developed in other subjects, such as science. Currently there are too few opportunities for pupils to engage in more practical and investigative work in mathematics. Older pupils use calculators to check their work, but otherwise the use of ICT is not fully exploited.
108. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. In most lessons their behaviour and concentration are good. They respond keenly to the teaching and work very well together in pairs, and very many pupils, especially older ones, are confident in sharing their ideas with the rest of the class. On occasions there are very small groups who can cause distraction and hinder progress within the class.
109. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages. In Key Stage 2 over a third of the lessons observed were very good or better. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of mathematics, and use questions effectively to encourage pupils to think. Clear learning objectives are identified and shared with the pupils. In many lessons the imaginative use of resources and activities gets pupils involved, maintaining their interest and concentration. The 'counting caterpillar' and Dienes blocks with the overhead projector (Year 2), the human fraction line (Year 4), and the simple role play of shopper and shopkeeper (Year 5), are just some

examples of effective involvement. Sometimes the review session at the end of lessons does not get pupils to consider the learning objectives and think about what they have learnt.

110. Teachers manage pupils well, and usually ensure very good organisation of time and resources. Class teachers work closely with learning support assistants and they cooperate together in planning the work. The learning support assistants help with the day-to-day assessment of pupils. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Often there are comments to help pupils move on to the next stage of learning, but this is inconsistent across the teaching staff.
111. The subject leader provides good leadership through the monitoring of teaching and planning. Many teachers have received individual observations and guidance on their numeracy lessons. There have been in-service training sessions for teachers, and also for learning support assistants and bilingual assistants. This all contributes to the consolidation of good practice. There are good procedures in place for assessing and recording the progress of all pupils. The school aims to improve these further by enhancing consistency in the methods used. One priority adopted by the school is to improve the quality of learning in numeracy. The promotion of practical and investigational work, the increased use of ICT, and the application of mathematics in other subjects will also enrich pupils' learning. There is a good range of resources to support learning.

SCIENCE

112. Inspection evidence indicates that, despite good progress as they move through the school, pupils' attainment in science at the age of seven is well below the national average for their age. At the end of Key Stage 2 at the age of 11, despite good progress, attainment remains below national expectations. However, when comparing attainment with that of pupils nationally, it is very important to take into account pupils' poor attainment on entry to the school. The significant movement of pupils in and out of the school, and the varying but generally high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language in the school are also very important factors. The school has largely maintained standards at the level reported in the previous inspection.
113. Most pupils in a Year 1 lesson are able, with the teacher's help, to understand the concept of a 'fair test' and predict which of a range of papers will be strongest. In a parallel class pupils sorting materials into magnetic and non-magnetic groups are able to predict and set out their findings and record their results, but do not make their own suggestions of ways to find things out. Although most pupils in Year 2 make good progress during the lesson in identifying major bones and joints in the human body, only one child can identify his jaw and about half can identify their wrist. A significant number of pupils in the current Year 2 have special educational needs and, in addition, a similar proportion have English as a second language - several pupils having only recently started at school after arrival in the country, not having the advantage of any previous education. These pupils are, understandably, attaining well below expectations for their age, with most very unlikely to attain expected levels for seven year olds by the end of the current school year.
114. In Key Stage 2, the majority of Year 3 pupils in one of a series of lessons on 'Light and shadows' are beginning to recognise the terms 'opaque', 'transparent' and 'translucent', but a significant proportion require adult support to identify materials to place in the appropriate category. In a Year 4 class, pupils learning that 'some materials can exist as a solid and as a liquid' are able to identify a liquid and a solid

