

INSPECTION REPORT

St Michael's CE (Controlled) Infant School

Aldershot

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116332

Headteacher: Miss Karen Nye

Reporting inspector: Dr Colin Lee
21854

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st June 2001

Inspection number: 198176

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Park Road Aldershot Hampshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Steve Scown
Date of previous inspection:	12 th July 1999

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21854	Dr Colin Lee	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed Special educational needs
8989	Mr Mike Romano	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils The school's partnership with parents
22397	Mr Stuart Fowler	Team inspector	English Design and technology History Music English as an additional language	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils Equal opportunities
27369	Mrs Carolyn Powell	Team inspector	Science Art and design Geography Religious education Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Michael's CE Infant School is large for an infant school, being about the same size as an average primary school. In Reception to Year 2 there are 268 pupils on roll, 135 boys and 133 girls who are taught in nine single-age classes, three for each year group. A decline in numbers, following the school's inspection in October 1997, has been reversed in the last two years. The school serves an area in which numbers of children of primary school age are declining and more than half the pupils live outside the catchment area. Pupils are from a very broad range of socio-economic backgrounds that are average overall. The percentage of pupils, who have English as an additional language, at 2.2 per cent, is slightly higher than in most schools and the main languages spoken by these pupils are Urdu and Punjabi. Thirty-three per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and this is above the national average. However, the percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is average, at 1.5 per cent. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, currently 8.2 per cent, is below average. Children start attending the school in the September before their fifth birthday. Children's attainment when they start school is assessed as average overall. The school has experienced a significant turnover of teaching staff during the last four years. Staffing is now stable, with just two changes in September 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Michael's CE Infant School has made an excellent improvement since its inspection in 1997 and, under the headteacher's excellent leadership, it is now a good Infant school. Pupils' standards are rising each year and are now matching the standards achieved nationally. The school has satisfactory strategies for promoting educational inclusion of all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those of above average ability make particularly good progress. All pupils have very good attitudes, which, together with rising academic standards, are the products of the school's excellent concern with all aspects of pupils' development. There is good teaching overall and very good management by key staff. The improvements in the school mean that it now provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher's excellent leadership is strengthened by the very good support of key staff.
- By the age of seven, pupils achieve well in aspects of English, science and information and communication technology.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are more able make particularly good progress.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes and good behaviour result from the excellent procedures for monitoring and improving their personal development.
- Academic progress is monitored and evaluated very thoroughly, leading to very effective target setting for each pupil.
- The standard of teaching is good overall.
- School and parents work closely together in a very good partnership.

What could be improved

- Planning for some less able pupils is not matched carefully enough to their needs.
- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage¹ needs revision to incorporate new national guidelines.
- Groups of pupils miss important parts of lessons in several subjects when withdrawn for additional work on literacy skills.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The inspection of October 1997 resulted in the school requiring special measures because of its very significant weaknesses. Pupils' unsatisfactory progress was caused by issues relating to the quality of teaching, the curriculum, provision for pupils with special educational needs, assessment and recording of pupils' work, aspects of school management, partnership with parents and a range of statutory and health and safety requirements that were not being met. Further inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectors took place in May and October 1998, and February and July 1999. These tracked and reported on how well the school was addressing the Key Issues from the 1997 inspection and, by July 1999, the improvement was sufficient to remove the school from special measures. The rate of improvement increased after the headteacher's appointment in September 1998, and the overall improvement since 1997 is judged excellent, whilst that since July 1999 is judged good. In addition to the original key issues, the school has achieved improvement in pupils' standards and progress in nearly all subjects. Additionally, there is now better provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the

¹ The Foundation Stage applies to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are of a higher quality. Much improved monitoring and evaluation of the school's all-round performance has created a reflective school with a good capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	D	D	B	C
Writing	C	C	C	C
Mathematics	E	E	C	C

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

In 2000, the standards achieved by seven-year-olds in National Curriculum test results in writing and mathematics reached the national average for the first time since testing began and the standard achieved in reading was above average. These results have shown a steady improvement since 1997, with only a slight drop in reading and mathematics in 1998 being against the trend of annual rises. Results of teachers' assessment in science showed standards to be average. The results generally matched those being achieved in similar schools². The rising trend in test results since 1997 is matched by teachers' assessment of science, which, in 2000, matched national averages and was above average when compared with similar schools. More able pupils perform well in the tests and percentages of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics, in 2000, were above both the national average and the average for similar schools. The overall trends show significant differences between the performance of boys and girls, with boys' results in reading and writing rising only slightly while girls have achieved significant improvement each year. Having identified this trend and implemented strategies to improve standards of writing, generally, and those of boys in particular, the school is starting to show success. The overall standards seen during the inspection show that, by the age of seven, pupils are now matching national averages in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The standards achieved by the more able pupils are well above average. Early indications are that pupils' performance in the recent 2001 National Curriculum tests is similar to that in 2000; a good achievement by a year group in which 29 per cent of pupils have special educational needs. This means that pupils will reach the challenging targets that have been set for them. In all other subjects, seven-year-olds are achieving standards that are in line with expectations. Particular strengths in pupils' work are their speaking and listening skills, the writing of reports of scientific investigations, and word-processing in information and communication technology. This is a picture of satisfactory progress being made by pupils overall. It maintains the progress that children make in Reception. Here, children start with average attainment for their age and, by the time they enter Year 1, they attain all the expected Early Learning Goals³ established for the Foundation Stage.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the school and the work that they do. They are very keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Pupils conduct themselves well in class and behave well at playtimes and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Very positive relationships exist between pupils and between pupils and staff, contributing to the very good overall personal development. Pupils show initiative and carry out responsibilities very conscientiously

² 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

³ The Early Learning Goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance matches national rates with authorised and unauthorised absence similar to most schools.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection, all the lessons seen were at least satisfactory; 50 per cent were good and a further 11 per cent very good or better. One lesson in the Foundation Stage was excellent. All teachers manage their classes well. They work well with support staff, providing detailed plans for these staff to enable them to achieve the teachers' objectives. At Key Stage 1, English is taught well and the basic skills of literacy and speaking and listening are applied and consolidated satisfactorily across the whole curriculum. The teaching of basic numeracy skills and mathematics, as a whole, is good. Teaching is generally matched appropriately to the needs of pupils of most abilities, with particularly good provision for more able pupils, those with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language. As a result, these groups achieve well and make good progress. Planning for less able pupils who do not have specific special educational needs does not match needs so well. Pupils achieve good progress in learning in many lessons and this is helped by their own levels of interest and concentration. They work hard to achieve the specific, individual targets that are set for them in literacy and numeracy.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum at Key Stage 1 is broad and balanced, but the new Foundation Stage curriculum is not being implemented fully and this is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good overall and is co-ordinated well. There is early identification of pupils with special needs, good liaison with parents, and regular review of pupils' progress towards the specific targets that are set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision that addresses pupils' individual needs well, with good ongoing support from teachers and classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with strong emphasis and very good provision for pupils' social development that encourages respect for others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school is a caring community, providing excellent support for pupils' personal development. It attends well to all aspects of pupils' welfare. Very thorough systems for monitoring all aspects of pupils' development ensure that their progress is constantly being checked.

The school works hard to develop links with parents and is involving them well in their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is supported very well by senior staff. Subject co-ordinators, many of whom are new to the role, carry out their management responsibilities enthusiastically.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well and provide strong support. Their constructive guidance and clear vision of the school's strengths and weaknesses make a very good impact on school development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good monitoring and evaluation of teaching and of pupils' standards enable the school to identify priorities, set itself targets and pursue effective courses of action for future improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory use of physical and human resources, and efficient, cautious management of finances.

The school has good accommodation on an attractive site. Staffing is satisfactory overall with a good number of support staff. Learning resources are satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value well, challenging its decisions, and securing the best value in the services and resources that it acquires.

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. • Their children's good progress. • The good behaviour. • The good standard of teaching. • The amount of homework. • The information received about children's progress. • How the school deals with their questions or problems. • The school's high expectations of its pupils. • The close working relationship with parents. • The good leadership and management. • How pupils are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors endorse all the positive views of parents. Concern about extra-curricular activities is partially upheld. Although it is unusual for there to be many extra-curricular activities in Infant schools, the school itself is anxious to develop this aspect of school life. However, as in all schools, organisation of such activities is dependent on teachers having time to volunteer to run them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's attainment is average overall, when they start at the school. Levels of attainment are assessed by a formal test at the beginning of the reception year. This 'baseline assessment' identifies children's strengths and the areas where they can improve. The children currently in Reception are exceeding expectations in the area of personal and social development. They achieve the expectations for their age in all other areas of learning, despite their learning activities not being based fully on the recommended experiences for the Foundation Stage. Children are, therefore, making satisfactory progress overall, during their time in the Foundation Stage, with those children who are more able making better progress than those of lower ability.
2. The satisfactory progress made by children in the Foundation Stage was also evident when the school was inspected in October 1997, although, at that time, children's attainment was above expectations, both when they started school at the age of four, and when they reached the age of five. The fact that children's attainment on entry is now at a lower level is due to a larger percentage of children from less advantageous backgrounds attending the school. At the time of the inspection in 1997, pupils were making unsatisfactory progress at Key Stage 1. This resulted in pupils attaining the standards expected of seven-year-olds in only science and physical education. The position is now much improved, due to the wide range of measures taken to eliminate the severe weaknesses in many aspects of the school's provision. Pupils now achieve standards at least in line with expectations and those with special educational needs, who constitute a third of the school, achieve particularly well.
3. The rising standards are evident both in the work done in lessons and in pupils' performance in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds. Results in these tests show a steady improvement since 1997 with only a slight drop in reading and mathematics in 1998 being against the trend of annual rises. In 2000, pupils' results in writing and mathematics tests reached the national averages for the first time since testing began and reading was above average. Results of teachers' assessment in science showed pupils' standards of attainment to be average by the age of seven. The results generally matched those being achieved in similar schools. The exception was science, which was above average when compared with similar schools. While standards overall were average, the school's good attention to the needs of its more able pupils is evident in the results that they achieved. When compared with all schools, and with similar schools, the percentages of pupils who reached the higher Level 3 in the tests and the assessments were above average in reading and mathematics and well above average in science.
4. Thorough analysis of pupils' performance in the tests in 2000 highlighted several areas that needed attention. First, boys and girls showed very different levels of performance. For the past few years boys have achieved only slight improvements in their reading and writing test results, whereas girls have made significant gains each year and have been the major contribution to the school's overall improvement. Second, a high percentage of pupils have been just managing to achieve the first stage of the expected level in the tests. The pupils predicted to be in line to achieve at this level were identified as a target group for 2001, with the aim of improving their performance. The measures taken by the school have included very specific target setting to ensure that pupils are constantly aiming to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Careful monitoring of progress towards achieving the targets, by teachers and by the pupils themselves, has successfully raised levels of achievement by boys in writing, and by those pupils who were originally predicted to achieve lower levels in the tests. The results in the recently completed 2001 National Curriculum tests, for which the national figures are not yet available, are similar to those in 2000, with two exceptions. There is improvement in the percentage of pupils who have achieved the expected level. Conversely, slightly fewer have achieved the higher Level 3, but this reflects the smaller number of more able pupils currently in Year 2. Overall, the results are a satisfactory achievement, as this is a year group in which there has been staff instability in two of

the three classes during the year. The targets set for 2001 test results, which were challenging but achievable, have been met.

