

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. PETER'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oliver's Battery Road North

Winchester

Hampshire

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116381

Headteacher: Marjorie Dean

Reporting inspector: Peter Kerr
(OFSTED No: 23583)

Dates of inspection: 27 - 30 November 2000

Inspection number: 224185

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oliver's Battery Road North Winchester Hampshire
Postcode:	SO22 4JB
Telephone number:	01962 852820
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Wini Meikle
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Kerr (OFSTED No: 23583)	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
		Music	How high are standards? The schools results and achievements
			How well are pupils or students taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Candy Kalms (OFSTED No: 9275)	Lay inspector		How high are standards? 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?
Patricia Walker (OFSTED No: 15372)	Team inspector	English	
		Art	
		Physical education	
Judith Howell (OFSTED No: 18083)	Team inspector	Science	
		Design and technology	
		Foundation stage	
		English as an additional language	
Graham Johnson (OFSTED No: 23054)	Team inspector	Information technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
		Geography	
		History	
		Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Peter's is a Voluntary Aided RC Primary school with 321 pupils on roll aged from four to eleven, drawn from a wide area. The children are taught in 11 classes in a modern building on a leafy site. Recent changes have been made to the interior of the building to provide separate teaching areas. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is below average. Children enter the school with above-average attainment, overall, but with a wide spread. There is an above average number of children on the register of special educational needs, but there is also an above average number of high-attaining children. Eight children have a language other than English as their first language and two have a Statement of Special Educational Need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective and rapidly improving school that enables the children to achieve high standards and excellent personal development by the end of Year 6. The teaching is very good. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is very effectively supported by the deputy head, the school's management team and the governing body. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- A common sense of purpose and commitment unites the school staff and governors, giving it an excellent capacity to succeed in its aim of achieving high standards within a Catholic ethos.
- The pupils achieve high standards in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good, with some excellent teaching.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, giving the school a very clear sense of direction; the deputy head and the school's management team work very closely with the head and fulfil their roles very effectively.
- The school makes excellent provision for the pupils' personal development, especially their spiritual and moral development, and provides a very good standard of care.
- The governors provide excellent support for the school and manage its finances very efficiently.

What could be improved

- The children do not achieve as well as they could in science in Key Stage 1.
- Achievement is not as high as it could be in geography in both key stages.

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

The school has already identified these areas for improvement in its long-term development plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1998, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Since then, there have been excellent improvements. All the key issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed. Teaching and standards have improved and all the areas of management that were weak are now very strong. The headteacher has brought very clear educational vision to the school. The deputy head and senior managers within the school are much more effective and have worked together with the headteacher to bring about improvements at a manageable but rapid rate. Relationships between the governors and the school have improved immeasurably. The governors have an excellent grasp of the school's needs and provide very effective support for the headteacher's management of the budget. Teaching is now very closely monitored and supported. The curriculum is broader, more balanced and much better organised and the children now have plenty of opportunities to investigate and explore and to be creative.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	B	A	B
Mathematics	A	B	A	A
Science	A*	A	B	C

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

The table shows that standards are well above average in English and mathematics compared with all other primary schools and above average in science. Compared with schools with a similar free school meals' entitlement, standards are average in science, above average in English and well above average in mathematics. Compared with other schools with similar Key Stage 1 results in 1996, however, the school compares more favourably: attainment is well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. This is a fairer reflection of the good progress that the inspection found the children to be making during Key Stage 2, and is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Overall, the children achieve well. The dip in results in 1999 in English and mathematics was due to disrupted teaching within that year group prior to Year 6. The children in fact made remarkable progress during their last year to achieve these results. The apparent decline in science standards does not reflect the children's achievements fairly because they have very good experimental skills, particularly in Key Stage 2, but these are not evaluated in the tests. In English, the children have exceptional speaking and listening skills and the quality of their free writing is very good. Their spelling is weaker than their punctuation and grammar, but the school is tackling this. In mathematics, they are very good at solving problems and finding general rules to explain patterns in numbers. The children achieve well and reach high standards in information and communication technology, art, history, design and technology, singing and creative dance. They do not achieve as well as they might in geography in both key stages and in science at Key Stage 1, but the school recognises this and has plans to address the issue. The school achieved its targets in English and mathematics in 2000. The targets for Year 6 in 2001 are similar to current results in English and slightly lower in mathematics to reflect the number of children with special educational needs in this year group.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The children enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They are eager to ask and answer questions and to contribute to discussions, and this has a positive impact on their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The children now behave well in lessons and around the school. On occasions their behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Harassment and bullying in the school are rare. There are occasional examples of aggressive behaviour in the playground, which are dealt with effectively, and there has been one fixed-term exclusion.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The children are friendly. They are mature and responsible and show respect for the feelings and views of others. They show initiative and independence in their learning, willingly accept responsibility and enjoy contributing to decision-making. The pupils relate very positively to one another and to the adults they work with, and this helps their learning.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and there are few instances of unauthorised absences. The good attendance rates contribute to the good learning that takes place. Punctuality is not so good, however, with a number