and know that wax and water can be either. With a considerable amount of prompting a small minority are able to recall 'conductor' as the correct term to complete the sentence: "The metal gets hot because it is a good ..." despite having covered this in the previous lesson. A significant minority of pupils in this lesson are working at Level 2, which is the attainment level expected of Year 2 pupils. Year 5 pupils, in the second of a series of lessons on 'Life cycles', have researched the topic in the previous lesson on the internet, although few respond to the teacher's question: "What does a seed need to grow". Pupils need considerable support to devise a 'fair test' and one asks, "What does 'diagram' mean?" when asked to record their findings. In Year 6, pupils identifying ways and situations in which bacteria can be spread understand that micro-organisms are harmful, but there is no indication of any understanding that bacteria can also be beneficial. After prompting, they identify: "touching animals", "touching a dustbin" and "cleaning out a fish tank" as potential dangers, but most offer suggestions already supplied by the teacher. Following the discussion, pupils are completing these sentences: "Hands get dirty when ...", "This means that ...", "We can prevent bacteria spreading by ...", but a significant number of pupils require help in understanding the task. A significant minority of pupils in the current Year 6 cohort are unlikely to achieve the expected Level 4 in science by the end of the current year and overall attainment in Year 6 is below the national average.

115. The quality of learning in lessons observed in both key stages ranged from good to satisfactory, and was satisfactory overall. The quality of learning and the progress made are, in most cases, linked directly to the quality of teaching in individual lessons. In both key stages the quality of teaching ranged from good to satisfactory, and was satisfactory overall. In the best cases, teachers skilfully ensure that pupils are well motivated and the overall pace of the lessons is at least satisfactory and frequently good. In most cases, teachers' classroom management skills are effective in ensuring that most pupils concentrate on their work and teachers use a good range of strategies to motivate and interest pupils. Teachers follow the science Programmes of Study closely and plan lessons well, providing an appropriate range of resources and using praise and questioning well. There was little evidence of ICT being used to record findings or offering alternative ways of discovering information.
116. Classroom management is a constant effort for all teachers and leads to a somewhat 'formal' method of teaching science. This is often because the lesson is long and in the afternoon, when the pupils are able to concentrate less well. As a consequence of the unsatisfactory behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, and the teachers' need to maintain control of their classes, most pupils do not get sufficient, regular 'hands on' experience of Science Attainment Target 1 - 'Scientific enquiry'. In most science lessons seen, teachers 'demonstrated' investigations or asked for one or two volunteers to come to the front of the class and undertake the practical task, which pupils watched and then recorded. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have a significant negative effect on pupils' progress in science lessons. In both key stages, lessons were seen where pupils' attitudes and behaviour were unsatisfactory despite the teachers' valiant and constant efforts to gain and maintain control. This has a tendency to reduce the overall pace and limit the progress that can be made in each lesson.
117. The co-ordinator for the subject has undertaken an analysis of pupils' responses in the annual Standard Assessment Tests and has produced very clear guidance for teachers on appropriate learning objectives, suggested activities, resources and assessment opportunities for all year groups. A successful 'Science Week' was organised by the co-ordinator in the term before the inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

118. Too few lessons were observed to enable overall judgements to be made on the quality of teaching. Pupils start school with immature skills and little experience of art and design work. All pupils make satisfactory progress in all aspects of their work. However, evidence from samples of work, displays around the school, and discussions with staff, indicates that standards in all aspects of art and design are below those expected for pupils aged seven and 11. The standards described at the time of the last inspection have been broadly maintained.
119. Pupils in Year 1 explore a range of media in their work. They draw and then paint portraits of themselves, after studying the work of Vincent Van Gogh. The paintings created are large and colourful but show only limited attention to the detail of features of the face.
120. In Year 3 pupils make drawings to record the patterns found in their immediate environment. They explore texture by taking rubbings from many surfaces and by using a variety of media to produce different effects. They blend pastels to create a range of skin tones, and draw with pen to represent the texture of hair. They make satisfactory progress in drawing faces, and explore emotions through drawing each other looking grumpy or scared. Pupils in Year 4 continue to explore texture and colour through printing. They study the work of established artists and complete paintings in their style. Pupils begin to evaluate the work of these artists and record how the paintings make them feel. When drawing objects from Tudor times pupils demonstrate the ability to capture the overall shape and proportion of an object. However, pupils have not developed the skills of using line and shading to give the objects they draw a three-dimensional quality.
121. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 continue to use their drawing skills in a variety of contexts. They make interesting arrangements of objects and complete 'still life' drawings using pencil, pen, charcoal and pastel. Pupils work in pairs to make multiple sketches of each other carrying out sporting actions. They then use these sketches to create flip-books. They print and paint on textiles to explore pattern and illustrate Greek myths. Pupils have only limited opportunities to use malleable materials and work collaboratively on large-scale projects, particularly three-dimensional work. Pupils are developing the ability to evaluate their own work and the work of others.
122. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is underdeveloped. ICT has been used as part of a local project, and pupils have learned how to use a graphics program to create designs for the local fire station. However, regular structured opportunities to use ICT are not planned. Visits to local galleries to meet and artists and study their work make a good contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of art and design. In addition, the school's 'Art Gallery' provides pupils with the opportunity to regularly study and evaluate the work of established artists. However, the art of non-western cultures is not sufficiently represented in the work studied by pupils.
123. Owing to the lack of possible lessons to observe during the inspection it is inappropriate to make an overall judgement on teaching. However, in the lessons observed, teachers demonstrated very good subject knowledge, and lessons were productive because pupils were well managed. Pupils enjoy art and design work, and work hard in lessons.
124. Sketchbooks are used regularly and provide a record of work completed by pupils. However, they are not used sufficiently as a working document in which pupils' experiment with and practise skills and techniques.

