

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTHWOOD COUNTY INFANT SCHOOL

Southwood, Farnborough

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116246

Headteacher: Mrs V K Thornton

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Cosway
OFSTED No: 2734

Dates of inspection: 11 - 13 December 2000

Inspection number: 198985

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

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 7 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Southwood Lane
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Farnborough
Hampshire

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Andrew Hyde

Date of previous inspection: 8 September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Paul Cosway (Ofsted No: 2734)	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Art	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
		English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
		Equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Ron Elam (Ofsted No: 9092)	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Lona Thomas (Ofsted No: 23574)	Team inspector	Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		History	
		Music	
		Foundation stage	
Garry Williams (Ofsted No: 22704)	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	
Graham Johnson (Ofsted No: 23054)	Team inspector	English	
		Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an infant school, educating children from the age of 4 to 7. There are significantly more boys than girls. It was built nine years ago to serve new housing estates on the outskirts of Farnborough. It opened with four pupils on roll and has grown to 125. Of the 36 Reception children, 14 are part-time and remain so throughout their first term. It is smaller than most primary schools. Pupils are drawn mainly from middle class, owner-occupied housing. Almost all the pupils are white, although the school does have the advantage of a small number of pupils who represent other world cultures. For almost three per cent of pupils, English is an additional language, which is above the average nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, less than two per cent, is below the national average. The proportion identified as having special educational needs is well below average. The attainment of pupils on entry is slightly above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school in many aspects of its work. Pupils' attainment is, overall, well above national averages in reading, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1 and average in writing. It is well above that in similar schools in reading and above in mathematics. Very good relationships, the good management of pupils, the overall good teaching and the care and concern for every individual create an atmosphere in which all children can develop self confidence and independence and make progress in their learning. Pupils are taught to work hard, to be considerate and independent. Very good leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by a caring and conscientious staff, is ensuring that the school is capable of continuing to improve. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good overall, often very good, leading to pupils learning well in almost all subjects.
- Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning, enjoy school and work hard. Almost all behave well. They make good progress as a result.
- It is a very caring school.
- Relationships are very good; pupils' personal, moral and social development is very good.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good overall: very good leadership from the headteacher helps to create and sustain a rich, stimulating learning environment for children.
- The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well.
- Links with parents are very strong and the school helps them to support their children's learning.

What could be improved

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in writing is not high enough.
- Assessment systems are not always effective in tracking the progress that pupils make and in setting them targets for their learning.
- The quality of teaching needs to be improved so that is consistently good in all classes.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's last full inspection was in September 1997. At that time, pupils were making satisfactory and often good progress, attaining above average results in the National Curriculum tests. The new headteacher was putting in place the structures, in terms of planning and policies, that were needed. The inspectors reported that there were four main areas in which the school had to improve. These were: meeting statutory requirements for the appraisal of staff and information for parents; improvements in the breadth and balance of the curriculum at Key Stage 1; improvements in the provision for assessment and improvements in the quality of teaching.

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	A	A	A*	A
Writing	C	B	C	D
Mathematics	B	B	A	B

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

Over the past three years, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has exceeded the national average in all three of these areas. Overall, attainment has risen in line with the rise nationally. Attainment has been consistently high in reading. Pupils at this school are generally a year ahead in their ability to read of pupils in the country as a whole and well above average compared with those in similar schools. Their reading performance is so very high that it puts this school in the top five per cent of all schools across the country. Attainment in mathematics has also been above average in all three years and has improved. Pupils' attainment was well above the national average in 2000 and above average compared with similar schools. Attainment in writing has been just above average, but very few pupils attain level 3. Compared with pupils in similar schools, the performance of pupils in the writing test is below average. In science, attainment measured by teachers' assessments is well above average.

The inspection finding is that pupils achieve well in all aspects of their work except writing. Pupils in the foundation stage, up to five years old, attain above average standards in all aspects of their work except their creative development, where they are in line to meet the expected standard for their age. In Year 2, pupils are well above average in reading, mathematics and science and attain average standards in writing.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils enjoy school and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: behaviour is very good overall, both in lessons and around the school, apart from a small number of pupils in Year 2.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils learn to relate very well to each other and to adults. There is a mutual respect that helps to reinforce the caring ethos of the school as well as creating a good ethos for learning in almost all classrooms. Pupils develop independent learning skills.
Attendance	Good: unauthorised absence is below average.

The positive attitudes to school that the teachers work so hard to foster ensure that almost all the pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. They enjoy their lessons and show great interest. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their actions.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	

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

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall.

There are many strengths in teaching. Teaching is good or better in 86 per cent of lessons and is very good or excellent in almost 45 per cent of lessons. It is almost always good or very good in Reception/Year 1 classes. It is at least satisfactory in 97 per cent of lessons. The strengths in teaching are in the very good relationships that teachers have with their pupils and the quality of their lesson planning and preparation. They work hard to make the lessons interesting and exciting for their pupils, who appreciate this and respond well. As a result, learning is generally good, pupils concentrate and work hard in class. Basic skills are taught well. The quality of teaching does vary between classes, however, being best in the Year 1 and Reception classes. It needs to be more consistent across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory for the under fives, but it is sometimes too formal for the youngest children. It is good at Key Stage 1.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: the provision for these pupils is well organised and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: they are helped to transfer their own language skills to the learning of English as a result of skilful teaching.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: there is very good provision for social and moral development. The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development has improved since the last report and is now good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well.

The school works very well in partnership with parents. The information it provides for parents is very good. The curriculum is enhanced by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, including educational visits. The school provides very good support and guidance for pupils to help them with their work and their personal development and offers equal opportunities to all.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good: very good leadership from the headteacher provides clear direction for the work of the school, setting high expectations of both pupils and staff. There is very good support from her deputy. Good management has been a key factor in the school's recent improvement.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: the governors are supportive of the school and give of their time willingly to help the school and be involved in its work. They fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: the school evaluates its performance well and uses this information to guide the priorities for further development.
The strategic use of resources	Good: the school allocates resources well to meet the needs of the pupils. It uses its funding appropriately and wisely to ensure that it can provide a good quality of education for the pupils in its care. The accommodation is satisfactory, but is used very well. There are weaknesses in the outdoor facilities for the Reception children. Very effective use is made of all learning resources.

The governing body and all members of staff work well as a team to ensure that policies are put into action and there is a shared commitment to bringing about improvement. Satisfactory progress has been made and the school is well placed to improve further. The school successfully seeks best value in the use and deployment of all its resources and in the use of its budget.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>The large majority of parents who responded think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children like coming to school; • behaviour is good in school; • The school expects its pupils to work hard and is developing responsible attitudes in them; • the teaching in the school is good; • they are comfortable approaching the school with any questions or problems; • their children are making good progress. 	<p>Of the parents who responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 per cent do not feel well informed about how their children are getting on; • 10 per cent do not feel that the school works closely enough with parents.

The partnership with parents is very strong and many parents make a significant impact on the work of the school by helping in classes or at home. The inspectors agree with the positive points made by parents, finding that pupils behave well and develop a sense of responsibility. Their good attitudes to school and good behaviour, with very positive support from home in many cases, are positive influences, helping them to attain well and benefit from the good teaching. The homework provision is satisfactory. Some parents are concerned about the progress children are making in the mixed age classes. The inspection found that teaching in these classes is good, often very good, but sometimes the curriculum is too formal for children under five.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Overall, pupils achieve well during their time in the school. Their attainment on entry is a little above average. The proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational need is below average.
2. Baseline assessment results indicate that children's attainment on entry is generally slightly above the average for Hampshire. Most pupils have well developed personal and social skills by the time they are five. Provision in the Reception classes prepares pupils well for entry to the first year of the National Curriculum and they make good progress academically as a result. The findings of the inspection are that most children are exceeding the recommended outcomes by the time they reach the age of five and their literacy and numeracy skills are above the expectation for children of their age.
3. Pupils achieve well in the core subjects in Key Stage 1, except in writing. In 1999, test results in reading were well above the national average in the end of Key Stage 1 tests and they were even higher in 2000 - in the top five per cent of results for school across the whole country. Two children gained level 4 for reading - the expected level for 11 year olds. Attainment in writing is not as good. It is average compared with all schools and below average compared with similar schools. No pupils gained level 3 in 1999, although large numbers reached this level in reading and mathematics. Only two pupils reached level 3 in the 2000 tests. The average score for writing went down slightly from the 1999 figure, although it went up for the country as a whole. Attainment in mathematics has been above average in recent years and in 2000 was well above the national average. Just over half the pupils gained level 3 for mathematics and every child gained at least level 2, the expected level for their age. Teacher assessments for science indicate that attainment is also well above the national average in this subject. Almost all children reached at least the expected level for their age, 98 per cent were at level 2 or above and 49 per cent were assessed at level 3 - a very high proportion, again in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Both boys and girls attained well across the three subjects. There was no significant difference in attainment, except in writing, where girls attained better than boys.
4. The findings of the inspection are that attainment is as high at the end of Key Stage 1 in the three core subjects as that indicated by last year's end of Key Stage 1 test results and teacher assessments. Attainment is well above the national average in mathematics. It is very high in reading and average in writing. It is well above average in science. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and has helped to raise standards in mathematics, especially in mental mathematics. The National Literacy Strategy has been adhered to closely and the planning for the improvement of reading skills has been very effective. The development of writing through the literacy sessions has been less successful, especially with the older Key Stage 1 pupils.
5. In mathematics, all pupils in Year 2 are in line to meet at least the expected level of attainment for pupils of their age and around a half to attain at the higher level, level 3. All pupils have a good range of skills in mathematics across the subject, including number, space and measure. In English, attainment is very high in reading. All are reading at a level at least appropriate for their age. The proportion of pupils whose reading skills are above average is high. Again, half the pupils are in line to attain level 3 in reading at the end of the key stage. These pupils read fluently, with good expression and very good understanding. In writing, almost all pupils should reach level 2. At present, however, few pupils can write expressively or accurately enough to reach level 3 by the time they take the national tests. They make mistakes in spellings, sometimes of relatively common words, and are not confident enough to write at length, other than in a narrative style. Attainment in science is high. All pupils are in line to reach at least the average level for pupils of their age and almost half to reach level 3. The pupils have a very good

knowledge of scientific facts for their age and they are able to think scientifically: the higher attainers beginning to understand how to hypothesise and how to test out their ideas. A weaker area, although still above average, is the ability to record their results and present the information in a variety of ways.