	of pupils arriving persistently late for school.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen, overall	Very Good	Good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching is very good, overall – an excellent improvement since the last inspection. In the 65 lessons that were observed, the teaching was always at least satisfactory and was good or better in 80 per cent of lessons. It was at least very good in one third of the lessons seen and was excellent in nearly one in every ten lessons. The quality of teaching is good in English and mathematics. In both these subjects there is some excellent teaching. The teachers are effective at teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and encouraging the children to use their skills in other subjects. Teaching is very good in the reception classes, where the children learn effectively through play and conversation and receive a very good preparation for the National Curriculum. A strength of the teaching throughout the school is the excellent teamwork between the teachers and very effective teaching assistants. The school enables children of all ability levels to achieve well. The children's eagerness to learn is harnessed very effectively in the best lessons, in which they are encouraged to be creative and to investigate and explore, and in which their ideas and suggestions are highly valued. Excellent teaching was seen in English in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics, science music and dance in Key Stage 2. The main weaknesses that prevent some satisfactory lessons from being good or better are the occasional failure to plan on the basis of what the children already know, and a tendency to over-direct the children. The very good relationships between the children and staff help learning throughout the school. The teachers prepare their lessons very thoroughly. They use a good variety of methods and resources, manage the children well during lessons and keep a brisk pace to their teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school has made outstanding progress in overcoming weaknesses in the breadth and balance of the curriculum identified at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum for children in reception is very good and the children's learning throughout the school is richly enhanced and made relevant by an unusually broad range of visits and other first-hand experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The children have their needs identified early. They are provided with Individual Educational Programmes where necessary. The teachers and teaching assistants supervise them very closely, ensure that they have access to the full curriculum and keep very good records of their progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Excellent records are kept on these children, who are given very good quality support. They have access to all lessons and activities and make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. The children have excellent opportunities to reflect on the spiritual dimension of life and their ideas and feelings are valued. The school provides an excellent framework for them to acquire good moral values, very good opportunities for them to develop a sense of responsibility and independence and a very good range of experiences of life's cultural richness and diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school ensures the safety and welfare of its pupils very effectively. It keeps good records of their achievements and personal development. Procedures for child protection are very efficient, although they are not yet embodied in a school policy.

The school has a very effective partnership with parents that enriches the children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher has brought a clear educational vision to the school. The deputy headteacher, with whom she works very closely, and the phase leaders, form a very effective senior management team that sets the agenda for improvement. The subject managers are taking increasing responsibility for standards and the quality of teaching in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors have an excellent grasp of the school's needs, take a very active part in strategic planning and play a full and active role in holding the school to account and supporting it in its daily work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Under the headteacher's guidance, the governors and the school's management team are increasingly sharing the responsibility for evaluating and improving teaching and learning and raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The governors manage the budget very efficiently and ensure that spending is closely linked to the school's main educational priorities. The school seeks the best value for money in all its purchases of goods and services. The office staff run the day-to-day finances and administration of the school very efficiently.