5. The standards now being achieved by seven-year-olds are very consistent. Reading, writing, mathematics and science are all matching national averages. Pupils show particular strengths and weaknesses. Their speaking and listening skills, for example, are above average and this is seen in lessons across the curriculum. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to think about their answers to questions and to explain themselves clearly and fully. In lessons and in conversation, pupils speak confidently and make good oral contributions to lessons. Pupils' library skills are very good and their knowledge of library classification, together with their ability to retrieve information quickly and accurately, are well above the levels expected of seven-year-olds. In science, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the principles of investigation is above average. They record results of investigations well, using their mathematical and writing skills appropriately for this recording. In other aspects of the subject, their knowledge of materials and their properties is not so well developed.
6. Standards in all other subjects are in line with expectations and, where there are strengths, they often reflect the progress made in developing the curriculum for the subject, since the inspection in 1997, or particular features of teachers' expertise. The good quality of pupils' word-processing is above expectations and reflects the confidence with which teachers approach this aspect of work in information and communication technology. By contrast, achievement in control, modelling and graphics work is not so high, again reflecting weaknesses in teachers' expertise and under-developed curriculum planning. Teachers' good use of the local environment in geography has the result of raising pupils' knowledge above expectations.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good; their use of initiative in lessons and at home is very good. Attendance in the school is satisfactory. Relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are also very good. Most parents are pleased with their children's behaviour, and agree that the school helps children to become mature and responsible.
8. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have very positive attitudes to their learning and they enjoy school. The youngest children are keen and enthusiastic in their learning; for example, in a Reception information and communication technology lesson, on using the mouse, children were very well behaved, concentrated and responded well. Children listen respectfully to their teachers and work hard. They share willingly with one another and, when given responsibility, show that they can work independently of adults. However, opportunities for developing independence are infrequent, for example, there are insufficient opportunities for children to organise resources for themselves. Pupils in Year 1 showed the very good relationship that they have with their teacher, during a literacy lesson on spelling strategies, when there was a controlled discussion by pupils in their groups, and between groups, to check whether the answer was right. In a Year 2 class, in a lesson on speaking and listening, where pupils discussed their relationships and talked about concerns, such as bullying, the pupils worked well in pairs to discuss the topic. They showed great responsibility in being able to discuss their feelings, and yet could call on the teacher when they wanted advice. All of these interactions are examples of the way in which pupils are encouraged to use their initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. This is also reflected in the homework they do; pupils take homework on projects such as the Egyptians or the local geography and research the work conscientiously.
9. Pupils know right from wrong, and understand that there are rules of behaviour and that they should keep to them. Very few instances of inappropriate behaviour were seen. The school's behaviour policy is consistently applied, and pupils get rewarded in class and assembly for good behaviour, attitudes or work. They respond very well to this. They behave well on their various visits, for example to Old Portsmouth, and to the Downland Museum. They respond eagerly to questions about these visits, and parents report that pupils exhibit very good relationships with all the staff that accompany them. All pupils show the same attitudes and behave well at playtimes

and lunchtime, and they behave particularly well in assemblies. For instance, they were enthralled by the army chaplain who brought a dummy in to an assembly to talk about 'Happiness', This assembly had a brief period of reflection within it, helping pupils to think about what made them happy.

10. The school's attendance figures are broadly in line with the national average, as is unauthorised absence. These constitute satisfactory attendance, with pupils usually arriving at school and lessons on time. Some families taking their children on holiday in term-time affect the statistics, to some extent, but this, at the moment, does not adversely affect pupils' learning. There was one temporary exclusion last year, and the reasons for this are clear, with the school having no choice. The school rarely excludes, unless faced with no other alternative.
11. Since the inspection in 1997, all areas have improved. Pupils' attitudes are now very good; their behaviour is good, and their personal development and relationships are very good. Attendance has also shown an improvement. The very positive attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils have a significant impact on the life of the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching ranges from excellent to satisfactory. Eleven per cent of the lessons seen were very good, or better, and this includes an excellent music lesson in a reception class. A further 50 per cent of lessons were good and 39 per cent were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. This overall picture is a significant improvement compared with the inspection in 1997, although there have been very many staff changes in that time. Only now, is staffing approaching a stability that has been lacking during the past four years
13. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and enables them to make steady progress during their time in Reception. The teaching in Reception has many good qualities, but, while it has strengths, what is taught is not always matched carefully enough to individual children's needs. The basis for the planning is the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1, rather than the Early Learning Goals of the newly-established Foundation Stage. This places some children in learning situations for which they are not yet ready. Support staff and volunteers are used very well in Reception. They are briefed thoroughly on each activity's purpose and the good quality of their interaction with the children has a positive impact on the children's learning. All teachers manage their classes well, relationships are good, and the children benefit from the well-established routines.
14. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good overall. It is particularly good in Year 2, where 96 per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better. The quality of this teaching confirms parents' views that the job-share arrangements in two of the three Year 2 classes are working well. Consistently good teaching occurs in English, mathematics, and design and technology. This contributes well to the progress that pupils make in their learning in these subjects.
15. All teachers create purposeful working atmospheres in classrooms. Pupils respond very well to teachers and other adults and work conscientiously and co-operatively. This is particularly evident when pupils in Years 1 and 2 are expected to work without direct supervision. Pupils respond well to the independence that they have at these times. They maintain good levels of interest in their work and show commendable maturity in their attitudes. They settle to work quickly, work at a good pace and achieve good productivity. The relationships between teachers and other adults in the classroom with pupils are very good and teachers make very good use of support staff to provide additional instruction and guidance for pupils. Support staff are thoroughly briefed and the quality of their guidance to pupils is good. All teachers provide thorough lesson plans for school support staff, and for visiting specialists who work with pupils for whom English is an additional language. This planning details what pupils are to learn, how activities are to be organised, and the sorts of questions, strategies and observations that will help staff to guide and instruct pupils. These staff and volunteers have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and to the progress that they make in lessons.

16. In the best teaching in the school, lessons are carefully prepared and resources are used very well to aid pupils' learning. Teachers question their pupils in a purposeful manner to consolidate their understanding and extend their learning. There is a brisk pace to the very good lessons and work is matched carefully to pupils' individual needs and abilities. All these characteristics were evident in the excellent teaching of a music lesson in Reception. The teacher's enthusiasm motivated children well, tasks flowed briskly from one to the next enabling children to experience success and enjoyment from their singing, listening, drawing and performing activities. They responded very well to the demands made of them. All were challenged sufficiently by their work and made good progress in their learning.
17. The teaching of basic literacy skills is good within English lessons. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy Strategy very effectively, by providing a good range of activities that are generally matched well to the needs of groups of pupils of different abilities, although work set for less able pupils is sometimes difficult for them to complete if working without support. Teachers successfully use lessons in subjects other than English to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Reading and writing skills are applied and developed satisfactorily overall in other subjects and there are good opportunities in science for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills.
18. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented well in many respects. While much of the teaching is good, there is a tendency for groups of less able pupils to be given the same work as pupils of average ability. This work is often too demanding, especially when insufficient practical equipment is provided for pupils to use. They become very reliant on too much help from support staff in trying to record and complete their work. This situation is in marked contrast with the very good strategy employed by teachers in whole-class work when they ask different questions and set different calculations for each ability group. Good opportunities are created for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. These can vary from measurement in design and technology, to the use of numbers up to 999, during lessons in library skills.
19. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are met well through thorough planning and good teaching. Good provision is made for these pupils during the literacy and numeracy lessons and during the additional work that they do outside the classroom with either support staff or the special educational needs co-ordinator. Pupils are regularly assessed against their learning targets and these assessments are used very effectively to set new targets and plan future work. Support staff interact well with pupils with special educational needs and give good levels of guidance that help them make good progress. Teachers manage those pupils who have behavioural targets well and use support assistants effectively to monitor their progress against their behavioural targets. Pupils with English as an additional language receive good support, both from teachers and support staff within lessons, and from the bi-language support service. Pupils are making very good progress in the development of their language skills and this enables good progress to be achieved in other aspects of their work.
20. Teachers' provision for more able pupils is good and reflects the high expectations that teachers have of them. The work for these pupils is appropriately challenging and they have a very well developed ability to work independently of adults. This is very evident in information and communication technology where much of the work on computers occurs outside classrooms.
21. All pupils have very precise literacy and numeracy targets that are the product of teachers' good use of assessment. This combines careful scrutiny of pupils' work by the class teacher and, on other occasions, by staff in year groups, analyses of pupils' performance in regular tests, and discussions with pupils about what they need to work towards improving. Targets are pasted to the front cover of pupils' books and are referred to constantly during lessons. Such prominence and references compensate for some of the variability in marking. For example, pupils' learning in mathematics is assisted well by the high quality of teachers' marking. This is detailed and provides pupils not only with confirmation of good features of their work but also indicates what should be worked on for further improvement. There is far more variation between teachers in the marking of other subjects. In English, for example, the provision of written guidance on what pupils should do to improve is very inconsistent. However, as a consequence of the high profile placed on pupil's targets, they have a very good knowledge of their own learning.

22. Teachers make good use of homework in which all pupils practice the basic skills of literacy and numeracy that consolidates their learning in lessons well. Additionally, pupils are set occasional 'finding out' activities related to topics in other subjects.

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

23. The school's curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, and personal, social and health education. The provision for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, although there is a need to update the scheme of work to include a greater emphasis on spirituality.
24. At the time of the inspection in 1997, the breadth and balance of the curriculum were unsatisfactory. The National Curriculum requirements were not met in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, geography, history, information technology and music. Since that time, the school has appointed a curriculum manager and developed a long-term overview of curriculum policy. The school has refined and developed its long-, medium- and short-term planning. A number of policies and schemes of work have been updated to meet the latest requirements of the National Curriculum, although some of these, such as those in history and music, are still at the draft stage. Curriculum co-ordinators have received good support from the local education authority in developing curriculum policies and schemes of work. Although curriculum policies take account of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, these pupils are regularly withdrawn from lessons, such as design and technology, for support in basic skills. When this occurs, these pupils are denied full and equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and this restricts their progress.
25. The good implementation and high priority given to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are making a strong impact on pupils' learning, and their attainment has risen consistently in these areas of learning. Skills are reinforced on a regular basis and are taught in a well-planned and structured way. Teachers plan collaboratively across year groups and this helps to develop a consistent approach to curriculum delivery. The thorough approach to monitoring ensures that teaching and learning are effective and are appropriate to the needs of the pupils.
26. The school has developed good links with the community. Children attend St. Michael's Parish Church to take part in special services and receive weekly visits from their clerical team. The local community police officer is a regular visitor to the school and strong links have been established with the alliance of pre-school providers, the local junior school, as well as with the Henry Tynedale School for Special Education. Pupils from the school participate in the annual Aldershot Arts Festival and raise money for local and national charities.
27. The school has recognised the importance of their pupils' personal, social and health education by appointing a co-ordinator for this area of learning. She has developed a comprehensive scheme of work based on a series of topics, such as growing and changing, and the importance of caring both for ourselves and for others. Regular 'circle time'⁴ sessions contribute to this area of learning, which is making a significant contribution to the good attitudes and relationships that are a strength of the school.