125. The subject is led and managed effectively. The newly appointed co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has carried out a thorough review of provision for the subject. She has established a clear plan to improve provision and raise standards through the further development of teaching and the improvement of assessment procedures. In addition, strengthening links with the community and working with artists have been identified as priorities. The school Art Club makes a valuable additional contribution to the overall provision for art and design. Resources are adequate and used effectively in lessons.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are in line with those expected for pupils aged seven and 11. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and all pupils make satisfactory progress overall. In the lessons observed, pupils achieved well. Opportunities for pupils to use ICT in the subject are rare.
127. Insufficient teaching was seen to make a rounded judgement, but that which was seen was good overall. Lessons have clear objectives, which are shared with pupils, and teachers give clear demonstrations and instructions. In the best lessons, a range of strategies are used to manage pupils effectively. However, even in these lessons some time is lost, particularly in the afternoon, when pupils find it more difficult to co-operate, and move from one type of activity to another. Resources are well prepared and used effectively. Support staff are well deployed and provide very valuable support for pupils with special educational needs.
128. Pupils enjoy design and technology activities. They are enthusiastic and discuss and exchange ideas readily. They work quickly and confidently and use a range of tools safely. They respond positively to their teachers' suggestions as to how they might improve their work.
129. Pupils in Year 1 investigate how to make things move with sliders and levers. Good links are made to other subject areas. For example, they make moving pictures to illustrate the poem 'Wishing Well', and link their study of movement to animals, including humans when investigating joints. In Year 2, pupils explore ways of joining materials to create hinges. They design and make lighthouses with lights that work in a successful project linked to science work. Through drawing and annotating designs they learn the vocabulary associated with each topic. For example, when making moving toys they identify the chassis and axle. The construction of their models closely matches their designs.
130. Year 3 pupils identify and investigate the materials and their properties that make effective packaging. They evaluate commercial packaging, noting the colours and shapes used. A good link with mathematics is fully explored during this topic through the study of three-dimensional shapes and nets. Pupils make their own cubes to practise the skills of drawing nets, cutting them out and assembling them. Pupils in Year 4 work with textiles to create wallets. They successfully sew material together, use a range of fastenings and decorate their wallets to make them attractive. Pupils' evaluations of their work clearly demonstrate that they can identify what did or did not work successfully.
131. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 design a variety of projects with increasing confidence. Their designs record the materials to be used, and some pupils are beginning to note how the product is to be constructed. They make musical instruments from a wide variety of materials using a range of joining techniques. Year 6 pupils design and make working roundabouts as part of a fairground project. Through guided tasks pupils

learn different ways of creating movement; for example, by using electricity, hydraulics or manual operation.