The school is generously staffed with very effective teachers and teaching assistants. The building is bright and welcoming and is kept in immaculate order by the caretaker and her cleaning staff. There are sufficient resources for all subjects, except geography at Key Stage 2. The exceptional team spirit that now prevails in the school, together with the dedication and increasing confidence of the management team and teaching staff, give the school an excellent capacity to continue improving.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed and is approachable. • The teaching is good; the children are expected to work hard and are encouraged to become mature and responsible. • The children like school, behave well and make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about their children. • The range of extra-curricular activities. • The amount of homework. • How closely the school works with parents.

The inspection team endorses all the parents' positive views. It considers that the children are set sufficient homework; that there is a good range of extra-curricular activities; that the school provides plenty of very good quality information to parents about their children's progress and that many parents work very closely and productively with the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 2000 tests for seven-year olds at Key Stage 1, there was a slight dip in the reading results, while in writing and mathematics they continued to improve. On the basis of the average points scored, the school's results were above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics.¹ Compared with similar schools (on the basis of free school meals entitlement), the results were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. A significant feature of the Key Stage 1 results is the high number of children reaching above-average levels. The proportion of children attaining at least Level 2, the expected level for seven-year olds – was average compared with all schools nationally in each subject, whereas the proportion reaching Level 3, the next higher level, was well above average in all three. Compared with similar schools, the proportion of children reaching at least Level 2 was well below average in all subjects. The above average number of children achieving lower than Level 2 than in other similar schools reflects the unusually high number of children with special educational needs compared to most such schools. The proportion of children reaching Level 3, however, was also above average in reading and writing, and was well above average in mathematics. This is why the average points comparison is a better reflection of the school's performance than the percentage of children reaching Level 2.
2. The school's results in the national tests for eleven-year olds show a steadily improving above- average trend. In 2000, the school's average points score was well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science, both compared with all schools nationally and with schools that had similar Key Stage 1 results in 1996. The school does so well, even compared with similar schools, because it is successful in enabling more able children to reach appropriately high standards. In English and science in 2000, half the children achieved Level 5, the level above that expected for the average eleven-year old nationally. In mathematics, half the children achieved at least Level 5, and a few children achieved Level 6, which is a very high standard. These results are significantly better than in 1999; they fulfilled the school's ambitious targets for mathematics and fell only slightly short of the English target. The school's targets for 2001 are similar in English and slightly lower in mathematics than in 2000; these are realistic in view of the number of children in this year group that have special educational needs, especially in mathematics.
3. The trend in science results at Key Stage 2 has not been as good as in English and mathematics compared with other schools. The school has recognised this and intends to give the subject high priority in the School Development Plan in the near future. The signs are, both from the results, which have taken an upturn this year, and from inspection evidence, that achievement in science is already beginning to improve, especially in the vital area of investigative learning. This is especially the case in the upper juniors.
4. At both key stages, the test results mirror the school's wide catchment area and very varied intake. A high proportion of children enter the school with above or well above average attainment, especially in language and communication skills. This section of the intake is balanced, however, by a significant number of children in some year groups with special educational needs. Therefore, the attainment in each year group does not follow a normal distribution pattern, with more children at opposite extremes than is usually found. The school has undertaken a rigorous analysis of the trends in test results, which shows that whatever childrens' initial attainment level, they achieve well by the time they are eleven. This was graphically illustrated for the 1999 Year 6 group of children. They started the year with a very low attainment profile owing to the number of children in the group with special educational needs who had not made sufficient progress during preceding years. During Year 6, they were supported very effectively and made extremely rapid progress. Although the eventual results were

¹ The average points score comes from giving each level a number of points. More points are given for higher levels than for lower levels. The number of pupils achieving each level is then multiplied by the points for that level. The total of points for all the pupils is then divided by the total number of pupils. This gives an average points score per pupil. It is a more complete way of measuring the school's performance than the percentage gaining at least the expected level because it takes into account the number of pupils who exceeded the expected level.

lower than in 1998, they were far better than they would have been without this well-targeted help. This reflects the strong position the school is now in to deal with the lower as well as the upper end of the ability spectrum.