Pupils' personal development

28. Since the inspection in 1997, there have been considerable changes in the school's curricular provision. At the time of the inspection in 1997, this aspect was reported as satisfactory. In the light of the school's improvement to the quality of the curriculum, it is now judged to be good.
29. There is good provision overall for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils. Within this positive picture, the school ensures that there are good opportunities for pupils to make progress in their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

⁴ 'Circle time' is an activity where pupils are able to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

30. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Religious education lessons, and acts of collective worship, offer opportunities for meaningful reflection and many involve stories containing moral issues. Music is played quietly as pupils arrive in the hall and is used to create a spiritual atmosphere. A cross on a table serves as a spiritual focus in the assembly and as a reminder throughout the day. Moments of spirituality occur incidentally, but are not sufficiently emphasised in lessons at the present time. In personal, social and health education, and religious education, pupils are encouraged to reflect on the values and beliefs of themselves and others. Attractive indoor and outdoor features, together with the arrangements of flowers and displays in the corridors, contribute to the spiritual ethos of the school.
31. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Rules concerning behaviour are clearly displayed in classrooms. The school is very clear about the values it promotes and the high expectations it has of its pupils' moral development. In classes, pupils strive to achieve various awards, which are recorded on classroom behaviour charts. The school fosters a very caring attitude, particularly for those with difficulties, and works hard to raise the self-esteem of all pupils.
32. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. There is good emphasis placed on the school as a community. The main feature of the social aspect of the school is its caring ethos and the very good relationships throughout. There is also very good emphasis placed on sharing, especially in the playground, where rotas encourage pupils to share equipment and play with an awareness of others. In lessons, there are numerous planned opportunities for pupils to work together.
33. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. Visits are made to Christian places of worship, and all pupils study Judaism as a world religion. However, the school does not actively encourage its pupils to appreciate the cultural diversity of the world around them. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to appreciate music from different times and cultures. This represents insufficient progress since the inspection in 1997 in this aspect of cultural development. Local museums and parks are used to support work in history and geography and visits and visitors enhance the cultural provision. These include the local clergy and the chaplain from the nearby army barracks who take a leading role in the daily assemblies.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' health and welfare. Parents responding to the questionnaire overwhelmingly said that their child liked school. Teachers know the pupils well and set very good examples of what is expected in order to make the school a community in which everyone cares for everyone else.
35. The school has a very effective policy for child protection, and follows the guidelines of the local area child protection committee. The headteacher, who, as the named person, has received appropriate training, has very good contacts with the relevant outside agencies. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, understand the procedures that they should follow if they have concerns, and they are all reminded of these at the first staff meeting of the year. The school has an effective Health and Safety policy, and the headteacher is, again, the designated person. Most of the ancillary staff have attended a one-day first-aid course, and the finance officer is a fully qualified first-aider. Suitable systems are in place to deal with accidents, fire, first aid, emergency evacuation and the administration of medicines. There is a well-stocked medical room, which is used appropriately. Audits for safety and risk assessments are carried out by the headteacher and the health and safety governor. The regulations relating to the control of hazardous substances are met, including the keeping of chemicals in a locked store. Pupils are reminded about safety in all aspects of their school life, in science, design and technology, and art and design lessons, and particularly through the good provision for their personal, social and health education. Each class has one lesson per week in personal, social and health education. There is a strong focus on safety and the needs of the individual and all aspects of pupils' personal education is discussed in a sensitive and caring way. This includes bullying, friendship, caring, and appropriate aspects of sex education and health education. The school has recently run a 'healthy heart' week, with the assistance of Army physical education instructors. The

behaviour support team, the physiotherapist, the school nurse, and other specialists, visit regularly to give specialist support on all aspects, where their services are necessary. The special educational needs teacher and support staff give good support to those pupils with whom they work.

36. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The clear behaviour policy is known to all, including parents, and is effectively applied by all staff. Rewards are a major influence in pupils' development, with well-structured systems for pupils to receive stickers and certificates, and with the headteacher's awards and letters home to parents playing a key part. This raises pupils' self esteem and is very much a part of the school's system for behaviour management. Rewards culminate in a special award given by the headteacher at the weekly celebration assembly for good work, behaviour or attitude. However, there are rare occasions when sanctions are necessary. The early stages of the sanctions system include verbal warnings, removal from class and sending to the headteacher. At this stage, parents will be informed, and beyond that there are several steps before exclusion takes place as a last resort. There are a number of pupils with special educational needs who have behavioural difficulties. These pupils have specific targets to aim towards and these work well. In a Year 1 science lesson, for instance, such pupils were observed working very conscientiously, with others, towards the team objective. Rewards cards with stars given on completion of a good session provide a strong motivation for pupils and these are discussed with parents at the end of the day. Exclusion procedures meet local education authority guidelines.
37. Procedures for monitoring attendance are also very good. The headteacher, who knows the families well, monitors the registers daily, with the assistance of the class teacher and the secretary. Any unusual factors, or variations in attendance, are noticed quickly and appropriate action is taken, including contacting parents, writing to them, or involving the education welfare officer in home visits. Parents know that they should notify the school of any absence, and all but a small minority do this. Promotion of good attendance is only satisfactory. The school only promotes good attendance through the newsletter and does not give an award termly or annually for the pupil or class with the best attendance. Registration procedures meet statutory requirements.
38. The reports that parents receive annually about their children's progress are very good and contain a section on pupils' personal, social and educational development. Parents also have the opportunity to discuss the personal aspects of their child's school life at the termly parents' meeting. If they or the school have concerns, an earlier meeting is arranged. Staff also have the chance to discuss any day-to-day problems or concerns with parents at the beginning and end of the day.
39. The standard of care in the school represents an improvement on the 1997 report when the policy for pupils' personal development was out of date, there was no policy for sex education, no procedure for monitoring personal development, and the monitoring of attendance did not meet statutory requirements. Safety requirements were not met on chemical storage. Some aspects of health and safety management did not meet statutory requirements and the policy was in draft. There have been improvements in all these areas. This represents a good improvement in the care and protection for pupils.

Assessment

40. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is very good and this is a significant improvement since the inspection in 1997, when the quality of assessment was judged to be poor. The school has produced comprehensive guidelines for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and these are followed consistently by all teachers. There are very effective procedures for assessment in the core subjects, particularly in English, where regular monitoring, sampling and assessment of the level of work takes place. Teachers make good use of pupils' tracking sheets, recording thoroughly pupils' achievements and all pupils are aware of, and encouraged to reflect upon, their individual targets in reading and writing. Pupils' portfolios, containing examples of work in English, mathematics and science, give an accurate guide to pupils' progress. All subject co-ordinators have developed, or are developing, assessment procedures within their curriculum

areas and these are used to inform future planning and to set individual targets for pupils. Assessment information, including detailed analyses of National Curriculum test results, is reported to governors on a regular basis to help them in monitoring school effectiveness and improvement. Although assessment is a strength of the school, daily marking of pupils' work does not often indicate to them how they can achieve further progress.

41. At the time of the inspection in 1997, the assessment of pupils with special educational needs was judged to be unsatisfactory. The assessment and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs, and of those with English as an additional language, are now very good. The quality of record keeping is thorough and these pupils receive good support from classroom assistants and from outside agencies such as the bilingual learners support service.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The school's partnership with parents makes a very good contribution to the education their children receive. An overwhelming majority of those responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, felt that the school was comfortable answering questions or problems, that it was well managed and led, and that it worked closely with parents. There were similarly high levels of agreement about nearly all the other aspects of school life covered by the questionnaire. The inspection team endorses all the positive views that parents have about the school and judges that it has very good links with parents. A good number, of parents, on average three per class, help in the school with reading, the care of resources, and outside visits. Their support is very welcome. They organise fundraising and social events, through the parent-teacher association, and the teachers are very involved in this. The association raises considerable sums for the school including, recently, £3,500 from the Summer Fayre, and parents attend these events in good numbers. These funds have been used for playground markings and equipment, seats, and a play area for Reception. A major target for future fundraising will be the planned parents' meeting room. A majority of parents have signed the home-school agreement. Most parents help their children at home with their homework, which is recorded in their reading diary, and is used as a communication between school and home. Parents are very supportive of the mathematics homework scheme that is used in all classes.
43. The information provided by the school is very good. It consists of a half-termly newsletter, detailing all school events, together with a half-termly letter from the teacher, giving broad details of curriculum the curriculum. However, there is a minimum of specific curriculum information for parents of children in the Foundation Stage, although they do receive a booklet entitled 'How to help your children at home'.
44. The parents of pupils with special educational needs receive good information about their progress, and are invited to the half-termly individual education plan review meetings. Pupils and their parents are given targets at the termly parents' evenings, which are reviewed at the next termly meeting or before this if there are concerns or problems. The annual reports are very good, with targets for improvement, predicted grades for English, mathematics and science, and personal targets for improvement in all areas, both academic, personal and social. Parents are also invited to workshops in the school. For example, a mathematics workshop, giving a trial numeracy lesson for Years 1 and 2, attracted 35 parents. Parents get many opportunities to come in to school, for coffee mornings, and special assemblies, such as on Mothers' Day, or at Christmas, and Easter when events often involve music or drama productions. Information is displayed on a parents' notice board, and children are given an induction pack and all have a home visit before they start school. Pupils leaving the school are also catered for well. Teachers from the Junior school come in to St. Michael's to discuss pupils' individual needs.
45. The school has good links with the local pre-school playgroup, and St. Michael's Church. It is very much a part of a 'village' community. The school's annual report to parents from the governors is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. Overall, the school's links with

parents make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning, through their contribution at school and at home, and through the school's efforts to involve them.