6. Attainment is well above average in music, above average in religious education and physical education. Pupils are attaining the expected levels in design and technology and in information and communications technology for pupils of their age. Attainment is close to average in history and geography, because the quality of the pupils' writing is restricting the level of attainment they can reach. There are examples of art work that are above average, but attainment is close to average overall.
7. Pupils with special educational needs are in the main achieving well in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans (EP's). Pupils with statements who have regular individual support make good progress.
8. Almost every parent who responded to the questionnaire believes that pupils make good progress at the school and the inspection finds that achievement is generally good. All pupils achieve well in the core subjects, except in the development of writing skills, but in foundation subjects, such as art and physical education, in some classes the high attaining pupils are not set work that is challenging enough to enable them to attain well.
9. In the last report, it was said that children, by the age of five, were broadly meeting the Desirable Learning Outcomes for their age and exceeding them in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. There has been improvement, especially in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils were attaining above expectations in English and mathematics. There has been significant improvement except in writing, which has remained in line with the national average. Attainment in science was average. There has been considerable improvement in this subject, as a result of very good planning and leadership. Attainment was below average in history, but it has improved to average levels of attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships with each other and adults are strengths of the school and make a very good contribution towards promoting their attainment and progress. This judgement maintains the findings at the time of the previous inspection and reflects the widespread views of parents. Parents state that their children enjoy school. The attendance and punctuality of the pupils are good.
11. Throughout the school the pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good. Pupils with special educational needs also have very good attitudes to their work. Most pupils concentrate well and show interest in what they are doing, often for extended periods. This was particularly noticeable with even the youngest pupils during a Reception/Year 1 literacy hour, when pupils worked with considerable interest and enjoyment. During a science lesson, making an electrical circuit, Year 1 pupils became really excited when they successfully lit up the bulbs on their Christmas cards. They have the confidence to try to work out answers in front of their classmates, as seen during mental mathematics in numeracy lessons. Pupils settle quickly to group work in lessons and maintain their interest, even when not being directly supported by adults in the classroom.
12. Overall, pupils behave very well in the classroom, at play and lunch times. Almost all are open, well mannered, polite to adults and to each other, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They move around the school in an orderly way, even when not directly supervised. When they come into school early in the morning they can be trusted to take off their coats, put away their lunch boxes and sensibly choose activities for the first ten minutes or so before the register is taken. They wait patiently for other classes when going to and from assembly. They show respect for property when using the computers, for example, and take care collecting and putting away instruments during music lessons. Nevertheless, in a Year 2 class, a few pupils are not always well behaved. They call out or interrupt the teacher when she is teaching the whole class and this

sometimes spoils the learning environment for other pupils. There is no aggressive behaviour in the school and there have been no exclusions in recent times.

13. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and contribute to the quality of work in lessons. Pupils get on well with each other when playing games at break and lunch times. In the classrooms, the youngest respect each other's space when sitting close together on the carpet. Good co-operation was seen when Year 1 pupils worked together, sharing materials making Christmas stockings and cards. Year 2 pupils listened attentively to their teacher and their classmates when practising the times tables. Boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds work together very well, when doing group work in the classrooms and when playing at break and lunch times.
14. The pupils' personal development is also very good. They are starting to use their initiative and move around the classroom independently to find materials they may need. During a numeracy lesson, even the Reception pupils were able to leave the classroom to gather information. Pupils respond confidently to the various tasks within the classroom, such as handing out books and equipment and taking the register to the office. The older ones help in assembly by putting out chairs and operating the CD player. They are developing research skills through 'finding out' homework and by seeking books in the library. The pupils also benefit from collecting for charities during the year and meeting people in the community - such as when they serve tea and biscuits on the afternoons when grandparents are invited in.
15. Attendance is good. Over the past year, it has been over 95 per cent and this makes a significant contribution to the standards attained by the pupils. Absences are often due to the inevitable childhood illnesses, though a large proportion of parents insist on taking their children on holiday in term time. Unauthorised absences are commendably low, though holiday periods greater than ten days are not recorded in the registers. Punctuality is very good with almost all pupils in school up to ten minutes before the formal start of the day. Registration takes place very promptly at the start of the day and lessons start and finish on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. At the time of the last report, teaching was described as being satisfactory or better in 88 per cent of lessons. There was unsatisfactory teaching in 12 per cent of lessons. Teaching was very good or excellent in a small proportion of lessons - 16 per cent of the total. The teaching of history was unsatisfactory. Weak lessons were characterised by low expectations, poor use of assessment and inappropriate teaching strategies. There has been improvement in all these areas. More effective planning, with clear aims for the lessons, now ensures that teaching is more purposeful. The improvements have come about as a result of the effective monitoring of lessons by the headteacher and the deputy. The outcomes of this monitoring have been shared to help and support teachers to improve their practice. The willingness of teachers to listen to advice and their high levels of commitment have also been key factors in the process of improvement.
17. As a result, whereas half of teaching was good or better at the time of the last report, the proportion is now 70 per cent, with 43 per cent of teaching being very good or excellent. The proportions of good and very good teaching are highest in Reception and Year 1 classes, but there are also examples of very well taught lessons in Year 2 classes. Parents indicated in their questionnaire returns that they believe teaching to be good in the school. Teaching is a strength of the school, but it is not consistently of a high standard across all classes. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has dropped, but there are still some instances and they amount to about three per cent of all lessons. The weaknesses are in the quality of relationships and the control of pupils in a small number of cases and the appropriacy of the tasks being set. There is a small number of occasions when the work that is set is not structured so that all pupils can achieve well. The tasks are too difficult or too easy for some pupils.

18. There are many strengths in teaching. A significant one is the very good planning and preparation by all teachers. Lessons are well organised and structured so that pupils can build on their learning and succeed. Resources are used well to help pupils to achieve and to make learning interesting for them. In a very good science lesson with a Year 1 and Reception class, for example, the teacher had a good supply of bulbs, wires, batteries and clips as well as sufficient switches, made of card and metal foil, for every child to examine one and work out how it worked. She made the lesson relevant and exciting for them by giving them a purpose for the learning: they had to make a working circuit with a switch in order to light a Christmas tree or Rudolph's nose in a card they were designing and making. They had good opportunities to explore and find things out for themselves, to make decisions and to produce their own ideas and designs. The pupils were, as a result, excited, absorbed, involved and learnt a great deal of science because they both wanted and needed to do so. They worked hard because they enjoyed what they were doing so much.
19. Almost all teachers sustain high standards of behaviour and expectations in their lessons. In only a few lessons observed were the behaviour and attitudes of pupils unsatisfactory. In general, pupils know what the expectations are of their work rates and behaviour from the moment they enter the classroom. No time is wasted bringing them to order or settling them down. This helps to establish a very good learning ethos in the classrooms and very good relationships. There is mutual respect and liking and this leads to pupils wanting to succeed and working hard to please their teachers. This is a major factor in the progress that pupils make.
20. Most lessons taught in the school are good or very good. Other factors that are strengths in almost all teachers' work are both good subject knowledge, that gives teachers the ability and confidence to extend and challenge even the most able pupils, and good endings to lessons, when the learning objectives are revisited to consolidate their learning. The pace of learning is brisk in the good and very good lessons. In an excellent music lesson with the youngest children, the class worked with the teacher to compose music to accompany the story of 'The Elves and the Shoemaker'. The planning, teaching and organisation of the lesson were of the highest quality. Not only did the pupils attain well, but their enjoyment was a joy to see.
21. Lessons are structured so that skills and knowledge are built gradually and progressively over time. This is a strong feature of all lessons. In a literacy lesson with Year 1 pupils, for example, the teacher began with a whole class session in which she shared a story about a runaway pizza. Immediately, the pupils were able to use their knowledge of similar stories they had read to draw comparisons. The fact that they were beginning to recognise a particular story genre encouraged them to listen even more closely, heightening their interest. They were able to draw on previous work they had done on authors and illustrators to increase their enjoyment and understanding. At a technical level, they built on and developed further their knowledge of punctuation and made very good progress in developing their literacy skills through a series of well-planned and appropriate small-group activities.
22. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory but not better, there are many of the strengths that are consistent across almost all lessons. The lessons are planned well, but the pace is slower. The work is less stimulating and not always appropriate for the whole range of pupils in the class, so that some pupils do not make as much progress as they should.