5. The inspection evidence confirms the school's analysis. Children of all attainment levels make very good progress and achieve well-overall. Children with special educational needs are identified early and receive very good support throughout the school to make optimum progress. The highest attainers receive effective extra support in Key Stage 2 and make very good progress. The success of this strategy suggests that special provision for this group may also be appropriate in earlier years. In some lessons, for example, in science in Years 1 and 2, the knowledge and understanding that some of the higher-attaining children already have is not acknowledged sufficiently and built on. This can also happen when the children are set on the basis of attainment. In mathematics, for example, in the higher-attaining set in Key Stage 1 and in the lower-attaining set in Key Stage 2, the highest attainers could have coped with more challenge. The school recognises this problem and is already planning to address it. Children for whom English is not their first language receive very good quality support and achieve very well.
6. The inspection found that children achieve well in almost all subjects at both key stages. In English, they have particularly good speaking and listening skills that are successfully nurtured and extended from the reception class onwards. They use these skills very effectively indeed to enrich their learning through discussion in many other subjects. For example, the vocabulary that the children brought to a Year 1 and Year 2 Science lesson on light was exceptional in its range and accuracy. The children also write neatly and well, using good grammar and sentence construction and a very creative vocabulary. Their spelling is not as strong as the other aspects of their writing, but the school recognises this weakness and has a good programme established to remedy it. The children read enthusiastically and well, both for pleasure and for information and study, although their skills are not quite as strong in this area as in their speaking and listening and writing.
7. In mathematics and science, the most significant improvement since the last inspection has been in the way the children learn through experimentation and investigation. In response to greatly improved teaching and more opportunities to think for themselves, they have developed very positive attitudes and effective study habits. They engage enthusiastically in discussions about problems, showing an eagerness to devise their own solutions, and this greatly enhances their learning and achievement. The knowledge and skills they develop are therefore much more secure than hitherto. In mathematics, they show a very good aptitude to apply their knowledge to new problems that were put to them by inspectors; for example, in science, they show a high level of skill in putting forward and testing their own theories, especially in the top junior classes. This aspect of science is not sufficiently nurtured in Key Stage 1.
8. History is another subject in which the children's very good knowledge and understanding by the age of eleven reflects a very successful emphasis on study skills. The children are able to offer suggestions as to why things happened as they did because the teachers have encouraged learning through enquiry in which explanations for events are central. In geography, study skills are not so well-established and, therefore, the children's achievement is not as good as it should be. The school recognises this and has plans in hand to address the problem.
9. The children's achievements in information and communications technology have improved beyond recognition since the last inspection. Attainment has improved from well below expectations to above expectations at both key stages, thanks to the new hardware and software, intense staff training and lots of help from skilled volunteer supporters of the school.
10. Strong gains in achievement have also been made in design and technology and art and design, especially in Key Stage 2. The children now achieve well in both subjects by the age of eleven, whereas standards were deemed unsatisfactory in the juniors at the last inspection. They have good design and making skills and incorporate a high degree of individual creativity into their work, reflecting again the school's success in building their self-confidence and enabling them to think for themselves.
11. In music, the children were deemed to have reached average standards at the last inspection. Recent improvements to the management and teaching of the subject have raised the quality of singing to above expected standards. The children sing with enjoyment, confidence and skill. Attainment in other aspects of the subject is in line with expectations, but the children are now making rapid progress during Key Stage 2. In physical education, sound standards have been maintained in