46. Parents responding to the questionnaire did not agree that the school provided a range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team agreed with this concern, as there is only a football club available as an extra-curricular activity. However, as in all schools, organisation of such activities is dependent on teachers having time to volunteer to run them.
47. Since the last report, there has been a dramatic improvement in the quality of pupils' annual reports, homework, information about pupils' progress, and in consultations with parents whose children have special educational needs.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. At the time of the inspection in 1997, an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher were providing effective but very short-term leadership and management. However, all aspects of the school's permanent management were judged to have significant weaknesses. These included lack of clarity in the senior management team's role, unsatisfactory subject co-ordination, insufficient monitoring of teaching, curriculum and pupils' standards and unsatisfactory school development and financial planning. The very good progress made in addressing these issues has contributed to the excellent all-round school improvement that has occurred since that inspection. The driving force behind this improvement is the headteacher who, with good support from the governing body, has been instrumental in developing and implementing the wide-range of policies and practices that have raised the quality of education for the pupils in its care very significantly.
49. The headteacher provides excellent leadership of the school. With a resolute determination, combined with excellent personnel management skills, she translates the clarity of her priorities into action. In this she is supported very well by the senior management team and this team's role has been vital during an extended period of high turnover of staff to ensure continuity in practice. The particular expertise of individual team members is used very effectively. The deputy headteacher provides exemplary models of planning, organisation and subject co-ordination that enable common practices to be established. Any new staff are, thus, provided with whole-school systems that work well, minimise interruption to pupils' progress, and ensure quick integration of staff into the school's way of working. The curriculum manager's interest and expertise in data analysis provides insight into aspects of pupils' learning or curriculum development that need attention. This has been crucial during times when there has been instability in the co-ordination of English, mathematics and science. Her detailed analysis of performance in National Curriculum tests has established priorities that, after implementation by class teachers, have contributed significantly to the rising standards.
50. The senior management team also plays an important role as part of the clear progression in the decision making that formulates the school's strategic plan. This planning has, of necessity, had to address many immediate, short term priorities in the school's educational direction. With issues being addressed successfully, the headteacher is now able to lead the team towards a longer-term vision of how the school can develop. This encompasses a development of the school grounds together with plans to provide pre-school education.
51. Many teaching staff are in the first year of having responsibility for subject co-ordination or are holding the responsibility only temporarily. However, all co-ordinators approach their roles enthusiastically and have ensured that subject policies have been revised to take account of new curriculum requirements. The priority for these staff has been to audit present provision in their subjects by monitoring existing planning and resources. Some have started to monitor the standards of pupils' work but need more guidance on how to do this effectively. As part of the school's strategic planning, each co-ordinator produces an action plan for the year that states the priorities for the subject. These plans are well formulated, providing details of the specific tasks to be completed, both for the achievement of the priorities and the ongoing maintenance tasks.

However, while consideration is given to how progress is to be evaluated, there is insufficient attention given to the specific indicators of success that are to be aimed for.

52. The management for the provision of special educational needs good. The school has a comprehensive special needs policy that is clear and accessible to parents, and all procedures follow the Code of Practice. The co-ordinator, although new, has a good overview of the specific needs of pupils on the special needs register, and keeps detailed records of all of them. She liaises frequently with parents and the class teachers. The register is kept up to date, and all paperwork is well ordered. The targets set for pupils in the individual plans are monitored well to give a clear picture of the pupils' progress. A very good feature of the school's provision is the early identification of any difficulties experienced by pupils. This is often initiated through the good liaison with nurseries and pre-school playgroups. There is a similarly good partnership with external support agencies. The co-ordinator meets with the governor responsible for special educational needs, and provides regular, very thorough reports to the governing body on the success of the school's special needs provision.
53. The school's aims and values are integrated well in all its work and, following the example set by the headteacher, all staff show high levels of concern for pupils' welfare. There is, thus, a very positive ethos that reflects the school's commitment to creating a caring environment for all pupils in which they are helped to achieve improving standards in their academic and personal development.
54. The curriculum policies contain statements of entitlement that recognise the importance of equal entitlement for all pupils. In practice, the school ensures that specific groups of pupils, such as the more able, those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are catered for well, through staff support and experiences that meet their particular needs. However, withdrawing groups of pupils from classrooms for specific support during the afternoons, means that these pupils are missing parts of the curriculum. This withdrawal occurs, most frequently, in order to provide pupils with additional help with their literacy skills. Insufficient consideration has been given to the possibility of support staff working within the classroom to provide this help when pupils are, for example, doing reading or writing activities in lessons such as science, history or religious education. The school's equal opportunities policy also applies to adult employment issues.
55. The school has very good systems for monitoring and evaluating its own performance. This is as a result of the headteacher's successful introduction of a range of procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work. Much of the responsibility for this has fallen to the senior management team as a consequence of the newness to the school of most other teachers. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching very thoroughly and constructively, resulting in refinements of teachers' skills that, in turn, have had a good impact on standards of pupils' work. The governing body receive full reports on the results of observations of teachers. These reports inform the appointments policy well and have, over time, resulted in recruitment and retention of teachers who now achieve a consistently good quality in their teaching. Standards of pupils' work are monitored very effectively through thorough analysis of National Curriculum assessment test papers each year. This analysis highlights strengths, weaknesses and trends and, when the data indicates areas for concern, such as the slow improvement in writing standards amongst boys, the school is quick to act to secure improvement. Whole-school discussions, input from external advisors, and changes to the curriculum to provide a stronger focus on skills and opportunities for writing, have had a good impact and are raising the attainment of boys. This prompt response is indicative of the shared commitment to improvement that the headteacher has developed and which now permeates the school's work. Performance monitoring and evaluation is thus a very practical tool that is used well to ensure that teaching and learning are tailored to pupils' needs.
56. A consistent source of monitoring, evaluation and support that has been valued by senior management, subject co-ordinators, and the governing body alike, is the input from the local education authority's attached inspector and his colleagues. This high quality support has been a significant feature of the school's development.

The Governing Body

57. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. It is led very well by a chairperson with a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's overall management is strengthened by the very good working relationship that has quickly developed between the headteacher and the governing body. The governing body provides good support for the work of the school and individual members visit the school to assist in a variety of ways. Through their visits and liaison with co-ordinators, governors are very familiar with the school's working methods. There is constructive monitoring of the school's developments by the governing body through visits and the reports received from teaching staff. The headteacher consults widely about proposed improvements, seeking the contributions of all staff and governors and developments proceed with the commitment of all concerned. As a result, the school strategic plan provides a good framework for school improvement and combines review of what has been achieved in the previous year with appropriate detail of prioritised targets for the current year. The financial and resource implications, including the demands on personnel, are identified and detailed costings and measures of success are included. The governing body has carefully monitored the action plan that followed the inspection in 1997, and parents have been regularly informed of progress with that action plan, and the results of subsequent inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectors.
58. The governing body's finance committee has a clearly-defined role. Governors are meeting their responsibilities in relation to budget setting fully and expenditure is monitored carefully. The governing body evaluates the cost-effectiveness of major spending decisions thoughtfully, using the reports from the headteacher and financial administrator and, if thought necessary, by seeking the advice of local authority finance officers. Governors compare the school's results with national averages and with those of similar schools. A desire for high standards and improvement is central. These instruments enable the governing body to have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

59. The school has sufficient qualified teachers, who all have adequate job descriptions. The school has experienced a range of staffing problems that only now are near resolution. Subject expertise is improving and the mix of teachers has improved in terms of subject knowledge over the past year. There is a temporary mathematics co-ordinator, and two newly-qualified teachers in the school. All teachers, except for three, are on permanent contracts. The school spends less than average on teachers but spends more than average on classroom assistants, which enables all classes to have support in the morning session. This deployment, coupled with the training that support staff have received is having a good impact on the quality of pupils' learning and contributing to rising standards. Staff development has proceeded in line with the school's strategic plan, with expenditure being limited directly to its priorities. The school also provides good support for newly qualified teachers.
60. The accommodation is good overall. It is very well maintained and the staff provide interesting and stimulating displays to enhance the learning environment. There are an adequate number of classrooms, with a medical room, a hall and a specialist music and drama room. The school hall is adequate, and used also as a dining hall. The grounds are of reasonable size with good playground facilities and a wooded environment. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage has insufficient space for outside play. The current area is small and cramped and the school has given priority within its strategic plan to enlarge this. The library is used well and is stocked with an appropriate variety of books.
61. Resources are satisfactory overall with the exception of music, where there is a shortage of tuned instruments. In religious education and science, the books in the library are generally good. However, the supply of books and artefacts to enable pupils to study and thereby gain an insight into other cultures is unsatisfactory. There is, currently, a shortage of computers, with one

available for every 23 pupils, but there are firm plans for improving the supply during the next school year.

62. Overall, compared to the inspection in 1997, considerable progress has been made. Staffing is more stable, although the leadership of subjects, particularly mathematics, has to be resolved. Personal, social and health education has been developed well and will now be incorporated into a Citizenship programme from September. Training provision for all teachers has progressed in line with priorities. Induction of new staff is now very effective for new teachers, who are all aware of health and safety and child protection procedures. The school has made very good improvement in staffing and learning resources, and satisfactory progress in improving the accommodation, all of which now have a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning.

The strategic use of resources and principles of best value

63. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources, particularly the staff. Support staff are used well to enhance pupils' learning, and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed in a calm and supportive way. The priorities of the school's strategic plan for the past year have been met, but this has resulted in an amount of £89,000 being carried over, which is too high. The school has been very cautious in financial planning, mindful of the need for contingency planning at a time when the number of pupils was falling. The use of two temporary teachers in Year 2 has successfully overcome recruitment problems and ensured that the provision is satisfactory. The last report judged systems for financial control to be poor; this is not now the case. Financial control is now good, although the school funds have not been audited since the time of the inspection in 1997. The use of specific grants is satisfactorily monitored and controlled under the stewardship of the finance committee and the school seeks to achieve the best value in all its purchases. This represents a good improvement on the situation at the time of the inspection in 1997.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to improve the standards of work and the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- θ Ensure that the learning opportunities planned for less able pupils are matched to their needs. *(Paragraphs 17, 18, 98, 107, 114, 134)*
 - θ Review and revise the organisation of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage to incorporate the national guidelines. *(Paragraphs 1, 13, 70-72)*
 - θ Review the present arrangements for withdrawal of groups of pupils from class lessons, for additional literacy support, with the objective of improving these pupils' access to the full curriculum. *(Paragraphs 24, 54, 115, 119, 122)*

Other issues which should be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:

- Extending the provision for pupils' multi-cultural education.
(Paragraphs 33, 78)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	9	50	39	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	268
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	90

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.4

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	29	36	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	26	25
	Girls	30	32	33
	Total	54	58	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (79)	89 (85)	89 (75)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	28	28
	Girls	30	35	33
	Total	55	63	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (77)	97 (83)	94 (83)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	173
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	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 – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.3
Average class size	29.8

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	253

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	506,461
Total expenditure	485,595
Expenditure per pupil	1,819
Balance brought forward from previous year	68,771
Balance carried forward to next year	89,637

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	260
Number of questionnaires returned	85
Percentage of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	41	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	52	2	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	61	4	0	0
The teaching is good.	49	49	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	45	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	35	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	44	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	52	45	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	35	0	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	49	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	22	35	8	20