132. Interesting and stimulating projects are planned for all pupils in the school. These cover all aspects of design and technology work, including food technology. The emphasis of these projects is weighted towards the completion of an end product, rather than practising and refining skills and techniques, and modifying designs. As a result, pupils' completed work often lacks 'finish' and the construction of the end product is not always as good as it could be.
133. The co-ordinator is new but has already carried out a review of the subject and drawn up an action plan focused on raising standards. She is providing a clear educational direction for the subject. Improvements in the assessment of pupils' work, and tracking of the progress pupils make, have been identified as priorities. These assessments will guide teachers' planning, and provide information on how pupils' skills should develop from year to year. Long and medium-term plans for the subject are based on the national scheme, with additional supporting materials. Resources are adequate and used well to support pupils' learning.

GEOGRAPHY

134. The last time the school was inspected, standards in geography in both key stages were in line with those expected of pupils of the same age. This has not changed and standards in geography remain similar to those seen during the last inspection. It was only possible to observe two lessons in the junior stage and due to timetable limitations no other lessons could be seen. It is not possible, therefore, to give an overall judgement on the quality of teaching because both of the lessons seen were in Year 4 and both classes were undertaking the same task due to the joint planning for the lessons. Therefore judgements on the teaching and learning in geography were made by looking at samples of work, photographs and displays across the school, and talking to teachers and pupils.
135. By the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils have looked at the school and where it is situated and can draw a plan of their route to school. They have a sound knowledge of the local area and its development. For example, during the construction of St Mary's Stadium, pupils were able to observe the development from start to finish and they have all already visited the completed stadium. The school has been actively involved in developing its own grounds and has participated in the development of a 'Field Playground' where a 'tree of ideas' was completed and subsequently published in the Community Magazine. Collective thoughts on the safety of playground equipment ensured that safe equipment was made available through a successful bid for a Community Safety Grant. A good example of encouraging pupils to find places on a world map or on local maps and plans occurs in the topic, "Where in the world is Barnaby Bear?" For example, one Year 2 class had their own 'mystery trip' where they had discovered that Barnaby Bear had gone missing. A group of Year 2 pupils were so enthusiastic about this topic that they wanted to talk about it. They explained that they had received a postcard from Barnaby Bear saying he was lost in Southampton. From various clues the pupils were able to find him and also to learn about their local areas and identify safe places to cross the busy roads, such as pedestrian crossings or an underpass. Investigation of the local area is continued into Year 3, when pupils study the highlights of the local area, such as St Mary's church, and focus on the use of land around the school. In addition, pupils study the area as it was before the building of St Mary's Stadium by looking at old photographs. An exciting event occurred when a helicopter that was taking aerial photographs locally landed on the school field. This helped to focus pupils' minds on how these

photographs are obtained when they were looking at aerial pictures of the school and the local area. To support their understanding of the different climates, physical features and lives of people in other countries, pupils undertake a study of a village in India. At the school entrance there is a world map showing the multicultural nature of the school with information about the different parts of the world that pupils in the school come from. This multicultural emphasis is also exemplified in the welcome posters written in different languages.

136. By the end of the juniors, pupils have studied a contrasting United Kingdom locality and looked at the development of settlements. For example, in the Year 4 classes pupils were looking at the reasons why people settle and what the essential needs are for a settlement. Some were looking at an imaginary island and identified from the landscape of the island where it would be best to settle. Pupils quickly realised that it was essential to have water, food and means of constructing a shelter and set about finding out where they thought would be the best the best place to settle on the island. Other pupils were studying Ordnance Survey maps to try and identify why towns and villages developed where they did. There was a good opportunity for pupils to develop their mapping skills through looking at a range of symbols, firstly by attempting to guess what they meant and then checking this on the key to the map. Pupils in Year 6 have been investigating rivers, and had undertaken group studies of world rivers. For example, for a study of the River Danube information was gained from the internet and printed out. However, pupils have not yet gained the skills of selecting and sifting out the relevant evidence for their studies and the material was displayed without any editing. During a discussion with pupils from Year 6 it became apparent how knowledgeable they are about their studies. They could talk clearly about the development of a river from its source to its mouth, using terms such as 'meander', 'tributary', 'oxbow lakes' and 'deposition' very confidently. In addition they could explain clearly about the water cycle and talked about 'evaporation' and 'condensation' and the reasons why these conditions occur. However, there is still too much emphasis on the use of worksheets and less on development of the independent work of the pupils. The use of ICT in the subject is very limited.
137. The subject manager has been in post for a number of years and has specific expertise in teaching and learning in the subject. A subject review was held in September 2001 and this highlighted areas that needed to be incorporated into the scheme of work and also the need to teach geography through other subjects. An action plan has identified areas to be developed that include improving the quality of teaching and learning, the need to audit resources and identify any gaps in provision, enhance assessment procedures and invite parents into the school to support and enrich pupils' learning experiences. Although there have been visits, including residential trips to Brownsea Island, the fieldwork is underdeveloped. The subject manager is aware of this and has identified that there is a shortage of staff who are qualified to take pupils away on fieldtrips and residential trips and is taking steps to remedy this.