gymnastics and games, but attainment in dance is now well above expectations judging from the lessons seen. Together with music and art, this is a developing creative strength of the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Children throughout the school have very good attitudes to learning. They behave well in lessons and around the school; the relationship between pupils and between children and staff is very good. These are strengths of the school and it is the combination of these factors that ensures a positive learning experience for all the children.
13. Children enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Throughout the school they have very good attitudes to their work and respond very well to the high standards of teaching. In those lessons where teachers have high expectations, the children show excellent attitudes, responding well to the challenges set. They are interested, enthusiastic and well-motivated, and listen attentively to their teachers. This has a positive impact on their learning. The children eagerly ask and answer questions and contribute to discussions. For example, pupils in a Year 1/2 geography lesson were keen to contribute to a discussion about their recent walk around Oliver's Battery and Year 5/6 enthusiastically offered their own views on the paintings being shown in an art lesson.
14. Children's behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. There are occasions when behaviour in lessons is exemplary. This improves the quality of life in the school and the learning that takes place. The vast majority of children are aware of and respond well to the high expectations of behaviour that are implicit in the values of the school. The children generally play well together in the playground, and although play outside is sometimes boisterous, harassment and bullying in the school are rare and the children work in an atmosphere that is free from oppressive behaviour. There is evidence in the behaviour books, however, of occasional lapses, with some examples of aggressive behaviour, and there has been one fixed-term exclusion. All but a small number of the parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that behaviour in the school was good.
15. The relationships that pupils establish with one another and with the adults they work with are very good and are a strength of the school. Relationships are based on the mutual trust and respect that underpin the school's strong Catholic values. The very good relationships between the children and the teachers and teaching assistants in lessons greatly enhance their motivation and learning. Relationships between the children in lessons are also positive. They co-operate well on joint activities, share equipment and resources sensibly and can be trusted to use tools sensibly in lessons such as design and technology.
16. Personal development is very good. Around the school, children are friendly and polite, particularly to visitors. They are very articulate and speak highly of their school. They express their opinions sensibly about aspects of school life. As the children move through the school they listen to one another showing respect for the feelings and views of others, for example, in personal and social education lessons and during registration. They respond well to the wide variety of opportunities that are available for them to show initiative in their learning. For example, in a Year 5/6 Science lesson they sensibly devised their own investigation. The children settle to work quickly and are able to work with little direct supervision. Children in all classes carry out their jobs as class monitors conscientiously, arriving at school early if necessary to carry out them out. Older pupils are involved in the daily routines of the school, showing good levels of initiative and increasing maturity, for example, by running the school library. The children chosen as house captains fulfil their roles well, collecting house points each week, for example, and replacing the ribbons on the 'champ' chart to show the winning house. Pupils are enthusiastic about their participation on the school council. They value their role in the decision-making process and the contribution they are making to the life of the school. They put forward ideas and have identified for the headteacher what they perceive to be strengths and weaknesses in the school.
17. Levels of attendance are good. Attendance has been consistently maintained at a level above the national average. Parents take seriously their responsibility to advise the school of reasons for absence and as a result there are few instances of unauthorised absence. The good attendance rates contribute to the learning that takes place. Punctuality is, however, a problem in the school. A significant number of pupils arrive late, some frequently.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is very good, overall. This is a key factor in the improving standards and

environment for learning in the school. During this inspection, the standard of teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the lessons seen, and was good or better in eight out of every ten lessons. There was also some outstanding teaching, in English at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics, science, music and dance in Key Stage 2. The proportion of teaching that was judged very good or better was also high, at about one in three lessons. This is a very good profile of teaching grades, and a vast improvement since the last inspection, when a significant proportion of the lessons observed was unsatisfactory.