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

65. Since the inspection in 1997, there has been a change in education for the youngest children, through the introduction of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
66. There has been a variety of improvements for the children in Reception since the inspection in 1997. However, the teaching is still focusing on the National Curriculum and not on the required curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. There have been many changes in teaching and support staff throughout the reception classes, over the last four years, but a period of stability has now been reached. Creative activities are still too teacher directed, limiting opportunities for children to use their imagination, and children's cultural development has received insufficient attention.
67. Children are admitted to Reception in the year of their fifth birthday. Home visits and visits to school, followed by a gradual introduction at the beginning of the school year, ensure a good start is made. The children in Reception are based in three classrooms, in an open plan base. They transfer from a number of pre-school groups within the locality.
68. Children enter Reception at a level of attainment that is in line with that expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their physical and creative development. In personal, social, and emotional development, their progress is good and they achieve above the expectations for their age.
69. Children who have special educational needs or have English as an additional language receive good support during their time in Reception and make good progress. Most parents bring their children to school on time and are confident that their children are happy and cared for well.
70. There is no early years' policy, or Foundation Stage curriculum, to guide the planning for these children and this is unsatisfactory. Although areas of learning are identified in the planning, the subject co-ordinators provide the sequence of work for these children. This results in the curriculum being inappropriate and in many cases, such as science for example, the lessons are repeated in Year 1, with little difference. The children in Reception are not receiving the breadth of opportunities that extend and form the foundation for their future learning. Aspects of the curriculum are either over-directed by the teacher, or taught at a level that is too difficult for some children. Children's experiences are restricted by subject-based lessons, and the literacy and numeracy lessons taught on a daily basis. Although this works for more able children, many are not ready for such formal experiences. This means that some children do not make sufficient progress because the work is too hard for them.
71. The assessment of these children is thorough, and procedures are good, but do not reflect the Foundation Stage curriculum. Children's assessment is not linked to the sequence of levels within the Early Learning Goals, known as 'stepping stones', in order to use them to record children's progress and provide an appropriate range of activities. At the beginning of the year, children are given a test to measure their strengths, and areas to improve, in the form of a 'baseline assessment'. The test is repeated at the end of the Reception year to see how much progress the children have made. The results of these tests are used effectively to identify individual needs of children and set individual targets for improvement.
72. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in each area of learning. However, teachers are not totally conversant with this newly-established stage in children's learning. This is evident where planned work focuses on the National Curriculum alone. In the successful lessons, the work is provided at the right level and opportunities are provided for exploration, imagination and enquiry in activities, and children make good progress. Teachers generally ask appropriate questions

which enable the children to develop ideas and increase their understanding. In these lessons, teachers give clear explanations of an activity, for instance, in physical education, music and religious education lessons, where children receive clear instructions and make good progress. In lessons where teachers have good expectations of their children and work with a good pace, teaching is good and some times excellent. Where there is over-direction of group activities, teachers do not provide the necessary breadth of experiences so valuable to this stage of children's learning. All teachers have good relationships and manage children well. As a result, the children's behaviour is very good.

73. Support staff provide a good level of help to teachers throughout the reception classes. They complement the teachers in their approach. In lessons, support staff are involved in organised group activities. They make a good contribution to children's learning, but have few opportunities to be involved in activities such as in role-play or telling stories in the library areas. Planned activities often involve too much direction. For instance, when children painted pictures of specific vehicles in an art lesson, there was over-emphasis on children achieving accuracy rather than being allowed to respond in their own way. Support staff contribute significantly to the good progress made by the children who have a special educational needs, or who speak English as an additional language.
74. The fenced area for outdoor activities is very small although there are plans to extend this in the near future. There is sufficient room for a small number of children at a time to ride bikes and use wheeled toys, on a rota basis. The Reception classrooms are bright and attractive, but the area allocated to 'messy' play is small and has to be shared between three classes. This limitation inevitably has a negative impact on the organisation and provision for creative development by restricting children's opportunities.
75. The co-ordinator has worked hard to establish the present improvements. The frequent changes of staff have made it difficult to establish training programmes but now a period of stability has been reached. This will enable the co-ordinator to put into action the many good ideas that she has for further development of the Foundation Stage provision.

Personal, social and emotional development

76. Most children have well developed skills in personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress, so that, by time they leave Reception, many children achieve the Early Learning Goals, and beyond. However, opportunities to develop a good level of independence in the selection of resources are not sufficiently encouraged, due to the teaching methods. Children feel safe and secure and display a good level of trust in the way they arrive at each session, confidently leaving their parents and carers.
77. Children behave very well and are clear about what is expected of them throughout the sessions. They concentrate, particularly when the activities are relevant and interesting. In groups, where children are interested, they work hard. They think things through, and some are confident when answering their teacher's questions, for example when the children decided that the old bear must be old because it belonged to a member of staff. Even when children do not understand the group activity, they behave well and make attempts to contribute to lessons.
78. In 'circle time', and in religious education lessons, the children learn to be aware of their own feelings and listen to the feelings of others as they share 'special things' with their friends. There are few opportunities provided throughout the Foundation Stage for children to develop a growing awareness of other cultures and religions.

Communication, language and literacy

79. Children's progress is satisfactory overall and more able children make good progress in their development of speaking and listening skills. Since the inspection in 1997, there has been an emphasis on literacy as the main focus for this area of learning. For many children this structure is inappropriate, as they have not yet achieved many of the Early Learning Goals.

Speaking and listening

80. In Reception, children enjoy listening to stories. Teachers organise adequate role-play activities, such as the school bus or the seaside shop, but, although well prepared and resourced, these activities are insufficiently planned for on a daily basis, and staff do not involve themselves frequently enough. Children are encouraged to talk and to listen to each other during 'circle time', but there are not enough opportunities to explain aspects of their 'news' or take part in focused discussions, for example, during art activities.

Reading

81. By the end of their year in Reception, many children know their initial sounds and the more able children blend sounds to create words. They place the letters of the alphabet in the correct order, and understand and name rhyming words in the poem, 'The Runaway Train'. Children make satisfactory progress and achieve the Early Learning Goals. However, some less able children are still to reach these 'goals' in this area of learning. Each classroom has a library area, although these are not used regularly enough during activity sessions. Children know what books they prefer and recognise words that are familiar. They take their reading books home regularly.

Writing

82. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for the development of children's writing. They practise their writing in a variety of ways. They 'write' their names and make postcards for the seaside shop, cards for their friend at the 'writing table' or write sentences about their recent visit to 'Brooklands'. All children have writing materials, which are within easy reach, but the way these materials are used differs between classes and is dependent upon the skill of the teachers and the organisation within the classroom. The more able children write in their 'books', some are able to form simple sentences, and some copy words using letters, which are well formed. Many children are successful in writing their own names.
83. There are a number of computers available, which children use in all reception classes and these are effective in promoting their literacy and numeracy skills.

Mathematical development

84. By the time they enter Year 1, many children have achieved the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning and make sound progress in the development of their early skills, however, the method of teaching numeracy, which involves a large group session, is inappropriate for many children. The more able children answer during the session, but the less able lose interest over time. Mathematical language is developed effectively through subjects such as physical education and history.
85. Children sort out number problems as they use a dice to find ways of making eight. They count the number of skittles left in their skittles game, developing an understanding of subtraction. Children play with sand and water but, although planned, it is too structured and does not develop children's thinking, or make a contribution to their mathematical development through play. More able children learn ways of subtracting numbers, some with good understanding. Where the teaching in Reception is good, more able children are successful and learn new mathematical words and concepts. Children move forward in their mathematical development, but there are few examples of teachers grasping everyday opportunities to develop children's mathematical experiences.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

86. Children come to school with developing ideas of the world around them and are aware of their own environment. From this beginning, children make satisfactory progress during their time in Reception. There are too few opportunities for children to freely investigate in their activities, as these are insufficiently developed to embrace all aspects of this area of learning.
87. In Reception, children investigate 'push' and 'pull' and some record their results. However, this science lesson was also seen in Year 1 with little variation. This illustrates the absence of a curriculum for the Foundation Stage, and planning, which specifically meets the needs of these children. Evidence in displays and in teachers' planning show areas of development within a theme such as 'On the move', but these 'stepping stones' of valuable enquiry are not being met systematically throughout this key stage. Children learn about 'old and new' and a visit to Brooklands Museum has made a good contribution to this area of learning, helping them to develop a sense of time.
88. Children have a good range of computers but less opportunity to use other things that 'work'. Children's standards in information and communication technology are good. More able children in Reception are developing good skills in their use of the computer and work confidently to a good level, for example, when using a graphics program to create pictures.
89. There is insufficient emphasis placed on developing children's awareness of other cultures and the beliefs of other people. There are very few pictures, books and items of play equipment to represent this aspect of learning throughout the Foundation Stage, which was the same situation found at the time of the inspection in 1997 and, therefore, represents no improvement.

Physical development

90. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development and, by the end of their time in Reception, they reach the levels expected for children of this age.
91. Children practise their skills, outside and indoors, as they climb and balance, using apparatus in the hall. Children make satisfactory progress so that, by the end of the reception year, they use small and large equipment in the hall with developing control and confidence. The outside area gives children opportunities to control their bikes and share games, but for only a few children at a time. The development of an outdoor curriculum is 'on hold' at the present time. Plans to develop the area are soon to be implemented.
92. There are fewer opportunities to use tools such as scissors and paintbrushes, on a regular basis, although these resources are available in organised lessons.

Creative development

93. Children make satisfactory progress overall in this aspect of the curriculum. However, by the end of their time in Reception, they do not reach some of the Early Learning Goals, particularly in the development of imagination and creativity, especially in art. There are too few opportunities in Reception for children to develop their imagination effectively. There are too few creative links made through activities because the teaching in Reception is based around subjects. Opportunities are insufficient within this area of learning for children to develop creatively. They experience a range of media, throughout the year, but, on occasions, these activities are too directed by the teacher and the joy of experimentation is lost. This is the same judgement as the inspection in 1997. Children have an insufficient variety of experiences of things to use, to make, draw and paint, or the freedom to try different colours and use a wide variety of materials to make pictures and models regularly. The creative area is small and insufficient for three classes to use throughout each day.

94. The weekly music session in the drama room contributes significantly to the development of children's skills in this area of learning, but daily musical opportunities are unsatisfactory. There is no singing of songs or rhymes throughout the day in Reception, and musical instruments are not available for children to experiment with or use independently or imaginatively, for example during role play. This does not provide the stimulation or creative motivation children require, and limits the use of their imagination.