HISTORY

138. Standards are the same as they were at the time of the last inspection. By the end of both key stages the pupils reach levels similar to those of other pupils of the same age. It was only possible to see a small sample of history lessons across the school. However, judgements of standards in both key stages are taken from samples of pupils' past and present work in books, classroom displays and discussions with teachers and pupils, indicating that most pupils make satisfactory progress in history. The new subject manager has made a good start by undertaking an audit of resources and has begun to develop history topic boxes and purchase new topic

- packs to fill the gap of resources in the infant stage. Good use is made of the local history library and, combined with the new resource collection targeted at the history curriculum, this should go some way to making an impact on rising standards. The use of ICT is underdeveloped and a priority in the subject manager's action plan.
139. By the age of seven, the pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people in the past, by looking, for example, at the differences between a range of old and new toys and what homes were like in the past compared with today. In both these examples, pupils were able to look at examples of toys and household objects that were used in the past. They were able to look at the similarities and differences between the objects and compare life today with that of time gone by. They also compared seaside holidays in the past with those of today, using their own experiences. The infant pupils gain much by looking at their own lives and keeping a diary to record past events and look at how they have changed. They make comparisons between the past and present in their families by talking to their parents and grandparents. In one Year 2 lesson, pupils had started to study the life and work of Florence Nightingale and were looking at pictures to note the differences between hospitals then and today. However, this work was not very successful because they did not have a grasp of what they were looking for and no guiding questions or clues had been prepared to help them focus on the areas where evidence could be obtained.
140. At the age of 11, pupils have learned that the past can be divided into periods such as 'ancient' and 'modern' and understand the terms BC and AD. In a Year 3 class pupils were learning about what life was like for children in the World War II. They had learned where the war had started in Europe and knew about Winston Churchill and Adolf Hitler. In the lesson seen pupils were learning about the effects of the air-raids on Britain and the decision to evacuate children from the danger areas to quieter and safer areas of the countryside. Pupils listened to a wartime broadcast informing parents of what they had to do to protect their children and then watched a video of children leaving the railway stations on their journey to the country. This lesson was very effective and pupils were thinking about those experiences and how the children must have felt leaving their parents and homes. Good use of photographs with targeted questions helped pupils to understand the experiences and feelings of the children in the photographs. The highlight of the lesson was when the teacher went into role as a lady who had been an evacuee and gave the pupils an opportunity to question her about her experiences. In addition, an excellent display of items such as ration books and other wartime artefacts gave pupils first-hand knowledge of life in World War 2. Other studies give the pupils the opportunity to learn about the life in ancient times, such as those of the ancient Egyptians and Greeks. For example, in a Year 5 class they were comparing the similarities and differences between ancient Greek times and today and were looking at the Greek alphabet and comparing letters that were similar in both alphabets. Other areas studied include events such as the Great Fire of London and famous people such as Samuel Pepys. Pupils also compare the life of the rich and poor in Tudor times and study what it was like for children living in Victorian times.
141. A strong feature of the work in history is the opportunity to explore the rich historical centres in the locality and further afield. For example, Year 6 undertake a local study of medieval Southampton and look at the development of the city from Roman times and the major events that affected life in medieval times. Other visits include the Tudor House Museum, Hampton Court and Beaulieu Palace House and motor museum in connection with a study on the Victorians. The quality of teaching in the sample of lessons seen was mainly good and sometimes very good. It was clear to see that the good teaching motivated the pupils to apply themselves very well and to