19. In the very best lessons, the teachers show flair and imagination as well as very effective planning and organisation. They provide ideas and activities that excite the children's interest and enthusiasm, giving them a great belief in their own abilities and challenging them to strive for excellence. In a Year 5/6 dance lesson, for example, every child in the class listened intently to a piece of music and expressed through their movements the emotion that they thought the music portrayed. The grace of their movements, the quality of their ideas and the concentration with which they worked reflected their evident love of the subject in a truly uplifting experience. This spiritual dimension that excellent teaching brings to a lesson was also exemplified when Year 1 and 2 children listened with rapt attention as the teacher read some poems and then picked out what they consider to be the most beautiful parts. They were bursting to share their ideas and showed real insight into and appreciation of the power of language to move people. They unerringly chose the most striking passages from the poems and expressed very poetically how the words made them feel, using sentences like "this idea really pierces my brain" and "it makes me feel it is really happening to me now". These experiences that the teachers provide for the children to appreciate and express their own thoughts, feelings and ideas greatly enhance their personal and spiritual development.
20. In the reception classes, the standard of teaching is very good. The two teachers and the teaching assistants work together very effectively as a team to provide the children with a consistently high quality of teaching and learning. The standard of teaching was good or better in all the lessons seen, and very good in more than two out of every three lessons. All the members of the teaching team understand how children of this age learn best. Under the skilled leadership of the phase manager, they provide a wide range of interesting and stimulating play activities from which the children can choose. They encourage them to engage in conversation, with each other and with the adults, developing their social and language skills in all the activities. They guide the children very effectively towards the targets in each area of learning for this age group, enabling them to develop their skills quickly and to reach above-average standards by the end of the reception year. The only area that the teaching is not as effective as it could be is in physical development, and this is because of the limited access the children currently have to a sheltered outdoor area and larger mobile play equipment. However, the teachers effectively compensate for this in the range of indoor physical activities they provide, so that the children still make sound progress in this area, overall.
21. The standard of teaching throughout the rest of the school is very good, overall, and ranges from satisfactory in about one fifth of lessons to excellent in nearly one in every ten lessons. In both the infant and junior classes, the teaching was good or better in nearly eight out of every ten lessons. The proportion of very good or excellent teaching was much higher in the juniors, however. Nearly one in three lessons were in this category, compared with about one in eight lessons in the infant classes. The difference was due to the number of inspirational lessons that were observed in Key Stage 2, and to the wider spread of subjects and teachers that were observed. In Key Stage 1, there is some good teaching in all the subjects seen, some very good teaching in mathematics and excellent teaching in English.
22. The teaching of English and literacy is good, overall, and is more consistently good than in other subjects. It was good or better in all of the many lessons that were observed and very good in half of them. The teachers understand the subject well and have implemented the National Literacy Strategy very effectively. They are particularly effective in developing the children's vocabulary and their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills across the curriculum. For example, they are aware of the possibilities of linking technical and creative vocabulary, as happened in a science lesson, when infant children enriched their appreciation and understanding of light and dark, using dramatic words to bring the subject alive. The teachers encourage the children to discuss together and to be sensitive to one another's views, and the children respond very positively by developing a very mature approach to discussions.
23. The standard of teaching in mathematics is good, overall. The teachers ensure that the children learn the basic numeracy skills well and apply them in other subjects when appropriate. They encourage the

children to think for themselves and to explain exactly how they solve problems. The best teaching leads them on quickly from one challenge to the next, sustaining their interest and continually improving their rate of learning. The teachers are very effective in stretching the high attainers in this way, especially in Key Stage 2, where these children develop excellent mathematical skills due to some excellent teaching. In less effective lessons, the teachers over-direct discussions, limiting the opportunities for the children to devise their own solutions, explain their own thinking, and occasionally to move on to more challenging problems. The standard of teaching is rapidly improving, however, as teachers become more confident with the National Numeracy Strategy, and the subject managers are looking at ways of spreading the most successful teaching methods more widely throughout the school.