ENGLISH

95. Over the last three years, pupils' overall attainment in the National Curriculum reading and writing tests for seven-year-olds has risen consistently and the results of the National Curriculum tests in 2000 show that pupils' attainment was above average in reading, and average in writing. This is a good improvement since the inspection in 1997, when standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were below the levels expected in reading and writing. The results in 2001 suggest that, overall, standards have been maintained and that the significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls over time have begun to be eliminated. The picture of standards indicated by test results is confirmed by inspection evidence.
96. Standards in speaking and listening throughout the school are good and this is a significant improvement since the inspection in 1997, when standards were judged to be below expected levels. Pupils are very confident speakers and benefit from the many opportunities that they receive to express their opinions and to listen to the views of their classmates. Most lessons begin and conclude with an opportunity for discussion, such as when pupils in Year 2 were comparing various different types of letter writing. This prompted some perceptive comments as to the likely tone of such letters and one girl volunteered a very comprehensive description of the scope and work of the 'Greenpeace' organisation. The pace of pupils' learning benefits from the many opportunities that teachers plan, within their lessons, for pupils to talk in small groups and in front of a larger audience such as the whole class. This was particularly evident in a Year 2 lesson, when pupils worked in pairs to examine their worries at the prospect of joining a new school, and in a Year 1 lesson, when pupils attempted to arrange a series of sentences into a story based on 'Where's My Teddy?' Teachers take every opportunity to broaden pupils' vocabulary by sharing technical language and structuring their questions so that they promote pupils' use of widening vocabulary.
97. Although the standard of pupils' attainment in reading is broadly in line with the national average at the age of seven, many pupils have developed very good library skills, as a result of the detailed and structured library policy. Most pupils in Year 2 can differentiate between fiction and non-fiction books and are fully aware of how to use the school library. One pupil in Year 2, for example, had no difficulty in finding a book from the history section of the library and could explain how the numbering system operated. This demonstrates a high degree of understanding. Many Year 1 pupils know the difference between story and information books and are aware that the library is divided into sections. Pupils make very good use of the well-resourced school library and are encouraged to take two books home each week, in addition to those from the school reading scheme. Home reading diaries allow parents to enter into dialogue with class teachers and to participate in their children's learning. Classroom assistants and parent helpers are used well and contribute significantly to improving reading standards.
98. Inspection evidence from lessons, school monitoring and the scrutiny of work indicate that pupils are writing for a range of purposes, although their creative writing is still underdeveloped. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils are using joined handwriting in a legible style and have been introduced to a range of writing experiences, including book reviews, stories and basic character descriptions. One Year 2 class, for example, had adapted the format of the poem 'Monday's Child' to produce their own poetry, whilst another class had developed wanted posters as a result of reading the Chinese story of 'Nung Guama'. By the end of Year 1, most pupils are able to communicate meaning through simple words and phrases, and letters are generally clearly shaped. More able pupils are writing on lines and forming simple sentences and can use simple punctuation, such as capital letters and full stops. The school is aware of the need to continue to improve the quality and range of writing achieved by pupils and regular sessions for extended

writing have been recently introduced into the English curriculum. Although pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in writing, as a result of the good levels of support that they receive, the progress of less able pupils is limited by the lack of appropriate support.

99. The previous report indicated that pupils with special educational needs did not reach high enough standards for their abilities. Inspection findings indicate that these pupils and those with English as an additional language now receive good support, both from within school and from specialist teachers from the local education authority. As a result of this support, these pupils now make good progress.
100. The overall quality of assessment within English is good. The school has analysed its test scores and other information about pupils' progress very carefully and has identified strategies to bring about improvement. For example, all pupils have individual targets in reading and writing and these are referred to consistently at the beginning and at the end of lessons. The school has introduced tracking sheets for guided reading and guided writing, which are completed on a weekly basis and teachers carry out half-termly sampling and levelling of pupils' work. The quality of long-and medium-term assessment is better than that carried out on a daily basis as, although pupils' written work is always clearly marked, it does not consistently include suggestions for future improvement.
101. At the time of the inspection in 1997, the quality of teaching was found to be unsatisfactory. Teaching is now good and, as a result, pupils in both Years 1 and Year 2 are making good progress. Teachers plan collaboratively across year groups and this ensures that they can share resources and that pupils receive consistency within their learning opportunities. They have a very good grasp of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and use it very well to serve the needs of their pupils. Lessons usually proceed at a good pace and teachers endeavour to provide a range of interesting stimuli. This was particularly evident in a Year 2 writing lesson, when worksheets were produced in the shape of a postcard, and in a lesson for extended writing, when pupils wrote in the 'sails' of a sailing ship, about their trip to old Portsmouth. In a lesson that was based on writing letters, one teacher focused on the example of a pupil's letter instead of using published material. Attractive photographs also often feature in lessons. Teachers use lessons in subjects other than English well for the development of pupils' literacy skills. Information and communication technology makes a good contribution, with frequent opportunities provided for word processing. The quality of writing of reports of scientific investigations is particularly good.
102. Lessons are usually organised well and teachers make good use of classroom assistants and parent helpers to support groups of pupils during group work activity. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, derive particular benefit from this support and make good progress within lessons. However, support for the less able pupils is not as good and this restricts their progress. In the best lessons, teachers use challenging questioning to make pupils think and to stimulate discussion. Pupils rise to these challenges. One pupil with special educational needs received a spontaneous round of applause from his classmates when he made a particularly good response to a question. The use of pupils' individual targets for reading and writing is a particularly effective strategy for improvement. Pupils are well aware of their targets and know exactly what they are required to do to achieve them. At the end of an extended writing lesson in one Year 2 class, the teacher gave each pupil the opportunity to reflect on their individual target in the light of their progress over that lesson. Whilst some pupils were pleased to have achieved their target, others were sufficiently confident to admit that they could have achieved much more.
103. In almost every lesson seen, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils were positive features. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very strong and contribute to pupils' good progress. Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning and instances of inappropriate behaviour are rare.
104. English is managed well and the co-ordinator has done much to develop and refine approaches to the teaching of English since her appointment. As well as developing a policy statement and scheme of work in line with national guidelines, she has led in-service training; monitored

curriculum delivery and planning; introduced focused reading and writing assessments; analysed test results; carried out regular sampling and levelling of pupils' work, and introduced pupil targets. She has responsibility for her own budget and has ensured that there are sufficient good quality reading books to effectively resource the National Literacy Strategy. She has a clear vision for the future and is committed to ensuring further improvement, through a number of strategies, which include a revision of medium term plans to include progression in pupils' learning about the sounds of letters and a greater emphasis on creative writing and drama. Standards in English are improving through the hard work and commitment both of teachers and pupils.

MATHEMATICS

105. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests, in 2000, matched both the average for all schools and that for similar schools. This maintained the annual rise in results that, with the exception of a slight drop in 1998, has otherwise occurred since 1996. The results in 2000 were a very significant improvement on the previous year. Early indications of the results for 2001 are that they match what was achieved in 2000, despite a larger percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The percentage achieving the higher Level 3, in 2000, was above average when compared nationally and with similar schools. The overall standard of pupils currently in Year 2 is average, and around a third of pupils are achieving well above average. This consistency in standards is the result of good teaching and, in particular, good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. These standards are an improvement on those at the time of the inspection in 1997. There has also been very good improvement in other areas of weakness noted at that time, notably the quality of teaching, the breadth and range of learning opportunities, assessment of pupils' learning and the use of data from National Curriculum tests
106. By the age of seven, pupils work with numbers to 100 confidently, know multiples of ten, and count in fives, twos and threes. Most have a good understanding of place value and can add and subtract two-digit numbers by splitting into tens and units. This sound understanding of number is developed successfully by the many opportunities for practising mental calculation and also by the frequent experience of problem solving. When working out money or time problems, pupils are competent at identifying whether they need to perform addition or subtraction operations. The more able pupils work confidently with numbers to 1000 and calculate division by two, three, four and five, correctly. All pupils have a good knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes, such as pentagon, hexagon, pyramid, cuboid and prism and they record, correctly, the numbers of sides, edges and right angles of each shape. Pupils' levels of knowledge, and understanding of shape and space, are above average for their age. Pupils' attainment in Year 1 is slightly below that expected of their age, due to the significant number of pupils with learning difficulties in mathematics. Most pupils are confident with numbers to 20, being able to add and subtract, and most can recognise numbers to 100. They count in tens but only the more able count correctly in fives.
107. The teaching of mathematics is consistently good and teachers implement the National Numeracy Strategy well. This is an improvement on the quality of teaching found at the inspection in 1997. Very thorough planning identifies the main learning in each lesson and each pupil has their specific numeracy targets displayed on the front of their exercise books. The frequent references to these targets means that pupils are developing the good habit of assessing their own learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, as a result, they are able to challenge pupils well, using questioning effectively to assess their progress. Oral and mental starter sessions are brisk in pace and provide pupils with the opportunity to use their numerical skills and language with growing confidence. A very good feature of these sessions is the full involvement of pupils of all abilities. This is achieved by setting different tasks and calculations for different ability groups, with answers being written on individual white boards. This engages all pupils well and they respond with obvious enthusiasm. In very good lessons, teachers constantly encourage pupils to explain the reasons for answers or how they carried out calculations. This good practice successfully develops pupils' ability to think mathematically, and prepares them well for the various tasks they are to undertake in the lesson. However, in contrast with the provision for different abilities that occurs in whole-class activities, planning of group work has some weaknesses. The provision for the groups of pupils of lower ability, not all of who have identified

special educational needs, is not matched carefully enough to their needs. The tasks are often the same as that being set for pupils of average ability, the only difference being that the less able have more support. These pupils are heavily reliant on high levels of help from support staff before they can complete tasks successfully. Their need for counting and other equipment to assist their calculations is not always recognised and many struggle both in the tasks and the recording of answers. There is generally insufficient emphasis on practical experience in the tasks that pupils complete during group work.

108. Those pupils with special educational needs relating to learning difficulties in mathematics receive good support. The classroom assistants working with them, either individually or in very small groups, are briefed well by class teachers on the pupils' needs and the specific intentions of the tasks that they will be teaching. As a result of the suitability of the learning activities and the good support, these pupils make good progress in their learning, achieving well in relation to their ability. There is similarly good achievement by pupils with English as an additional language. Their work is explained carefully to them and teachers ensure that these pupils understand fully what they are to do. The more able and gifted pupils are challenged well by their work. For the latter, additional resources suitable to their ability are provided. Pupils who work independently do so very well, maintaining very good levels of concentration and interest.
109. Pupils work very well individually, and in small groups or as a class. They consistently work very well together. They listen carefully and are very willing to share both ideas and equipment. In every lesson seen an atmosphere was created in which teachers were able to work with small groups or individuals, whilst others concentrated and worked hard independently. These good practices result in high quality work and a good quality of learning by all pupils. Teachers make very good use of resources available. For example, they used individual number cards for pupils to record their answers during quick-fire mental activities. This ensured all pupils were involved and the teacher could make quick assessment of their accuracy. All lessons end with a quick review of what the pupils have learnt during the lesson and this provides good reinforcement of the main learning as well as preparing pupils for the next stage.
110. The good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on standards. There is thorough assessment of pupils' learning, through observation and good marking of work completed in lessons and also in the longer term by regular review and recording of pupils' acquisition of basic skills and knowledge. Teachers' periodic annotation in pupils' books provides further evidence of pupils' progress. This records relevant information about pupils' knowledge and understanding, noting for example if a pupil worked with support or independently, if specific difficulties were evident, or what the pupil needs to do next. This is a very good source of detailed information about each pupil's progress that is used very well in the planning of the next stage in learning. Teachers also make good use of opportunities in other lessons to develop pupils' numeracy and other mathematical skills, such as graph work in science, and measuring in design and technology. Information and communication technology is not used frequently enough for number work. Better use is made of the recording of data to produce graphs and charts although, during the inspection, identical work of this type was being done by both Years 1 and 2, indicating a lack of progression in pupils' learning. A good example of the links made between numeracy and literacy is work in Year 1 in which pupils have to match a sentence in words with a sum written in numbers.
111. The subject is led satisfactorily by a temporary co-ordinator who has had this responsibility since January 2001. She has, through effective monitoring of standards of pupils' work and teachers' assessments, gained a good understanding of priorities for the subject's development. Her subject action plan reflects the whole-school strategic plan with the priority given to developing the use of information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

112. Since the inspection four years ago, standards have remained very much the same, although there has been an increase in the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in National Curriculum assessment. Inspection evidence judges that pupils are attaining standards in line with the national average, at the age of seven. The number of pupils currently reaching the

higher Level 3 are fewer than in 2000, however, as there is a higher proportion of pupils identified as having a special educational needs in Year 2. Pupils display a sound level of scientific knowledge and an improved vocabulary. There has been a marked improvement in pupils' experimental and investigative skills, which was identified, in the inspection in 1997 as a significant weakness.