The Quality of Teaching in Subject Areas

23. Teaching is very good for the under fives. The teachers plan activities to make them accessible and fun for the children. Where children are ready, they are encouraged and challenged, so that many children are reaching standards within level 1 of the National Curriculum. Children benefit from the teachers' skilful use of questioning, which encourages them and gives them confidence to participate. Group activities are well organised and teachers provide an excellent range of games and other materials that are appropriate to the age group of the children and stimulate their interest. Teachers give good support for the group activities, but the limited availability of additional adult support means that there are times when some children find it difficult to complete tasks.
24. In English, teaching is good. The planning and organisation of lessons are areas of strength, and ensure that time is used effectively. The literacy hour has been implemented well and the recent emphasis on the need to raise standards of writing and reading has led to increased monitoring of teaching, which has helped to raise standards further. In mathematics, teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and the numeracy hour is taught well. Teaching in science is very good overall in Key Stage 1, characterised by good subject expertise, good coverage of all the areas of the curriculum and effective use of first-hand experience.
25. The quality of teaching is a strength in many other subjects. The teaching is good in art. The pupils respond by concentrating well and working hard to try to reach their teachers' high expectations of them. In the two history lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory in one and unsatisfactory in the other. The teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject is passed on to the pupils and helps to make it enjoyable, except when the weak management of the class allows a few pupils to disrupt the lesson and make little progress. Teaching in music is very good. Teachers are inventive in their choice of themes for the lessons and this imaginative approach makes learning interesting. Pupils learn well as a result, showing high levels of enjoyment and energy. Teaching is good overall in physical education. Activities are well structured to enable the pupils to learn skills progressively. They give clear instructions, so that pupils always know what is expected of them.
26. No teaching was seen in design and technology or geography. The teaching of information and communications technology is satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate well the skills they want the pupils to learn.
27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. All pupils, whatever their abilities, have personal targets set for them. The planning for varied abilities is particularly good in English and mathematics. In the non-core subjects, the tasks set are mostly for the whole class, but expectations and outcomes vary with pupils' needs and abilities, as does the teachers' support during independent working.
28. Overall, the high quality of teaching leads in most lessons to pupils developing good, often very good, learning skills. They respond well to the expectations of them and work hard in class, concentrating well on their work and making considerable intellectual and, when appropriate, creative effort. The clear instructions they are given always ensure that they know what is expected of them.

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

29. Overall, the school provides good opportunities for learning and these promote high achievement, particularly in numeracy and reading. In most classes, teachers plan a wide range of imaginative activities that motivate pupils to want to learn. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are fully in place in the school. The planning and provision for numeracy are good throughout the school and these have proved helpful in raising standards. The implementation of the Literacy Strategy has been satisfactory overall, but has been much more effective in teaching reading skills than writing - which has not improved since the last inspection. Overall, these national

strategies have helped the teachers to develop a consistent way of planning for learning that identifies clearly the aims of lessons and what is to be learnt.

30. The curriculum for the foundation stage (Reception) meets the statutory requirements and incorporates all the areas of learning. In most areas it enables the children to make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals. Since the last inspection, as a result of a reduction in the school roll, three mixed age classes now operate that include Reception and Year 1 pupils. For most of the time, the work is organised satisfactorily to meet the needs of the two age groups, but there are occasions when the work does not offer appropriate challenges to the youngest pupils. High priority in the foundation stage is appropriately given to children's personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics.
31. The school curriculum at Key Stage 1 meets all the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Its breadth and balance has been improved since the last inspection such as in the application of mathematics and science and in the development of the history curriculum.
32. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and conforms to the National Code of Practice. Procedures are in place to ensure early identification and the nature of pupils' learning difficulties. Clear targets are set in pupils' individual education plans and these are effectively focused on their learning needs.
33. There are many well planned visits to places of interest in the locality and further afield. These include visits to the local church, a synagogue, museums, local festivals and an annual visit to Old Portsmouth. Such visits serve to enrich and support the curriculum, stimulate learning and widen pupils' experience of the wider world. A wide range of visitors to the school includes the local police officer, nurse, musical groups, theatre and puppet shows and a representative from the Reading Rural Life Museum. Extra-curricular activities are satisfactory. Computer, art and dance groups are organised after school and are popular and well attended by pupils.
34. The school has good links with the 11 local playgroups that serve the school. The headteacher visits a number of these at the beginning of the school year and the Reception class teachers visit others during the term prior to the new intake starting in September. Parents of pupils attending the playgroups are encouraged to visit to see the school at work. A conference to include the staff of the school and of the feeder playgroups has been organised in the spring term when a visiting speaker will talk about appropriate experiences in the education of young children.
35. At the end of Year 2, pupils move into several different junior schools in the area. The number and diversity of these make the development of strong links difficult to manage. However, the school is successful in maintaining good relationships with the schools and appropriate visits are arranged during the summer term.
36. Sex education is not provided formally, but relevant opportunities are taken during lessons and pupils' questions are dealt with appropriately. Health education and the understanding of the misuse of drugs and the safe use of medicines are taught through the science curriculum. All pupils are given equal opportunities across the full range of the curriculum.
37. Overall, the provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Most of the adults in the school provide very good role models and the pupils are made fully aware of their responsibilities within the school community. In most classes, there are clear expectations that pupils take responsibility for their action and that they demonstrate an understanding of the difference between good and unsatisfactory behaviour. The school rules are simply expressed so that they can be easily understood by children from four to seven years old and they are applied consistently and effectively, so that no pupil has any doubt of what is expected. The overwhelming majority of children respond appropriately and are invariably industrious, well behaved and courteous. In one class only does unacceptable behaviour occur. In this class, the group of pupils which is inattentive and disrespectful has not had the benefit of the school's very good provision for all of their schooling, being late entrants. The school encourages pupils to recognise the importance of positive attitudes and of being helpful to others with the entries in the

'golden book'. These pupils are mentioned at Friday celebration assemblies. Very well planned and run circle times, sessions in which pupils can explore moral and social issues with their teachers, help pupils to learn to listen to others and to be tolerant of different points of view. Their personal qualities and awareness of social responsibility are enhanced by the various responsibilities they have around the school.

38. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Their growing awareness of spirituality is developed sensitively and positively in collective worship and in religious education. It is also developed well through music, art, science, literature and environmental study. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Cultural growth is promoted through providing opportunities for pupils to become aware of local culture through stories, rhymes and visits. Visitors to the school such as musicians, dancers and museum personnel bring additional lively elements that arouse the pupils' interest in culture. The celebration of festivals such as Divali and Hanukka serves to introduce pupils to the faiths and cultural backgrounds of others. However, too little is done overall to help pupils develop an appreciation of the multicultural nature of contemporary British society. This is the only weakness in an otherwise well planned programme.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. All members of staff show appropriate concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage their development. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community. They feel comfortable approaching teachers and other adults working for the school if there are any problems. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory overall, although on a day-to-day basis teachers know their pupils well and are aware of their needs and of the progress they are making.
40. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. The headteacher is the designated officer for child protection and the school follows local procedures. The staff has received guidance on how to deal with situations that may arise and know who to report to if necessary. The provision for first aid is appropriate. Several members of staff have had first aid training and records are kept of any treatment and resulting letters or telephone calls home to parents. A health and safety policy is in place and the governors are actively involved in touring the school to identify any potential hazards. Outside contractors are used to regularly check the fire extinguishers and electrical items. The teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science, physical education and design and technology. However, the school has not carried out a full health and safety risk assessment in the last two years. In addition, electrical items do not have an up-to-date record of when they were last tested.
41. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development make a satisfactory contribution to raising pupils' achievement in English and mathematics, subjects in which regular assessment information is recorded to indicate the progress made by every pupil. However, assessment procedures in a number of subjects, including science and physical education, are not fully developed and are only effective in the short-term, whilst the class teacher who knows the pupils well is responsible for their teaching and progress. The procedures for recording and passing on information about individual pupils' progress are unsatisfactory, overall. There is not an up-to-date policy for the recording and assessment of pupils' work across the curriculum. However, the drawing up and implementation of a full assessment policy is currently in progress and is in the school's current development plan. The co-ordinator for assessment has recently attended a course for assessment and has drawn up plans to put in place new systems for assessment and recording that represent a significant improvement on the present practice. As present, the school is not succeeding in tracking the progress that pupils make in all of their subjects and in setting targets for their learning.