24. The teaching of science is good in Key Stage 2, with examples of excellent teaching in Year 5 and 6. The excellent teaching is characterised by the imaginative linking of learning to real-life problems demanding a scientific solution, such as separating sugar from water or making dirty water clean. The children are highly motivated by these experiences and their learning is further enhanced by very good questioning from the teacher as they work. In other science lessons, good teaching encourages the children to ask their own questions and answer them through practical activities and discussion. This is an aspect of the subject that is not tested in the national tests, but is at the root of the good quality teaching and learning in science now established in the school. The standard of science teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, but is not as strong as in Key Stage 2, although, here too, the teachers emphasise learning through investigation and discussion.
25. The standard of teaching in information and communications technology has improved beyond recognition since the last inspection, when the teachers were criticised for not having enough expertise. They now have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are well supported in their work by assistants and knowledgeable volunteers, who make a valuable contribution to the children's learning. The standard of teaching in the lessons seen was good, overall, and very good in some lessons in Year 5 and Year 6. All the lessons are well planned to take advantage of the available lesson time, computers and expert assistance. A limiting factor in lessons that take place in the computer suite is the lack of room for the teachers and teaching assistants to move around and support all the children.
26. Teaching is good, overall, in art and design and in design and technology, which is a big improvement since the last inspection when there was a lot of unsatisfactory teaching in these subjects. The teachers demonstrate skills and techniques effectively and in the best lessons encourage the children to evaluate their work continually and strive to improve their skills and use their imagination. They keep the lessons moving along at a brisk pace with well-judged questions and comments.
27. There was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching in geography in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, teaching is satisfactory, with some good lessons that encourage the children to focus on aspects of their environment that make them attractive or unattractive. The only history lessons seen were in Key Stage 2, where teachers displayed very good subject knowledge. They provide very clear explanations for historical events, encouraging the children to reflect for themselves on why things happened as they did. The impact of this effective teaching was evident in an assembly in which the children recalled the important features of King Henry VIII's reign. Overall, teaching in history is good.
28. No lessons were observed in music in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, a visiting specialist provides good quality teaching for each Year 5 and 6 class while the co-ordinator teaches the Year 3 and 4 classes to a very good standard, providing them with a wide range of listening, singing, composing and performing activities. A feature of these lessons is the opportunity given to the children to evaluate their work critically. The teaching of singing to the whole of Key Stage 2 is excellent, enabling the children to learn and enjoy a wide variety of songs and hymns. The quality of teaching and learning in music has improved markedly since the last inspection.
29. The standard of teaching in physical education is good, overall, with some excellent teaching of dance. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The teachers are particularly effective in demonstrating and explaining skills so that the children are clear about the purpose of the lessons and aware of how well they are doing. They are given ample opportunity to demonstrate and evaluate their skills in Key Stage 2, but this effective teaching technique was not much in evidence in Key Stage 1 during the inspection.
30. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The teaching assistants work closely with teachers and the special needs co-ordinator to ensure that these children make good

progress towards their agreed targets. The teaching assistants are very effective when they work with the children, either in lessons or with individual learning targets. They establish close working relationships with the children for whom they are responsible. They often demonstrate good teaching skills, probing pupils' understanding with relevant questioning and ensuring that they make the expected progress in the course of the lesson. The activities they supervise, devised by the class teacher, closely mirror those planned for other pupils. Good channels of communication ensure that co-ordinator, teachers and assistants are thoroughly briefed on pupils' development and progress. Children who are learning English as an additional language are well taught, make very good progress and show highly developed skills in communication. The improved teaching has had a positive impact on all areas of the children's learning and personal development. Particular strengths are the interest, concentration and independence in their learning and the rate at which they acquire the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology. Teachers set appropriate homework at each stage and make good use of it to encourage the children to become independent learners.

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

31. The school teaches all the subjects of the National Curriculum. The curriculum is of good quality for children in Key Stage 1. It is very good in Key Stage 2, where teachers employ an unusually broad spread of strategies to enhance children' learning and to increase its relevance; for example, through a wide range of visits and the imaginative use of history resources. The school has therefore made outstanding progress in overcoming weaknesses in the breadth and balance of the curriculum identified at the time of the previous inspection.
32. The school employs excellent strategies for teaching literacy skills to its children, and makes very good provision for teaching numeracy. For both of these subjects, children at Key Stage 2 are grouped appropriately within each two-year age band, and in each of these groups children are offered different work according to their attainment, so that tasks are very specifically tailored to meet children' needs. The school's science curriculum is generally of good quality, and this is currently being revised in the light of new guidance from the local authority. Here, children are given good opportunities to develop investigative skills and to observe and present evidence.
33. The curriculum for the majority of other subjects is either good or very good. The school makes very good provision for the teaching of history, where there is very imaginative use of resources as a springboard for historical enquiry, and art, for which there has been significant curricular improvement since the last inspection. The programmes of study for design and technology, information technology and music are all of good quality. Provision of physical education is satisfactory; the school does not currently have a two-year rolling programme for each age group, so it cannot be sure that children are building incrementally on the skills they have learned. The curriculum for geography is also satisfactory. While provision for children to acquire geographical knowledge is generally good, they do not have opportunities to practise skills, such as drawing maps or using geographical instruments, with sufficient regularity. The school makes very good provision for children in the reception classes, for whom a new curriculum has recently been written.
34. The school provides equality of access and opportunity for all children. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good. These children make very good progress and are very well supported in their work by both teachers and teaching assistants, who receive good training. The school makes appropriate decisions concerning the withdrawal of children from lessons for specialist tuition.
35. The school makes very good provision for children' personal and social education, both in lesson time and through the informal opportunities that arise during the course of the school day. The co-ordinator, recently appointed, has clear priorities for the development of this aspect of the curriculum and has prepared draft guidelines for teachers' use. There are appropriate opportunities for children to learn about the dangers of drug misuse through the science curriculum. In accordance with its statutory requirement, the school has properly considered appropriate provision for the teaching of sex education.
36. The range and number of extra-curricular activities is good. All Key Stage 2 children have the opportunity to take part in clubs such as art, dance, choir, French and netball, while those in Years 5 and 6 may participate in additional sporting activities; for example, football, rugby, rounders and