show enthusiasm towards and interest in their work. This was well illustrated in the interviews held with a sample of pupils, when they were excited about a visit to Beaulieu Palace House. They described taking on the roles of butler and maids and also their impressions of the differences between Victorian schools and their experiences today, which they much preferred. In the best lessons, the strengths were in the quality of teaching, which demonstrated a very good command of the subject, combined with good planning and a mix of questioning and activities that challenged and inspired pupils.

142. The subject manager has identified areas for development and has undertaken a course provided by the local educational authority in leading the subject in Key Stage 1 to enhance her own knowledge and understanding. However, due to recent developments in planning for the subject the subject manager is now just beginning to collect work samples for the development of a history portfolio and also to link planning more directly with the assessment to ensure that consistency and progression are achieved throughout the school. However, training, monitoring and consistency of practice in using the scheme of work and teaching within and across years have yet to have a full impact.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

143. Pupils' attainment in ICT is now in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. This is considerable improvement on the position noted at the time of the last inspection, when ICT was receiving little attention and pupils were making little progress. At Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with the use of computer equipment and the software that can run on such equipment. They use basic word processing successfully, choose fonts and explain their choices. Two boys in one of the reception classes were able to start up the computer, click on the appropriate icons and 'drag' their choices to the required spot to be successful. In Year 2 this knowledge was being built on in a lesson on word processing. The language being used was taken from the work the class had completed earlier in the week when considering their Big Book in a literacy lesson. Their use of the text was underdeveloped for their age as they had not yet had many sessions in the suite.
144. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 5 showed an understanding of the Internet and how they can use information they have obtained. They discuss information they have gleaned on Henri Matisse and explain how they would use his picture of 'The Snail' in a publishing package to make their own designs. In Year 6, pupils working with a database demonstrated their competence in logging on and retrieving information they have saved. They were able to interpret data on a spreadsheet and save the results they wanted. This is a sound level of achievement for their age and shows the effectiveness of the teaching in the computer suite. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in both key stages.
145. Pupils in both key stages are interested in and motivated by the use of ICT. They collaborate well and are proud of demonstrating their ability. Concentration skills are good and most pupils respond positively to interventions by the teacher. This was clearly demonstrated in lessons in the ICT suite, where pupils show a high level of motivation and enthusiasm. However, the use of ICT in other subjects is currently underdeveloped and this enthusiasm is not being harnessed to good effect. In addition, there were times during the day when the computer suite was not being used at all. The lack of concentration in other lessons that many pupils demonstrated, particularly later in the day, significantly was not evident when they were using computers.

146. The quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory in the four lessons observed. In all lessons the teaching was sound or better. Much of this was in the ICT suite and reflected the level of confidence of the different teachers. Lessons were well organised and had clear aims. In most lessons, clear explanations of the objectives and positive interventions enabled pupils to make sound progress and acquire key skills. Lessons were appropriately linked to previous learning, and pupils were occasionally involved in evaluating their learning.
147. The number of computers is now good, as a whole class of 30 can use the ICT suite at the same time. The school is appropriately equipped with facilities for using the Internet. Sound use has been made of funding to provide training for teachers, and the co-ordinator team and headteacher have a clear long-term plan for developing the subject. Planning has been improved through the adoption of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work, with all strands being addressed. The use of assessment to ensure that pupils build on the progress they have already made is currently being developed.