113. Pupils now experience all the different aspects of science required by the National Curriculum and display sound knowledge and understanding in most aspects of science. In Year 1 lessons, pupils are encouraged to investigate toy vehicles that can be moved by pushing or pulling and, unlike the findings of the inspection in 1997, now record the results using drawings or making simple charts with confidence. A more able pupil shared an idea to extend the chart to record more information and this was followed by the group. In Year 2, pupils again build on previous work and use prediction when investigating vehicles travelling down a ramp with a variety of surfaces. More able pupils understand the importance of a 'fair test' in their investigations to test the predicted distances these vehicles travel. Looking at pupils' work since September confirms that they cover all areas of the curriculum but with less emphasis on materials and their properties. This is evident when talking to pupils in one class in Year 2, where their understanding of materials and their properties, or how to make sure that a test is fair, is comparatively weak. Where pupils have direct practical experience, they are more confident in their knowledge and understanding.
114. The quality of teaching has improved since the inspection in 1997 and teaching is now satisfactory overall, with aspects of good teaching in Year 1. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and good progress in their experimenting and investigating. Teachers ask well-structured questions to develop pupils' thinking and to check what they have learned. Pupils are encouraged to use scientific language and teachers place good emphasis on this. Less able pupils are given an easier form of recording, but many struggle to understand the instructions and do not keep up with the rest of the class. The quality of assessment of pupils' progress has significantly improved from the inspection in 1997 and now provides a clear picture of each pupil's achievement. Teachers' expectations of their pupils' knowledge and understanding have improved and this is evident in lessons. The quality of relationships between teachers and pupils and the good way in which pupils behave, leaves teachers free to teach, rather than spend time maintaining order. Pupils work together well, co-operating, listening to each other's points of view, and acting upon suggestions.
115. The progress of pupils with special educational needs in science is affected by the number of pupils who are taught for periods of time outside the classroom, for example, when practising reading with a learning support assistant. However, when supported by staff in lessons, these pupils make good progress. The progress made by the less able pupils slows when they receive insufficient support in groups, when tasks become too complex. More able pupils make good progress. Their learning is promoted by good questions, which cause them to apply a good level of intellectual effort. Pupils with English as an additional language progress satisfactorily as a result of the teachers and support staff ensuring that pupils understand the tasks and expectations.
116. Medium-term planning is completed by the co-ordinator. Teachers then complete their own individual plans. This ensures that pupils in each class, within a year group, receive a similar curriculum. Planning is now based on a scheme of work involving topics and the school has purchased supporting material; as a result the quality of current lessons has improved, together with a very good assessment system to record pupils' progress. The subject makes a positive contribution to literacy and numeracy, which is shown in the improvement of scientific recording and the use of graphs and tables to record results of investigations. The use of information and communication technology in science is being established and further developments are planned.
117. The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership. She is enthusiastic and committed to improving the standard of science in the school. She has good relationships with colleagues and monitors all aspects of the subject, providing the necessary expertise and advice. This is particularly important, given that many teachers have recently joined the school.

ART AND DESIGN

118. At the time of the inspection in 1997, pupils' attainment in art was below expectations at the age of seven. Art was being used mainly for display purposes and as a support for other subjects. Since that inspection there has been more emphasis placed on the development of pupils' skills and the use of their imagination, rather than as a support to other subjects.
119. Pupils' attainment in art and design is now in line with expectations by the age of seven. These judgements are a result of observing two lessons, examining displays, and talking to pupils and teachers. As only two lessons were seen, the teaching standards overall cannot be evaluated. Links with other subjects, such as history, religious education and English are used well and art and design is developing as a subject in its own right. There are few links with information and communication technology. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress in class, through good support, however, when they leave the class to do other work their rate of progress slips back.
120. Examples of pupils' work are displayed well in corridors and in some classes. These examples of artwork are presented well and pupils' work is valued. However, although aspects of art and design have improved over the last four years, there are still further developments required, particularly in the consolidation of knowledge, such as primary colours and colour mixing, and in the teaching of sculpture and textiles. In Year 2, pupils paint seascape pictures based on paintings by famous artists, but there are insufficient opportunities for them to develop their imagination and creativity through art, or to investigate the roles of craftspeople and artists, and experience art from other cultures. Pupils enjoy art and design and persevere even when the task is difficult.
121. The co-ordinator leads the subject satisfactorily. She has been responsible for art and design for less than a year and is set to evaluate the new scheme at the end of 12 months. She is aware of the areas for development in the subject and is enthusiastic about the progress already made. Portfolios of pupils work are to be developed to enable teachers to assess pupils' progress over time and the creative art week next year is intended to enhance the subject. The resources available are sufficient and organised well.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

122. At the age of seven, all pupils achieve standards in line with expectations. This is an improvement since the inspection in 1997, when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. Although pupils make good progress throughout the school, some pupils with special educational needs make less progress, due to them being removed from design and technology lessons to receive additional literacy support, and are, therefore, denied full and equal access to all aspects of the curriculum.
123. The standard of pupils' skills and understanding has improved since the inspection in 1997, particularly in designing and evaluating their work. Pupils in Year 1 draw on their own experiences to generate ideas and clarify their ideas through discussion. One pupil, for example, knew that he would need to attach a second box to his model to enable him to make a dumper truck, whilst other pupils were aware of the colours that were needed to turn their vehicles into police cars and fire engines. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils were particularly good at recognising and overcoming design problems and this was particularly evident when they were designing mechanisms for lifting a spider.
124. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good. Teachers plan effectively and provide an interesting range of resources. Support staff play an important role in the organisation of lessons, for example in Year 1, where the classroom assistant had ensured that each pupil's model was on their table at the commencement of the lesson. During the introduction of lessons, very effective discussions take place regarding the suitability of design ideas. In Year 2, for instance, pupils spent time in considering how to attach their spider to the lifting mechanism and a number

of sensible suggestions were put forward for consideration. One pupil suggested drilling the dowel rod, whilst others felt that the use of glue, cellotape, or masking tape, might be more effective. At the end of this discussion, the class teacher allowed pupils to make their own decision as to which method they chose to adopt. In lessons, teachers ask carefully posed questions that help pupils to respond effectively and to make good progress. There are good links to other areas of the curriculum. In Year 2, for example, pupils used their numeracy skills appropriately when they were measuring the length of string needed to lift their spider to the top of the box, whilst in Year 1, pupils used their literacy skills to describe how they had designed and made clay hedgehogs and what the clay actually felt like to handle.

125. Pupils are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy lessons. One pupil in Year 2, for example, was so enthusiastic after the lesson spent designing his lifting mechanism that he had already worked on the next stage of the process at home with his father. Pupils work hard and quietly as individuals or in groups, and are prepared to share their ideas with others. Pupils understand what they are doing, sustain concentration, and think and learn independently. They handle simple tools carefully and show respect for property and the work of others.
126. The co-ordinator is very committed and enthusiastic about the subject and she manages the subject well. The curriculum is now planned appropriately using national guidance and with support from the local authority. The co-ordinator has introduced an assessment programme based on national objectives, and is developing currently a skills support programme that will include a sequence of teaching points for each teaching unit. She manages her own budget and has purchased a good range of resources that are organised well and are accessible. Her plans for future development include ensuring that the scheme of work reflects greater use of information and communication technology, and for using the assessment procedures to influence future planning.

GEOGRAPHY

127. When the school was inspected in 1997, standards in geography were below those found during this inspection. Pupils are now reaching standards in line with expectations at the age of seven, representing good improvement. During this inspection one lesson was seen and an overall judgement on the quality of teaching has not been possible. Judgements are based on this lesson, as well as looking at pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with both pupils and teachers. This evidence confirms that all pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress in lessons.
128. In Year 1, pupils learn about their own, and wider areas, such as Brickfields. By Year 2, in contrast to the inspection in 1997, pupils have a good awareness of places beyond their own, such as Portsmouth. This latter visit formed part of a combined geography and history project. They are introduced to the Isle of Struay and learning activities in this topic enable pupils to apply reading and writing skills well. Pupils use globes, looking at the world and use skills of enquiry and recording in their recent expedition. They enjoy geography and in conversation give interesting reasons why they like Aldershot, and compare Portsmouth with where they live. For instance, comparisons were made between Aldershot and Tenby in Wales, one of which being that there were no sharks in Aldershot.
129. Pupils' ideas in personal research and recording are developing and provide good links with literacy and numeracy. More able pupils are given work, which provides a challenge and encourages them to think for themselves. This is evident when looking at pupils' workbooks. Teachers are gaining confidence in the new geography curriculum and are developing sound geographical knowledge and understanding. Their confidence has increased since the introduction of the newly revised curriculum.
130. There is a new scheme of work, which provides a more consistent teaching and learning programme for geography, to ensure that younger pupils build on what they already know in a systematic way. Assessment is good and ensures that the development of pupils' skills is

recorded so that work is continuous and not repetitive. Resources are sufficient but further items are to be purchased to meet the needs of the new curriculum. The use of information and communication technology is planned, but not yet established. There are plans to extend pupils' work, both in the use of software and the use of the Internet.

131. In contrast to the inspection in 1997, the co-ordinator has developed the subject very well. The scheme of work is thorough and visits are planned and researched well.