42. The monitoring of progress of pupils' personal development, although satisfactory overall, is not formalised and relies mainly on the teachers' knowledge of individual pupils. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. The behaviour policy was developed in discussion with parents as well as staff and governors. It has a good balance of rewards and sanctions. School and playground rules are on display and teachers raise them with the pupils at the beginning of the year and refer to them as necessary at other times. The inspectors saw very good instances in lessons of teachers ensuring that the pupils understood how to behave. Nevertheless, in some lessons the teacher did not insist on the pupils putting their hands up and they were allowed to continue to call out or chatter amongst themselves. The overall lack of bullying or oppressive behaviour is a result of the ethos around the school and the good role models provided by the staff, both teaching and non-teaching. The pupils who show any sustained difficulty with behaviour are monitored well through the school's special educational needs system.
43. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The early opening of the school makes for a relaxed and welcoming start to the day. The keenness of the pupils to come to school and the good relationships with parents result in little absence and lateness is rare. Parents are generally prompt in notifying the reason for their children's absences. However any unexplained absences are not followed up for two or three days. Holidays are a significant reason for many of the absences. Some parents take holidays for longer than ten days.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents showed that they are very pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team supports all of their positive comments and their views have changed little since the last inspection. Parents recognise that the school is well led and that the teaching is good. Their children like coming to school and make progress from the level of support they receive. The school expects them to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. They consider that their children receive the right amount of homework to do at home. The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable approaching the school with any questions.
45. The school has established very good links with the parents and these contacts are very effective. The headteacher sends newsletters home each month providing general information as well as many other letters on more specific matters. Every half term the letters include details of the topics being covered by each class. Every morning and afternoon provides a very good opportunity for parents to see the teachers. The inspectors saw many conversations taking place and it is very apparent that parents feel very welcome to come into the school. The parents were actively involved in devising both the home school agreement and the behaviour policy. There are formal meetings with teachers in the autumn and spring terms at which parents find out what their children will be doing and to discuss their progress. Almost all parents attend. In the summer term an open morning provides an opportunity to see the pupils' work over the year and to receive the annual report on progress. This report provides a good summary for all subjects of what the children know and can do as well as targets for English, mathematics and science. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the setting and review of their individual education plans.
46. Parents' involvement with the school makes a very good contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. The overall positive attitudes of the pupils reflect the extent to which parents encourage their children to respect the school and the education it provides. The meetings for new parents and the very good booklet of information provide extensive information of what the children will be learning in school and guidance on how parents can help at home. The school also holds workshops on numeracy, literacy and helping children with their handwriting. Reading books go home every day and some of the reading records were seen to include useful comments by parents. The Friends' Association is very supportive in arranging both fund raising and social events, including ones for the benefit of the pupils. Many parents come to help in the

classrooms on a regular basis and many more are willing to help on trips out of school. Parents provide material for lessons such as artefacts for history lessons and examples of pottery for design technology. Their involvement is enhanced with other initiatives including a fathers' day and a grandparents' afternoon.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. At the time of the last report, the school was managed well and provided satisfactory value for money. The headteacher was providing good leadership, working very effectively in partnership with staff, governors, parents and pupils. The school development planning was detailed, but there was no long-term financial planning. There has been satisfactory improvement since then.
48. Overall, the leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are very good. The governing body is fulfilling its responsibilities well in almost all its areas of responsibility. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is good and effective action is taken as a result. The principles of best value are applied well in all financial decisions and resources are used well.
49. The headteacher, supported very well by the deputy, is ensuring a very clear educational direction for the school. She has, as a result of very effective monitoring of teaching and attainment, identified the key areas for development and put in place appropriate and effective strategies to bring about improvement. For example, she was aware, through the monitoring of National Curriculum test results, that the quality of pupils' written work at the end of Year 2 was low. She has monitored the teaching of writing as a result and has arranged for an education adviser from the local authority to observe teaching and provide in-service training for the staff. It is too early for this to have been effective.
50. The subject co-ordinators provide good leadership in their subject areas. They produce the long-term planning for each subject, give useful advice and guidance to teachers and monitor the medium-term planning to ensure that the coverage is satisfactory. Delegation is used effectively and all members of staff who have additional responsibilities carry them out well. The provision for the children under five is managed well. The deputy headteacher monitors the teaching and learning of this group of children and ensures that their progress is monitored effectively. The aims of the school are reflected very well in all of its work.
51. There are 18 pupils on the Code of Practice register, two are in receipt of a statement. Individual education plans are precise in content and identify specific areas to be addressed. This aspect of the school's work is managed well by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). The teaching and support staff keeps regular and accurate records of pupils' progress. Reviews are conducted on a termly basis and parents are involved at the end of year reviews. The school enjoys particularly good relationships with external agencies and the special educational needs governor is fully involved in the work of the school and the governing body is updated on relevant information at each meeting. The governing body is very supportive in this area. The more able pupils are also given consideration in terms of needs.
52. The governing body is well informed about the work of the school and has a good understanding and knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development. The governors carry out their statutory duties well. They are involved in setting the budget, ensuring best value from financial decisions, school development planning and the monitoring of finances. The governors have a strong say in the shaping of the school's future direction.
53. They are also involved in the monitoring of the work of the school, not only through the monitoring of National Curriculum test results, but also through regular visits to classes. Every governor on the curriculum committee visits the school at least once a half term, with a different subject focus for each visit. At the end of these visits, a report is prepared and then shared with fellow governors. As a result of these, the governors are on the whole well informed about the curriculum provision and are coming to a good understanding of teaching aims and objectives.

54. The quality of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, by the headteacher and her deputy is good and has made a contribution to the standards of teaching now seen throughout the school. There is a good programme of class visits, linked to performance management. The school's strategy for performance management is developing well.
55. Statutory requirements for the appraisal of teachers and for some items of information for parents in the governors' annual report were not being met at the time of the last report. These are now in place.

Finance

56. The school budgets systematically for all expenditure. The senior managers and the governing body allocate major funding decisions according to the priorities outlined in the School Development Plan. Governors and all members of staff are involved in the determining of these priorities. In so far as there is scope for governors to make decisions about how the rest of the budget is spent, they always seek best value in the allocation of contracts. Curriculum co-ordinators have responsibility for their own budgets and similarly seek to maximise the value they can get from their funding in terms of the effectiveness of the resources they purchase. Overall, the quality of educational provision has benefited from the careful management of the budget. Funds have been allocated successfully to areas of educational priority. These have proved to be successful in raising standards and the quality of educational experience for pupils. Funding has been used well to purchase a very good range of reading books to support work in the literacy hour and reading standards in the school are high. The resources the school has added to the national funding for information technology have helped to raise standards in that subject area by widening the opportunities for pupils to have access to computers and use them to help their work across the curriculum. A computer suite has been created in the large entrance area to the school and the effective use of this good resource has helped to raise attainment. The quality and rigour of financial management is good: the last auditors' report was satisfactory and the recommendations it made were minor and have been addressed.
57. The school makes effective use of new technology. It is used appropriately for administration and in many subject areas. Special grants, for educating pupils with special educational needs, are used appropriately. Overall, taking account of the progress made by pupils, the quality of teaching, the good personal development of pupils and the relatively low costs of the school, value for money is good.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

58. Accommodation in the school is satisfactory, overall. The site is attractive and offers a generous amount of playground space for the pupils in the school to all play outside safely. The outside areas are attractively landscaped and include shaded areas as well as adventure play equipment. Considerable energy and imagination has gone into the planning and construction of the outside facilities and they are, overall, a good stimulating environment for rest and play. There are some strengths in the unusually designed internal space. There is a good-sized hall, a separate and sound-proof music room and a spare classroom that is used for storage and for teaching small groups when appropriate. The large central area has been used well to create a large library space, equipped with a good range of books. There is also a computer suite in this area and the *magic castle*, an exciting construction in which the pupils with special educational needs are taught in small groups for withdrawal work. The classrooms are open plan and small for the number of pupils in them. However, teachers use the available space very well so that learning does not suffer. The areas outside the classrooms, containing play shops and science activity areas amongst other things, are used well to supplement the accommodation. The very responsible attitudes engendered in most pupils ensure that they can be trusted to work hard and well outside of the classrooms with the minimum of supervision.
59. The display spaces around the school, in classrooms and corridors, are used well to celebrate pupils' work. The standard of cleanliness in all areas of the school is good and there is no litter.

The site manager and the cleaning staff work hard to support the teachers in maintaining a difficult building as a teaching environment of quality.

60. Learning resources are good in most subjects. Resources for information technology are good in the school, the central facilities being effectively organised, with a variety of appropriate software. Information and communications technology is used well overall, including the use of computers for school administration.
61. The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. The SENCO is a full-time teacher. She has made good links with the learning support team from the local education authority and uses them to give guidance to all staff. She has satisfactory contact with outside agencies.
62. The programme of professional development for all staff is thorough and well organised and includes good provision for performance management. The support for newly qualified teachers is generally good. The teaching assistants are appropriately trained and they give good levels of support, as do the clerical and administrative staff. All the adults who work in the school make a valuable contribution and help to ensure that the work of the school proceeds smoothly.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In order to continue to improve and to raise levels of attainment and the quality of education in the school, the governors, headteacher and teaching staff, with the support of the local education authority, should:
 - develop strategies to improve the teaching of writing in order that more of the higher attaining pupils reach level 2a and level 3, by the end of Year 2. This entails:
 - encouraging teachers to have higher expectations of pupils' writing skills;
 - providing interesting, extended opportunities for writing for the higher attaining readers in order to further extend their writing skills;
 - improving the presentation, quality and accuracy of written work by way of meaningful opportunities for pupils to redraft significant pieces of written work; (paragraphs 3,4,5,6,76,79,89.)
 - develop strategies for tracking the progress of individual pupils in the core and non-core subjects, as outlined in the school improvement plan, with a clear focus both on what the pupils are capable of achieving and what is expected in terms of National Curriculum levels; (paragraphs 41,42.)
 - ensure that teaching is consistently good in Key Stage 1 by regularly monitoring teaching to be certain that the work planned is appropriate, expectations are consistently high and class management and control strategies are effective; (paragraphs 17,22,25,85,111).