MUSIC

148. Standards in music are in line with the level expected for seven and 11 year old pupils. This is because the sound teaching of class teachers is enhanced by some excellent input from a visiting specialist music teacher. Pupils sing enthusiastically, making a bold sound. At Key Stage 1 they sing well in pitch and the tone is good. At Key Stage 2 the sound is always attractive. Pupils here pitch accurately. The oldest pupils are keen to sing and they join in all the songs in the key stage singing assembly. Those at an early stage of speaking and understanding English gain much from hearing the language sung by those around them.
149. In Year 5 and 6 classes pupils demonstrate a good sense of pulse and rhythm. They can think through parts of the song silently and restart in time. In another class in Year 6, pupils had good ideas about the piece of music they listened to, and understood its nature well. They realised that they would need noisy instruments to make music in the same style. In Key Stage 1 pupils can read simple rhythms from traditional notation.
150. Teaching is good. Some excellent teaching was seen during the inspection where high level music skills combined with very good basic teaching skills to produce first-rate sessions. Lively pace and appropriate, interesting activities also helped to keep pupils motivated and enjoying their music making. In the key stage singing sessions all pupils became involved and worked hard. Singing skills advanced perceptibly within the sessions.
151. Accommodation for music is good, although the halls do not flatter musical sound. Music is well managed. The curriculum leader ensures that the specialist input of visiting teachers and the allocation of time to year groups is fair, and provides consistent experiences throughout the school. There is also a good in-service element. Class teachers attend all the sessions and carry on the class-based music in between the visits of the specialist teacher. The use of ICT to extend provision in music and to enhance pupils' opportunities has not yet been planned. However, the school has taken a very positive step in committing the necessary sums of money to enhance its music provision.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152. Observations of physical education lessons indicate that pupils make good progress in physical education as they move through the school from a low and, in some cases, very low level of attainment on entry. Despite good progress made during Key Stage 1 attainment at the age of seven remains below national expectations, but, by the end of Key Stage 2, at the age of 11, the attainment of most pupils is broadly in line with national expectations.
153. In a gymnastics lesson in the school hall, Year 1 pupils showing actions that represent 'the sea in stormy weather' were beginning to employ movement in an imaginative way. However, in a significant number of cases pupils' control and gross-motor co-ordination are more typical of a reception year child. In another Year 1 lesson observed, pupils explored balances on different parts of the body, stretching and curling, moving and stopping to show a 'balance'. Year 2 pupils, in a dance lesson, were employing movement in an imaginative way, responding to both musical stimuli and bubbles blown by the teacher to show movements of floating and drifting. In another Year 2 lesson observed, a gymnastics lesson, pupils rocked in various ways and were developing the basic skills of travelling, being still, using space safely with apparatus and beginning to broaden the range of their skills and actions. In both lessons, however, pupils' overall skills and physical co-ordination were below those expected of pupils at the age of seven. In Key Stage 2, only two lessons in physical education were observed: a Year 3 lesson and a Year 6 lesson. Year 3 pupils were investigating ways of travelling over apparatus, climbing and balancing. However, it was not possible to assess pupils' skills due to the very limited amount of time they were engaged in physical activity after they had changed for the lesson and the apparatus had been set out and put away. Year 6 pupils, in the second gymnastics lesson in a planned series on 'Inversion', were working with a partner to produce a short sequence of linked movements incorporating inverted balances. Most pupils are able to undertake a forward roll and land satisfactorily, most achieve a shoulder balance and most make good progress in attempting a handstand and a headstand. Pupils are taught to compare and comment on the skills and techniques in others' work and use this understanding to improve their performance. The majority of pupils are working at levels appropriate for their age of 11, connecting skills, techniques and ideas, and applying them with appropriate accuracy. The school provides swimming instruction in Year 3, and follows this up in later years if necessary. By the time they leave the school the majority of pupils can swim 25 metres.
154. In a number of lessons observed in both key stages, pupils' behaviour and attitudes had a significant negative effect on the progress that could be made during the lessons and this in turn had a significant effect on the overall quality of their learning. In Key Stage 1, learning ranged from good to poor but was only satisfactory overall, despite good teaching. In the two Key Stage 2 lessons observed, the quality of learning ranged from very good to unsatisfactory, but was satisfactory overall. Where attitudes and behaviour were unsatisfactory or poor, a significant minority of pupils did not participate enthusiastically. They found it difficult to work together with, or relate to, their peers and adults, and did not take part in the activities confidently, refusing to demonstrate their movements to the class and, in some cases, laughing at pupils who volunteered to do so. Significantly these lessons took place later in the day when pupils were clearly tired.
155. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 ranged from very good to satisfactory and was good overall. In Key Stage 2 only two lessons were observed, one of which was very good and the other was unsatisfactory, thus providing insufficient evidence upon which to make a secure overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Where teaching