HISTORY

132. As it was only possible to observe one lesson during the course of the inspection, judgements are based predominantly on discussions with pupils, looking at their work and the limited displays of pupils' work around the school. The inspection in 1997 indicated that pupils' attainment was below expectations and that their progress was unsatisfactory. Standards have now improved. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress and pupils are now attaining standards in line with expectations by the age of seven.
133. Pupils can make simple distinctions between their own lives and past times. The current Year 2 topic, based on the seaside, enabled pupils to focus on changes over time, and they could list a number of differences between visiting a seaside now and visiting one a hundred years ago. The history curriculum is enriched by a number of educational visits, such as that by pupils in Year 1, to the Weald, and Downland Open Air Museum. This enabled pupils to compare houses from the past to those of the present. These comparisons are reflected in an attractive display in one classroom. In Year 2, pupils talked enthusiastically about their recent visit to Old Portsmouth and how much they had enjoyed dressing up for their Victorian School Day. These experiences are appreciated and valued by pupils and are important in helping them to develop their understanding of chronology.
134. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to explore artefacts or to discuss the history of the neighbourhood. A scrutiny of past work indicates that the teaching of history is too often based on pupils being given a picture to colour, or being asked to write a simple sentence from a prepared worksheet. This was evident in the only lesson observed during the inspection when all pupils worked from the same worksheet. Although the most able pupils worked independently to successfully achieve the lesson objective, and pupils with special educational needs received good support, less able pupils found the objective too challenging. There is little evidence of planning for pupils of different ability levels, within the history curriculum, and pupils are insufficiently challenged to research simple information from other sources, for example, by using the school library or the computer. Pupils enjoy discussing the famous people that they have found out about although they occasionally become a little confused. In Year 2, for example, pupils knew about Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale and could link Samuel Pepys to the Great Fire of London.
135. The management of the subject is satisfactory, although the current co-ordinator has only recently been appointed to the post. The school has used national guidelines to develop a scheme of work that is now in place and the history policy is currently in draft form. Assessment sheets for the end of each unit of work have been introduced recently and these are intended to be used to influence future planning within the subject. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop a range of resources to include sufficient materials for pupils to be able to interpret the past, handle artefacts and research information.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

136. At the time of the inspection in 1997, pupils' standards were below expectations, teaching was unsatisfactory, and the curriculum did not meet requirements. Progress in rectifying these weaknesses has been erratic, largely as a result of the lack of a permanent subject co-ordinator. Under the deputy headteacher's leadership since January 2001, there have been rapid developments in the subject. This momentum is set to increase, due to a combination of factors. The subject is a major priority in the school strategic plan, intensive staff training is intended to

take place during the next school year and there is significant expenditure planned for both hardware and software.

137. Pupils are now achieving standards in line with expectations by the age of seven. Pupils' learning has strengths and weaknesses and greater consistency is being sought by ensuring that key skills are being developed step by step and by enabling these skills to be applied and developed in all subjects. By the age of seven, pupils' word-processing skills are well developed, and generally exceed expectations. They produce extended pieces of text, such as reports of a visit to Portsmouth and comparisons of books that they have read. These demonstrate pupils' ability to experiment with, and select from, different fonts, size, and arrangement of text and borders, that result in attractively presented work. They produce eye-catching labels and captions for work in classroom displays. Pupils' knowledge of functions, such as saving and printing work, is well established. They have satisfactory knowledge of Internet search facilities and use these competently to find non-fiction sources for science topics. CD-ROMs are similarly used to gather information. E-mail communications are used constructively, for example, pupils in one of the job-share Year 2 classes keep in touch with one of the teachers when she is not at the school. Skills in the areas of planning and giving instructions are less well developed. Although teachers' planning indicates that some experience of working with programmable floor robots and controlling the movement of an object around the screen, on the computer, has taken place, conversations with pupils indicated that little knowledge of how this was done has been retained. The entry of data and presentation of this in graphs or charts is under developed. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 were working at the same level in this aspect, during the inspection, a level below what pupils in Year 2 should be achieving.
138. The range of pupils' achievements indicates that their progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils with English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs, progress at the same rate as all other pupils, although they gain particular benefit from the opportunities provided for them to use computers and listening centres during literacy lessons. Provision for and the rate of pupils' learning are inhibited by the current number of computers, and some tasks are extended for at least a fortnight in order that all pupils in a class can complete the task. Although some teachers confess to lack of confidence in some aspects of the subject, the direct teaching seen during the inspection was good overall. Introductions of tasks to the whole class are organised well, instructions are clear and good use is made of support staff and volunteers, by briefing them thoroughly on their roles and the learning that pupils are to achieve. Pupils' learning is enhanced well by their own good attitudes and behaviour and, most especially, by their very good capacity for working independently. Pupils do this frequently in pairs and show very good co-operation, respect for one another's ideas and a willingness to take turns without prompting by adults.
139. In a short time, the co-ordinator has established very good leadership of the subject. She has used the few opportunities provided for her to be released from classroom teaching to carry out several excellent forms of monitoring. Work sampling has taken the form of observing pupils from all classes as they work. This, along with pupils' interviews, has identified the skills that need developing. A detailed skill progression has been produced as a basis for assessment. The very thorough subject development plan has clear targets, including improvement in attainment as measured by percentages achieving different levels. Teachers are, currently, lacking in the skills to carry out this type of assessment and they fail to retain sufficient evidence of pupils' work to enable them to judge progress with any accuracy. Redressing these weaknesses is essential if the improvement targets are to be achieved. Within their own subject development plans, co-ordinators of all subjects are reviewing the current use of information and communication technology. This audit is to be the basis for extensive revision of the information and communication technology curriculum. Inspection evidence indicates good use of information and communication in literacy and science, but unsatisfactory use in mathematics and other subjects.

MUSIC

140. At the time of the inspection in 1997, standards in music were judged to be unsatisfactory, particularly in the areas of performing and composing, and listening and appraising. Standards in

music have improved since that time and pupils' attainment is now in line with expectations by the age of seven. This is due to the successful teaching of a well-structured curriculum.

141. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, enjoy their music-making activities and look forward to lessons. They achieve good standards in singing, both in lessons and in assemblies. They know that good posture is an important part of good singing and are building up a repertoire of songs. In one assembly, for example, all pupils joined in with the hymn 'Shalom, whilst in Year 2, pupils sang a variety of different songs during the conclusion of their music lesson. They become increasingly aware of musical terminology. In Year 1, pupils begin to recognise the changes in musical tempo within a 'Mantra' from North Africa whilst in Year 2 pupils listen attentively to seaside songs and make appropriate comments about the mood of the music, the rhythm and the lyrics. Although pupils develop their musical knowledge over the key stage, information and communication technology does not make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
142. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory. In music lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils' capabilities and they respond with confidence. In one Year 2 lesson, almost all pupils were sufficiently confident to sing a musical response to a question individually, and another class regularly answer the register in song. Pupils in Year 1 use percussion instruments, and their own bodies, to represent the movement of different animals. They repeat the rhythm well and make good progress as a result of the good support and appropriate expectations of the teacher. The standard of teaching has improved since the inspection in 1997, because teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is now sound.
143. Pupils clearly enjoy the opportunities to perform for an audience and are very supportive of each other. In Year 1, pupils work in groups, using a range of instruments including tambourines, maracas and cabasas to compose and perform pieces of music based on movement. In Year 2, pupils practise and perform a new song based on a visit to the seaside. Although pupils from the school participate in choral performances at the Princes Hall, Aldershot, other opportunities for pupils to develop in the area of performance, such as in assemblies and concerts, are fewer. There are no peripatetic musicians or regular peripatetic music lessons within the school's music curriculum.
144. The subject is led satisfactorily by the very new co-ordinator, who is enthusiastic and keen to develop a school scheme of work that is based on national guidelines and school topic planning. She has not, as yet, had opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in music, although she plans to do so in the future, but she has led in-service training, based on the development of composition and pitch control. Assessment procedures have been introduced recently and it is intended that these will influence future planning. The co-ordinator recognises that, although resources for the subject are adequate, there is a need to introduce more tuned instruments and has already begun to address this aim. She is aware also that there is a need to make more use of information and communication technology within the music curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

145. At the time of the inspection in 1997, standards were judged to be in line with expectations in games and gymnastics, and dance was not observed. During this inspection, only games has been observed and, by the age of seven, the standards achieved by pupils continue to match expectations.
146. By the age of seven, pupils perform the basic games skills of throwing, catching and kicking a ball with satisfactory control and accuracy, co-operating successfully with a partner and using space sensibly. In small group games, such as two versus one, they use skills, such as dodging and marking, satisfactorily, in order to retain or gain possession of the ball. These standards are achieved by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. There is no evidence of any pupils who achieve significantly higher standards than others. Pupils have a good understanding of the relationship between health and exercise. They warm up and cool down conscientiously, explain correctly the effects of exercise on the heart and have a good understanding of why these aspects of the lesson are important.

147. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are planned thoroughly and teachers pay good attention to health and safety factors. All teachers manage their classes well. Good teaching incorporates use of carefully selected pupils to demonstrate specific actions that reinforce key features of what is to be learned. In good lessons, pupils have extended periods of practice that enable them to achieve consistency and improvement. In satisfactory lessons, there is a tendency for teachers to adhere rigidly to their plans and move pupils on to the next activity before they are ready for it. As a consequence, the rate of learning slows down when pupils have insufficient practice time or they are in group activities, such as relays, where they are passive rather than active much of the time.
148. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management based on her good level of subject expertise. This is achieved while also carrying out the responsibilities of a deputy headteacher. Her review of teachers' planning has prompted a significant revision of the guidelines for all areas of activity. She has produced useful procedures for assessment of pupils' learning but being new they have yet to have a positive impact on teaching or learning. Innovative monitoring has focused on interviews with pupils to establish attitudes and these being used as an indicator of the effectiveness of teaching.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

149. Since the inspection in 1997, there has been an improvement in the standards and they now meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils develop a good moral philosophy and code of conduct, based broadly on the Christian tradition, which is developed through stories, discussions and 'circle times'. They learn about the main Christian festivals, traditions, customs and buildings and make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress, through good support in classes.
150. Younger pupils learn about things that are special to them and to others. They understand that the Bible is special to Christians and bring books to school that are special to them. Pupils learn about Christian ceremonies, and the festivals of Christmas, Easter and harvest, and they visit the local Christian church where they are shown special Christian artefacts. By the end of Year 1, pupils know some miracles that Jesus performed together with a few aspects of Judaism.
151. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory overall. Pupils behave very well in lessons and treat the religious topics covered with respect. Appropriate resources are used reverently in lessons, and teachers' questions used effectively to extend pupils' thinking and promote their understanding. Teachers are less successful in creating a sense of spirituality in lessons, although these elements are emphasised in their planning. In one lesson observed, too much noise was being made by an adjoining class in their activities for a spiritual atmosphere to be created.
152. There have been a number of changes in the leadership of the subject, with the effect being that the scheme of work has not been updated and lesson objectives are not sufficiently specific. There are plans to give the subject the appropriate attention in the near future and update the scheme of work in the light of the locally agreed syllabus. There are good links to literacy through the writing of religious events and in considering moral aspects, such as 'my conscience'. The use of information and communication technology is not developed within the curriculum, but is currently being reviewed as part of the subject development plan.