Other areas for development that have been noted by the inspection team, but not picked out as key issues, that the governors may wish to include in their action plan, are the need to:

- improve the curriculum for the children under five years old. At present, in the mixed Reception and Year 1 classes, the curriculum for the under fives is not always providing enough opportunities for these children to learn through play and exploration;
- ensure that a health and safety audit is carried out regularly, including a biennial check on portable electrical appliances and plugs.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	40	27	27	3	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	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		125
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		22

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.73
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.08
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	26	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	23
	Girls	25	25	23
	Total	48	47	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95	93	91
	National	89	83	86

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	24
	Girls	25	23	26
	Total	48	46	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94	90	98
	National	82	86	87

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	88
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8
Average class size	23.8

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	130

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	300360
Total expenditure	300568
Expenditure per pupil	2031
Balance brought forward from previous year	13968
Balance carried forward to next year	13760

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	119
Number of questionnaires returned	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	25	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	48	4	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	52	0	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	50	6	2	6
The teaching is good.	67	29	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	52	12	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	33	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	47	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	48	42	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	33	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	38	2	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	50	6	0	2

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

64. Children start school in the September after their fourth birthday. There are 36 on roll. The older four year olds attend full-time and the younger four year olds attend part-time until January. Since September, as a result of a reduction in pupil numbers, the school has re-organised the Reception and Y1 children into three parallel mixed age classes. The local education authority's baseline assessment procedures indicate that the children's level of achievement on entry to school is slightly above average.
65. As a result of the new system of mixed year groups and the appropriate emphasis placed on the development of numeracy and literacy skills, the importance of play as a medium of learning is under-emphasised. The planning guidelines and the work observed during the inspection show that there is not always suitable provision for structured play that provides challenging and extended opportunities, building on prior learning experiences. This is the only weakness in an otherwise good programme of work. Teaching is very good overall. Teachers' class control and management are very good. They establish very good relationships with the children that ensure that the children listen and learn. Very good discussion takes place as a result of the teachers' willingness to listen and respond positively to children's ideas and their excellent questioning skills. There has been good improvement in the foundation stage since the previous report. The key areas of literacy and numeracy now are given greater emphasis and attainment has risen. They now exceed the Early Learning Goals in these areas. Children's attainment also exceeds expectations for their age in the areas of physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal and emotional development. In their creative development, they are meeting the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Most children have had some form of pre-school education and are used to mixing with other children. This helps them to settle easily into the school routine. The members of staff have built up very good relationships with the children. They are encouraging and supportive, while at the same time setting high standards for behaviour. As a result, the children are sensible and clearly know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They share and take turns readily, they tidy up responsibly and they look after books and other equipment carefully. They listen well to the staff in the introductory part of sessions. They are interested in their work and remain on task for extended periods. They are able to organise themselves well when given opportunities to work independently such as in Santa's Workshop or with construction toys. They are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

67. The Reception and Year 1 pupils are divided into three ability groups for the literacy hour. Most of the Reception pupils are in the same group but three of the higher attainers are with Y1 pupils. The quality of teaching in this area ranged from good to very good and is very good overall. Teachers plan a balanced and interesting programme of work for this area of learning and the children achieve well because they enjoy what they are asked to do. They are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year.
68. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of good speaking and listening skills. Most children display good concentration spans and listen attentively in class sessions. They follow discussions carefully and put their hands up appropriately to answer questions. They are learning to enjoy books and stories. During one session when the focus of the class reading was, 'The Runaway Pizza', the children quickly made comparisons with other stories with similar content and characters. They know the meaning of 'author' and 'illustrator' and, in addition to full stops and commas, are able to identify question marks and exclamation marks in the 'big' books they are

reading. All the full-time children make good progress with their early reading skills. Most are able to recognise some words and short phrases from their reading books and three are already independent readers. They all take books home to share with their parents and this contributes to the good progress being made. The part-time children who attend in the afternoon miss out on the literacy sessions for the first term. Most of the children have made a good start with writing independently and two are able to form a simple sentence without help.

Mathematical development

69. The children remain in their class groups for numeracy and all are making good progress with their numeracy skills. They are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year.
70. Most are confident with numbers up to ten and many manage well with numbers up to twenty. Most can match objects to numerals and are beginning to acquire an early sense of addition and subtraction as they count forwards and backwards. They can associate these activities with the language of 'more' or 'less', 'bigger' and 'smaller'. The children have devised their own block graph of their favourite party food. They are able to explain clearly how they gathered the information and are able to interpret the data from the simple graph they have compiled. The work in the numeracy sessions is well planned and delivered. The quality of the teaching was consistently of very good quality. Patient and constructive questioning encourages pupils to think for themselves and so learn well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Suitable foundations are being laid in science and computer technology. The children's acquisition of early keyboard skills and their handling of the 'mouse' are developing well. They are able to follow simple instructions and are beginning to understand how the computer can help them. After experimentation in producing an electrical circuit, the children are able to discuss sensibly the simple requirements necessary to make a bulb light up. They have made a study of sounds in the environment and have recorded their findings on a tape-recorder. They are able to identify loud and quiet sounds and decide which are pleasant and which unpleasant. They are developing a sound sense of the past through comparing and discussing the difference between 'then' and 'now' in relation to lamps from Victorian to present times. A small 'museum' of lamps has been created in class areas. In relation to their topic 'Light and Day', they have talked about the habits of nocturnal animals. They have observed the moon and discussed how it changes shape and they are able to discuss knowledgeably how it is best to be seen at night, for example, through wearing a reflective strip or carrying a light. The teaching is consistently very good, making very good use of resources and first-hand experience to interest the children and to help them to understand. As a result, the progress made by the children is good in this area of learning. They are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year.

Creative development

72. Progress in creative activities is generally satisfactory and is good in music. Overall, they are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. The quality of the teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall, ranging from mainly satisfactory to excellent. It is the teaching of music that is excellent. High expectations challenge the children and they work hard to meet them, making very good progress as a result. All the children enjoy their musical experiences. They sing tunefully and are able to use percussion instruments to provide various sound effects in response to a story stimulus. They demonstrate good ability to keep a beat and they stop and start appropriately. They also show good control of the instruments when playing softly, loudly, slowly and quickly.
73. The teaching of other aspects, such as art, is satisfactory, but there is not enough opportunity for pupils to make choices and explore the use of materials for themselves. This restricts the progress they make in their learning. The children have gained confidence in the use of tools and materials and know how to use equipment safely. However, many of the activities are too teacher-

directed. For example, when making photograph frames, the children had few opportunities to use their own ideas in relation to the design of the frames and were not encouraged to make choices on what materials to use.

Physical development

74. The children have good skills in using appropriate tools, objects, construction toys and malleable materials. Overall, they are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. They are taught to hold pencils and crayons correctly so that they can write and draw neatly. Outdoor play was not observed because of inclement weather. Observations of the children indicate that they are able to use space sensibly without bumping into each other in the class areas and around the school. They wait patiently in lines and they take their turn when moving through a door or confined area. The teaching is well planned and class control is excellent. As a result, children learn to listen and to follow instructions, so that the development of physical skills is accelerated. No time is lost in correcting inappropriate behaviour and children are taught to watch and to learn from each other.

ENGLISH

75. Standards in English are above the national average for pupils at the age of seven. This inspection found that attainment is at the level suggested by national test results in 2000, which were above average, and that standards in the subject are broadly similar to those described at the time of the last inspection in 1997.
76. However, within this broader picture there are variations for different aspects of the subject by the end of Year 2. For example, standards in reading are very high compared with the national average, in the top five per cent of all schools, and are above average when they are compared nationally with schools in similar contexts. This is because pupils are well taught and practise their reading skills regularly, both at school and at home. Standards in writing, however, are not as high as they could be. While they are in line with those expected nationally, they are below the average in comparison with standards in writing in similar schools. Although pupils in Year 2 have adequate opportunities to practise writing skills, they are not encouraged with sufficient frequency to improve the quality of their work; for example, by first drafting their ideas and then improving on them. Pupils' first efforts are often accepted as their best, with the result that they are not always challenged sufficiently to raise the standard of their work.
77. Standards in speaking are above average across the school. Pupils are generally given sufficient opportunities to express themselves in class discussion, both during the literacy hour and in other lessons. In some class discussions, pupils are encouraged to think carefully before they reply and to give reasons for their answers. In these, teachers often create a calm working atmosphere in which pupils are encouraged to speak quietly and to have proper regard for the contribution of others. Teachers and classroom assistants use questioning well when they are supporting pupils working on their own or in groups, encouraging them to describe a problem they have encountered or to explain how they are tackling a task. Pupils also support each other well when working individually, taking time to offer quiet advice to those in difficulty. From the age of five, pupils develop very good listening skills. In general, teachers quickly establish a quiet working relationship with their pupils at the beginning of each lesson, encouraging them to listen attentively to each other. Pupils learn to adopt this strategy when they are collaborating in small groups, so that they progressively become more aware and respectful of the needs of others to express their views. Most pupils develop longer spans of concentration as they move through the school, and are very attentive when they are required to listen at length, for example in assembly or when a story is read.
78. Attainment in reading across the school is well above the national average and has risen since the time of the last inspection, when it was described as good. Pupils are taught to read systematically using a variety of strategies. By the age of five, many already recognise a few words and identify correctly many of the initial sounds. Pupils quickly gain confidence in reading

because they practise a range of skills regularly and systematically and because there are high expectations of success. Teachers have established secure patterns of teaching and practice which make use of a wide range of carefully graded reading books. Parents support pupils' efforts well and school and parents work well together to ensure that pupils make good progress. Strong features of this successful partnership are that new parents are given sound, detailed advice on how they can best support their children, and that there is constant informal liaison between home and school on pupils' progress. Older, higher attaining pupils read from a variety of texts, including poetry and non-fiction, and have a good understanding of how to use the school library to retrieve information. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their efforts to read. They are well supported by both teachers and classroom assistants who have a good understanding of pupils' learning needs and deploy a wide range of skills to ensure that these are met.