was good or very good, the teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge, used praise appropriately, had high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, gave very clear instructions and maintained a good pace throughout the lesson, changing activities frequently to maintain pupils' interest and enthusiasm. However, in a significant proportion of lessons, most of which were in the afternoons, the teachers had to work very hard and consistently to maintain appropriate levels of behaviour and this had a tendency to slow down the planned pace of the lessons. Where teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson, this was because the teacher's time management was unsatisfactory, so that, for example, pupils had barely five minutes of physical activity in a one-hour lesson, no warm-up or cool-down activities were organised and the teacher's behaviour-management strategies were ineffective.

156. Resources for the subject are broadly satisfactory, although the school is aware that a good deal of the large equipment is old and well worn, and is gradually replacing this one item at a time. Although the school is fortunate to have more than one hall, both are restricted in size. However, on-site facilities are good. The school provides a good range of sport-related extra-curricular activities throughout the year; Year 3 pupils attend a local swimming pool for one lesson per week for one term and there is a good range of after-school activities, including a 'Kabbadi' club. The school is developing very good links with the adjacent Southampton Football Club and shortly after the inspection the club was providing one week's coaching for the whole of Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator is new to the role but is very enthusiastic, has made significant changes to the quality of guidance for teachers and has been pro-active in working with the Friends of the School association to obtain a lottery grant for new basketball equipment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

157. Standards of attainment at end of both key stages are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. During their time at school, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, have made satisfactory progress overall.
158. It is evident from assemblies and from talking with pupils that they develop a good knowledge of groups of people who are of different faith traditions, or of no particular faith. Festivals and celebrations such as Eid-ul-Fitr and Christmas are recognised in assembly for the whole school. A small group of Year 2 pupils recalled and named Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Sikh as examples of religious groupings.
159. By the age of seven, pupils consider their own importance and that of the family. In Year 1 they also learn from Bible stories about the people Jesus met. They consider the feelings we have of sadness and joy at different times, and how Jesus would have felt sad when having a last supper with his friends. Year 2 pupils widen their knowledge of faiths as they learn about the Hindu celebration of Diwali, and extend their appreciation of religious symbolism in topics such as 'special places'.
160. Easter, and the events of Holy Week, continue as a focus for pupils in Key Stage 2. They also acquire new knowledge and understanding of the distinctive features of religious traditions, and of the central beliefs and values of individual religions. Year 3 pupils meet the concept of sacred books as they learn about the significance of the Qu'ran in the lives of Muslims. Older pupils learn of the key teachings of religious leaders such as Guru Nanak in Year 4, and Muhammad in Year 5. Pupils can identify examples of symbols and explain the significance and meaning they have for groups of people.

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161. The quality of teaching is good. Six lessons were observed, with one of these being in Key Stage 1. The intention of staff to include all pupils in the activities is evident in lessons, as it is in assemblies. Thus, on occasions, pupils of a particular faith tradition will share their knowledge with other pupils in class. In the more successful lessons, teachers maintained a good pace, and used methods and resources to get pupils fully involved. Where appropriate, some switched to a different short lesson or topic to avoid one lesson being too long. Good use is made of visits to places of worship, such as a Hindu temple, the Gurdwara, and St Mary's Church. Year 6 pupils also enjoyed the visit of the Buddhist nun. They had prepared their questions to ask her, and were very interested in what she had to say, as they deepened their knowledge of that faith.
 162. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and cultural development. The recently appointed manager supports teachers well. At present there are no procedures for the regular assessment of pupils' progress as they pass through the school. However, the school is currently developing methods of assessment for this purpose.