79. This inspection confirms this year's test results, which indicate that standards in writing are below those in reading. Although in line with national averages, standards are lower than those for similar schools and have declined a little since the last inspection. Building on the good start they receive before they are five, pupils in Year 1 write with increasing confidence and greater length, so that many can order ideas sequentially to the point where they can write a simple story or factual account by the end of the school year. Some use writing effectively to support their work in design and technology, or in science. For example, they write clear instructions for using a toy, or describe a simple science experiment. Many younger pupils use full stops to clarify meaning, and are beginning to use capital letters to begin a new sentence. At Year 2, pupils develop further their confidence in writing; many write at length, developing a well-rounded narrative and correctly demarcating sentences. Some higher attaining pupils begin to use commas to distinguish items in a list. However, average and higher attaining pupils do not always produce the work of a sufficiently high standard because too often their first effort is accepted as their best and because they are not encouraged to draft their first ideas, and then to reflect and improve upon them. Sometimes, too, the context within which a piece of writing takes place is not discussed sufficiently with pupils, so that they have too few ideas on which they can exercise their imagination. Although the work of these pupils is regularly marked, teachers' comments do not always encourage them to higher achievement, so that they do not progress as rapidly as expected. A few Year 2 pupils are well motivated, producing work of high quality and displaying good powers of concentration to finish a task to their satisfaction.
80. Standards of spelling are generally good. As with reading, there are well established, successful practices for teaching spelling from Year 1. Pupils are expected to learn spellings at school and at home, and teachers use good strategies to develop the visual memories of their pupils. Sometimes when writing, older pupils do not spell accurately words which they already know, although they are able to correct their own mistakes successfully when these are pointed out to them. Handwriting is taught systematically, and, from the age of five, pupils are encouraged to write individual letters incorporating the correct joining stroke; this prepares them well for writing a cursive script. In all classes, standards of handwriting are at least satisfactory; and some pupils are beginning to develop a confident, joined style by the time they leave the school.
81. Teaching in English is good overall and is often very good at Year 1. In Year 2, teaching is generally good for all aspects of English except for writing, for which it is just satisfactory. Across the school, teachers plan and organise their work carefully, pacing its introduction well so that pupils have sufficient time to practise different skills. Patterns of work are well established, and pupils display a good knowledge of the way in which teachers organise their lessons, settling quickly both to class discussions and to individual tasks after these have been set. Teachers display a good understanding of all aspects of the subject, except in the case of writing in Year 2 where average and higher attaining pupils are not challenged often enough to produce work of a sufficiently high standard. In the very good lessons seen, teachers had high expectations of what their pupils were to achieve and established a busy working environment in which all pupils were well motivated to learn. The achievement of pupils, which is generally good, is generally well monitored in lessons and pupils' efforts are well supported by classroom assistants, some of whom use questioning skills very effectively and make a very positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs are well taught and

make good progress. Homework is used very effectively, particularly to support the practice of reading and spelling, and close co-operation between home and school make a significant contribution to the very good standards in reading.

82. The English curriculum is sufficiently broad and a full range of skills is taught. The principles of the National Literacy Strategy have been introduced appropriately. Some aspects of literacy are supported well in other subject areas, especially the skills associated with reading. Writing skills are developed less well. However, older pupils are rarely asked to copy writing from the board or to mimic teachers' written examples. They are able to forge their own written responses in geography, history, religious education and science. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in these subject areas, however, nor for them to revise and improve their writing. The headteacher has a very good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and a clear view of the priorities for development. She observes teaching, and offers advice to teachers on their performance. Pupils' test results are evaluated, and are used to identify areas where the English curriculum needs to be strengthened, but this information is not yet applied effectively to enhance the individual performance of pupils. Resources for the subject are very good. There is a good supply of reading books, appropriately organised and graded so that pupils have easy access to the material they need. Older pupils have a good understanding of how to books containing factual information. The school makes occasional use of drama and the theatre to enrich the curriculum; for example, 'A Christmas Carol' was performed by a visiting theatre group. Authors' workshops are also arranged, during the school's book week, for example, so that pupils accumulate a wide range of experiences of how the language may be used and enjoyed.

MATHEMATICS

83. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards well above that expected for their age. The national test results for 2000 were well above the national average and test results nationally and above those in similar schools. Standards show an upward trend since 1997. The number of pupils achieving level 3 has increased and the inspection confirms this.
84. By the age of seven, pupils have very good knowledge and understanding of place value up to 100 and, for many, up to a 1000 or more. Pupils solve problems quickly and accurately using money; buying items and identifying change required. They recognise shapes and know the properties of 2D and 3D shapes and use measuring instruments accurately. For example, less able pupils measure different parts of the body, working in pairs supporting each other. They measure correctly and record their results accurately. The average pupils measure head size, adding three centimetres and cutting cord to make Christmas hats. The more able pupils measure the length of various curved lines using string and then transfer the length of string to a ruler. Pupils are secure overall in checking their results. In one class, two girls noticed a vast difference in the measurement of their head size, rechecked and discovered an error in measurement. Throughout the school, the pupils are confident in applying their own mathematical knowledge to problems. This is, in part, the result of very good teaching of the application of mathematics in the foundation stage.
85. The quality of teaching is good overall, ranging from satisfactory to very good. In the better lessons, pupils' objectives are outlined and discussed at the beginning of the lessons, so that pupils know what is expected of them. Descriptions are clear and questioning is effective, probing pupils' thinking and encouraging an enthusiasm for answering. Resources, time and support staff are used effectively to support pupils. The pace of lessons is brisk. As a result of these factors, pupils achieve very well in mathematics and learn quickly. The pupils eagerly set about their tasks, following stimulating and often demanding introductions, thus promoting good progress. In the least successful lesson, there was an over-tolerance of talking by some pupils, which slowed the pace of the lessons and generally impeded progress.

86. Teachers are familiar and secure with the Numeracy Strategy, which teachers apply effectively. They adopt the standard structure given, adapt good questioning techniques and give clear explanations during the introductory sessions. Tasks are well matched to pupils' ability. The teaching and learning of numeracy is supported well in other subject areas. Mathematical skills are learnt and used in science, when weighing measuring and setting out tables of results. Numeracy skills are reinforced in geography and history and pupils practise their counting skills in physical education and at registration. Good classroom management of groups, the effective use of appropriate resources and good support for individuals enthuse and motivate pupils. The plenary sessions are well conducted and provide the teachers with evidence to appraise the pupils' strengths and weaknesses. This usefully informs future planning and teaching. The oral and mental sessions are usually taught with enthusiasm and pupils learn quickly and display good mental agility. There is evidence that information and communications technology is used well to support mathematics, although none was observed during the inspection week.
87. Teachers use day-to-day assessment for short-term guidance on how well pupils are learning and data is now analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance in the national tests. This is a very positive move, enabling teachers to be able to target and predict more accurately and effectively.
88. The school has sustained its standards since the last inspection and the trend is upward. The co-ordinator has been in post for only a short time but is already making a very positive impact. She acknowledges that, in order to raise standards even further, a sharper focus needs to be given to assessment and monitoring.

SCIENCE

89. The results of National Curriculum teacher assessment for seven year olds in 2000 show that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level, level 2, was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching above average standards, performing at level 3, was also well above average. Almost half (49 per cent) of pupils were assessed at level 3. These assessments reflect the attainment observed during the inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in science is well above average. This is a significant improvement on standards at the time of the previous inspection, which were average. The pupils' skill at recording their work, although a weaker area, is satisfactory. There are some weaknesses in presentation skills, which affect the quality and quantity of recorded work, but this is related to the quality and presentation of pupils' writing. These weaknesses are partly an outcome of a strength in the provision, the way in which pupils are made to record and write up their work themselves rather than using a template or notes written for them by the teachers .
90. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a very good knowledge of science and the teachers ensure a good development of knowledge and skills, as well as teaching key vocabulary. Pupils are adept at practical investigations. These capture pupils' interest and provide the basis for good discussion, which allows for the development of good skills of enquiry and prediction. They experiment with different ways to make a circuit, use simple switches and explore their effectiveness. They understand the function of the battery and have a very good understanding of how a simple lighting circuit works and why. They have a good knowledge for their age of the different parts of the human body and their functions, as well as the purpose of the skeleton, having considered the skeletal structure of humans, animals and dinosaurs. They have a very good basis for understanding forces. They have explored, for example, the way that the jet of air escaping from a balloon can be used to propel a straw along a string
91. The behaviour of pupils and their attitudes to their work are good. Pupils of all ages enjoy their science lessons and work hard at their tasks. Younger pupils work well together, and share their observations with their classmates and teachers. The majority of older pupils respond well to the opportunities to carry out investigations and observations, collaborate well and use equipment

carefully and safely. In discussion, they are able to recall previous work, using correct terminology.

92. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are well planned, with a clear structure and learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. Teachers are also very careful to use and emphasise the correct scientific terminology. There is good attention to giving pupils good practical experiences. The good provision of resources enables pupils to work independently. The lesson planning provides for a tight structure, in which, following the initial introduction, group activities are planned so that the teachers are able to support and assess the work of the pupils. Support assistants provide good support for pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers are providing pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum. There is a structured approach to the build up of skills, so that pupils apply previously learnt knowledge to new learning. There is a very good emphasis on direct experience and experimentation. The pupils, through excellent, skilful questioning by the teachers, are being made to think for themselves (not told facts, but helped to develop their own scientific thinking) that is leading to such good results. As a result, by the time they are seven, pupils have achieved well. They are beginning to understand what a fair test is, for example, and to know why it is necessary. There are good, supportive opportunities in which pupils can make informed suggestions and they show good skills in asking questions and sharing their predictions.
93. The management of science is very good. The school's scheme of work ensures that there are clear learning objectives and that there is continuity and progress in the acquisition of scientific knowledge and understanding. The assessment procedures are satisfactory, although they are not yet effective in tracking the progress of individual pupils or for setting target for classes and year groups. Resources are good, and selected to provide effective support to thematic work. The co-ordinator monitors planning and pupils' work, but has not yet had opportunities to observe teaching and learning.

ART

94. Art shares timetable provision with design and technology. It was only possible to see two lessons during the inspection. Evidence was also gathered from the policy and scheme of work and from the scrutiny of the many examples of pupils' art that are well displayed around the school.
95. Standards in art have been maintained since the previous inspection and are in line with the levels expected for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils develop their investigating and making skills systematically as they progress through the school. They make satisfactory progress. They have a variety of opportunities to express their creative and imaginative ideas and their observational skills through a range of media and cross-curricular themes. In Year 1 and Reception, pupils experiment interestingly with various forms of collage, using different textures and colours of paper. They produce colourful and expressive jungle pictures that bring across the excitement and complexity of a jungle well. In Year 2 this work is extended. Pupils have successfully used a wider range of materials to make large-scale representations of the local environment, featuring recognisable representations of houses, animals and people. Some pupils use the textures and colours of the papers and fabrics well. The overall standard of this work is in line with what could be expected of pupils of their age. They go on to explore the range of shades, colours and tones that they can make from fabrics and produce large-scale tone charts of a satisfactory standard that demonstrate their sense of colour. The higher attaining pupils have produced very good abstract pictures using light and dark tones with dramatic effect. They have based this work on the study of Vincent Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, and show a satisfactory appreciation of his style and techniques.
96. There are examples of art work produced by Year 2 pupils on computers, using paint programs. These are of an average standard overall, although some is of a very good quality. Almost all pupils can draw figures with a reasonable sense of proportion. The best work is of pictures of angels, some of which have particularly delicate and fine detail and a good sense of colour. These have been made into attractive calendars. In literacy lessons Year 2 pupils wrote

instructions for making models of angels. They then followed their instructions and produced good examples of 3-dimensional art work. These models show a good sense of the proportions of the human body and the facial details are well drawn in the best of them.

97. There is less evidence of good, detailed observational drawing. This is an aspect of art that can be developed in order to raise pupils' levels of achievement, which are just satisfactory at present. It is necessary to develop in all pupils the skills of close observation and shading to begin to give shape and texture to their work.
98. The quality of teaching is good. In Reception and Year 1 classes, the teachers used their expertise to provide a stimulating, well-structured lessons that took pupils step by step through the designing and planning skills of making and decorating a Christmas stocking or a Christmas card. The result was that the pupils showed great interest and worked carefully and creatively. The teachers demonstrate well, but also allow, in Years 1 and 2, a reasonable amount of choice to the pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to experiment with ideas and materials. The teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning, and this encourages the pupils to take pride in their work. Pupils respond well in art lessons. They have good attitudes to art. They enjoy the creative opportunities that the subject gives them and they behave well, treating equipment carefully and responsibly and cooperating very effectively in small group work.
99. The leadership and management of art are good. The co-ordinator has gathered a good range of accessible resources together. There is a good and detailed scheme of work, but no formal system for the assessment of art leading to the recognition and development of pupils' skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. No lessons on design and technology were observed during the week of the inspection. Judgements are based on discussions with the co-ordinator and the scrutiny of work plans, photographs and models made by the pupils. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is similar to that noted in the last report, when standards were judged to be in line with the expectations nationally for children of this age.
101. At the end of the key stage, pupils have average designing and making skills. They make moveable vehicles involving axles, wheels and basic body structures, demonstrating such skills as sawing, sticking, cutting, joining and assembling. Throughout the key stage, achievement is satisfactory and pupils show developing skills in the use of a range of tools, materials and components. They work successfully with textiles, wood and card as well as with food. Younger pupils discussed the best fillings for sandwiches, in line with the work they have done on healthy eating. After completing a survey of the most popular fillings, the pupils then made their own sandwiches to a reasonable standard.
102. As pupils progress through the school, they make moving structures using sliders. Pupils use these in a variety of models that display a good understanding of the principle of sliders and how they may be used in toy books to make moving pictures.
103. No teaching was seen. From the evidence that is available, it is clear that teachers are generally secure in their knowledge and are supported well in their planning by the co-ordinator. There is limited evidence of design and evaluation and this needs further development. The co-ordinator is committed and enthusiastic. She acknowledges that the assessment and recording of pupils' achievements and skills and the monitoring of their work and of teaching are areas for development. There is an appropriate range of resources.

GEOGRAPHY

104. Based on the observations made in the one lesson seen, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with older pupils, pupils are judged to achieve average standards in the subject. This is in line with standards attained during the last inspection. In the lesson seen, the quality of the

teaching was good. Pupils were introduced to the journey of a letter from posting to delivery and most displayed good understanding of the processes involved.

105. Year 1 pupils know about the importance of caring for the environment through visits to the locality and around the school grounds. They are able to discuss how noise affects other people or animals. They are able to identify which noises cause the most problem and have taped some of the most offending noises. Year 2 pupils are able to track their journey from home to school, referring to buildings and other landmarks they see on the way. They are able to locate Farnborough on a map of the British Isles and know where England is located on a world map. In relation to their current topic, 'Journeys', they are able to discuss different modes of travel and the quickest and most effective ways to travel for different purposes. Evidence from the work of last year's pupils shows that, by the end of the key stage, an annual visit to Old Portsmouth enables pupils to compare and contrast their own locality with another further afield to a satisfactory standard. Pupils learn how to use secondary sources such as aerial photographs, maps, information texts and stories to identify and describe where a place is and how it compares with other places.
106. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. The evidence in their books indicates that they work hard, sustain concentration and take pride in their work.
107. The subject is well co-ordinated and resourced. Geography and history are blocked into half-termly units and the work is planned over a two-year cycle. This system is shortly going to be reviewed to take account of the needs of the three mixed aged classes in the school. The system operating at present ensures satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum.

HISTORY

108. Two lessons were seen during the inspection. In one lesson the teaching was satisfactory and in the other it was unsatisfactory. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory, the disrespectful and inattentive behaviour of some pupils marred the learning atmosphere for others. A lack of challenge was posed in some of the follow-up work-sheet activities provided for pupils. Based on these two lessons, the inspection of teachers' planning, discussion with pupils and the scrutiny of previous work, it is evident that the majority of pupils attain the expected standards for their age. The planning and range of work covered are better in Y1 than Y2. There is a definite improvement since the last inspection, when attainment in the subject was judged to be weak.
109. Evidence provided from photographs and the books of last year's Year 2 pupils shows that pupils learnt effectively from a visit by a member of the Reading Rural Life Museum. She set up a Victorian kitchen in the school's music room and introduced the children to artefacts and customs from that era. They also benefited from a visit to Old Portsmouth, when they learnt to use secondary sources, such as old photographs and maps, as well as their own observations to make historical links with the past.
110. Year 1 pupils display a good understanding of life 'then' and 'now' through their observations and handling of different methods of lighting that have been collected in their class museum. They are able to discuss in simple terms the differences between gas, electric and candles and some advantages and disadvantages of each. They are beginning to understand the different ways in which people lived at different times. Year 2 pupils are able to retell historical events, such as the Gunpowder Plot, and know facts about famous people, such as Florence Nightingale. They are able to discuss sensibly why they think people acted as they did and the consequences of those actions. They can talk about and compare different ways of travel between Biblical times and now, but they are insecure in their understanding of the sequence of the chronology of the events covered.
111. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan work well, so that pupils build progressively the knowledge and skills that the subject requires. Ineffective classroom management was a problem in the unsatisfactory lesson observed, however. Some

pupils in Year 2 were allowed to distract others and this affected the pace of the lesson and the quality of the learning. Elsewhere, pupils are well behaved in lessons and have positive attitudes to the subject, enjoying historical enquiry and concentrating hard on their work.

112. The subject is well resourced and co-ordinated. Good use is made of outside agencies such as museums and costume lenders to extend and enrich the school's resources. Recent changes have been made to the school's programme of work to take account of new national guidelines.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

113. No full lessons were observed for information technology, but observations were made of small groups of pupils using the computers both in and out of classrooms. From these observations, scrutiny of documents, discussions with pupils during these sessions and with the co-ordinators, it is possible to judge that the attainment of pupils at the end of the key stage is average.
114. Opportunities are taken to involve pupils with the subject in pairs and small groups and this has resulted in the acquisition of basic information technology skills. As pupils pass through the key stage, the planning provides for opportunities for the basic skills to be developed, as well as the acquisition of new skills. Teachers and support staff have appropriate knowledge and understanding to secure opportunities to promote these skills. They show appropriate expectations of the pupils. Pupils are able to log on, change the font size and shut down. They are able to use the mouse to drag selective colours across the screen to make a picture and erase what was not required. A group of Year 2 pupils worked in pairs to make and print as many words as possible from the word 'moonlight' and showed sound word processing skills. Pupils use the computers to print out passages they have written, showing appropriate use of the word processing program and of the mouse and keyboard. In other areas of technology, pupils are able to use the audio distribution centres without assistance, be responsible for the music centre in assembly and demonstrate use of the roamer, a programmable 'floor robot'.
115. The teaching observed was satisfactory. Pupils are given encouragement and support that boosts their confidence and develops their skills appropriately. They respond well, taking care when working unsupervised with equipment. They sustain concentration and work hard even when no adult is in the immediate vicinity. The curriculum documentation provides teachers with sufficient guidance on planning a coherent programme of work, as well as maximising their use of the subject to support work in other areas of the curriculum.
116. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The level of resourcing is good. The computer suite is used well to support all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

MUSIC

117. Music is a major strength of the school. Standards of attainment in music at the end of the key stage are well above average. They have improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to be of a good standard.
118. Pupils have opportunities to sing regularly in whole school gatherings and on seasonal and community occasions. During rehearsals prior to, and in, a concert produced during the inspection, Year 2 pupils achieved very high standards in singing, playing the recorders and other percussion instruments and performing their own compositions after listening to and appreciating items of modern classical music. Pupils successfully created a wonderful atmosphere when their expressive movements blended with musical and voice sounds to denote owls hooting and cats screeching amongst other sounds. The content and performance were of a very high standard.

119. Pupils are able to create rhythmic patterns by combining parts of the body with percussion instruments to create background sounds to a range of stimuli. They handle instruments adeptly and display a good sense of rhythm and timing when keeping their part on the instruments. They are able to select the most appropriate instrument to create the right tone and sound for various purposes. They distinguish between high and low pitch and identify simple note values. During one lesson a mixed age class of Year 1 and Reception pupils sang and played percussion accompaniment to the story of 'The Elves and the Shoemaker'. They listened attentively to each other's contributions and were able to start and stop effectively at the teacher's command. Their performance, without exception, was of a very high standard.
120. Most Year 2 pupils learn to play the recorder and they have made good progress in reading music and playing the instrument since starting the tuition at the beginning of term.
121. The quality of the teaching in the lessons seen ranged from good to excellent and is very good overall. Teachers have very good expertise and very good class control and management. They plan the work well, with an appropriate range of teaching and learning strategies that keep the pupils interested. As a result, pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They work hard, sustain concentration and take pride in their work. Co-ordination of the subject is very good. The expertise of the LEA's advisory teacher is used successfully to extend and develop staff's knowledge and proficiency in teaching music. Long, medium and short-term planning is of good quality. The subject is very well resourced and the range of percussion instruments includes a good variety of instruments from a range of cultures. The music room is well organised and used effectively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. Standards in physical education are above average, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls. The school has worked hard to provide a balanced approach to gymnastics and dance, with transferred skills from gymnastics being used creatively by pupils in dance lessons. In most lessons, the teacher, support staff and pupils work well together. Good use is made of discussion, evaluation and pupil demonstration to develop the pupils' skills effectively.
123. Pupils work enthusiastically in gymnastics and dance. For example, in gymnastics, pupils travel using a variety of body shapes in different directions. When working on apparatus, pupils achieve well in climbing, swinging, jumping, landing and moving on, around and through. Very effective use is made of pupils watching and evaluating the performance of others so that pupils recognise the need for good body shape, style and fluidity. As pupils progress through the key stage, they show an increasing awareness of space. In dance, pupils listen carefully to instructions from a tape, supportive comments from teachers and the music. They listen to the mood of the music and reflect this in their interpretation through carefully thought out movements. They are aware that they should not copy the movements of others, but create their own sequence. As a result, pupils achieve well.
124. The teaching is good overall, varying from satisfactory to very good. Most teachers' expectations are high in relation to their pupils' performances and behaviour. Pupils respond to their teachers' high expectations well, trying hard to do their best. They experience the satisfaction of success and physical education lessons are an enjoyable experience. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding and insist on pupils' understanding of the safety aspects of the subject, by skilfully using demonstration and structuring lessons so that pupils face increased challenges. The teaching ensures that pupils work hard, sustaining concentration throughout the lessons.
125. No games lessons were observed during the inspection because they were not being taught in the term in which the inspection was carried out.

126. Co-ordination of the subject is sound and some assessment is being undertaken. Resources are good overall.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

127. By the age of seven, pupils reach a standard in the subject above that expected by the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus. Standards in religious education have improved since the time of the last inspection, when they were average. Pupils generally achieve well in the subject as they move through the school.
128. Pupils in Year 2 display a good knowledge of the basic beliefs and traditions of the Christian faith. They know, for example, that Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died on the cross and came back to life. Some can explain clearly that Joseph was Jesus' earthly father and that God is his father in heaven, although they are less clear about the importance of Jesus for Christians today. In general, pupils possess a good understanding of the sequence of events surrounding the birth of Jesus, and recount in some detail the Easter story. Pupils also know some of the stories associated with Old Testament figures, such as Noah and Joseph, and begin to explain the significance of their actions. For example, some know that Jonah found it impossible to hide from God when he was told to go to Nineveh. However, pupils sometimes confuse names and stories and do not understand, for example, that the stories surrounding Old Testament characters are much older than those of Jesus and his friends. Pupils understand that people hold different beliefs, and that each faith has particular customs or ritual. For example, many know that the Sabbath is important to Jews, and that this is observed in a special way. Some pupils know that light has a particular, but different, significance for Jews, Hindus and Christians, and can name and outline simply the festivals associated with each.
129. Pupils in Year 1 begin to understand that some days are special and that these are celebrated in different ways. They appreciate the excitement and anticipation that the arrival of a birthday or Christmas brings and they also begin to understand the reason for celebration and its magnitude. For example, they know that birthdays are a cause for personal celebration, but understand that Jesus' birth is commemorated all over the world. Pupils are able to identify the characters the Christmas story, and many are able to relate it accurately. Most pupils understand that Christians regard Jesus as a special person and some are able to give simple explanations of why this is so.
130. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory overall, but has some good features. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure. Where they are less confident in their own expertise, they make good use of resources, such as video recordings and stories, to support, illustrate and supplement their teaching. The work set is generally appropriate for pupils' ages and abilities. Sometimes, however, tasks are set which are too difficult for average and lower attaining pupils because they are not discussed or explained sufficiently. For example, some Year 2 pupils were asked to write about why Jesus is important for us today. They found this too difficult and consequently their progress in the lesson was impeded. Generally, however, lessons are well planned and proceed at an appropriate pace. Teachers monitor well the progress of individual pupils; in one lesson, for example, the teacher sat with each group of pupils, probing the understanding of each and checking that their knowledge was secure. Pupils are generally well managed, and teachers establish a purposeful working atmosphere to which pupils respond by displaying a genuine interest in the subject. Lower attaining pupils are often well supported in their work by both teachers and classroom assistants and so achieve well for their abilities.
131. The curriculum for religious education is sufficiently broad and balanced. Pupils are not only taught Christian stories and traditions, but are offered clear explanations of their purpose. For example, two pupils were able to explain simply the reason why Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan. Collective worship is used well to support the curriculum, and this is often a principal source of ideas and discussion. The headteacher, as curriculum co-ordinator has a good overview of the curriculum, and standards in the subject have improved under her leadership. Resources for the subject are well arranged and accessible; books, pictures and artefacts are arranged

logically for each theme in such a way that they offer good support for teachers as they prepare their lessons. The school has developed good links with local clergy who regularly visit to support and enrich the school's curriculum. Visits are made to local churches and to the synagogue at Reading in order that pupils may begin to appreciate the similarities and differences in the worship of different faith groups.