cricket. The school is fully involved in competitive sports with local schools, and makes good use of both visits and visitors to enrich the quality of children's learning.

37. The school has developed very close links with its church and the community, both of which make a significant contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural life of the school. For example, the school sometimes works with the local community theatre, and Year 6 children have taken part in the 'Winchester Hat Fair'. Close working relationships have also been established with the school's contributory playgroups, especially the 'Little Fishes', which uses the school's facilities, and with the majority of the secondary schools which receive Year 6 children on their departure.
38. Overall, the school makes excellent provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of its children. This represents an improvement even on the high standards reported by the last inspection.
39. Provision for children' spiritual development is excellent. Children are given ample opportunities to reflect and to wonder, both during acts of collective worship and in the course of lessons. Teachers use moments of stillness imaginatively and effectively, making time to allow children to be touched by the meaning of a story they have heard or to reflect on the consequences of actions. Music is used with great awareness to evoke particular feelings; these the children express with great sensitivity in music and dance. In one excellent dance lesson for children in Years 5 and 6, for example, boys and girls alike reacted with feeling and expression to well-chosen music, responding sensitively to the mood it created and to the images evoked by the teacher. In Years 1 and 2, children are encouraged to articulate their reactions to poetry and to respond with feeling to the atmosphere induced by candlelight. Such extensive provision ensures that children develop receptiveness towards a wide range of spiritual experiences by the time they leave the school.
40. The school makes excellent provision for the moral education of its children, which is informed both by its Christian teaching and by the school's policy statement, that morality touches every aspect of the curriculum. As a result, children have a very clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong, and members of staff intervene promptly when misdemeanours occur to remind children of the needs and feelings of others. Children sometimes discuss moral issues in their writing, such as the environmental impact of new leisure facilities or the selfless actions of historical figures such as Captain Oates. Teachers provide an excellent model for their children, showing respect for their ideas and genuine understanding of their feelings. Throughout the school, there are high expectations that children and teachers will treat one another fairly and with consideration.
41. Very good provision is made for children' social development. The youngest children are encouraged to undertake tasks on behalf of others, and the level of responsibility accorded to children increases progressively as they move through the school. Older children, for example, are encouraged to help or play with younger ones at lunch-time, or to act as monitors in the library. Children use their initiative well, volunteering to support others who are unwell or spontaneously comforting those who are distressed. A school council has been established as a forum for views and suggestions, and the children have been invited to identify for themselves the school's strengths and weaknesses. The children collaborate well in lessons, sharing materials and equipment sensibly, and responding considerately when they have to work where space is more restricted, for example, in the school's computer suite.
42. The school's provision for the children' cultural development is equally very good. Children are introduced to a wide range of experiences which reflect their own cultural heritage; for example, through geographical studies of the local community at Key Stage 1, and visits to the historical centre of Southampton or to the Nuffield Theatre at Key Stage 2. Field visits afford children the opportunity to compare their own culture with those of others in this country, while studies of Roman and Tudor Britain, ancient Egypt and India enable them to compare their lives with past or distant cultures. Children receive good preparation for their life in multicultural Britain through their study of the religions and customs of others. A multicultural week held in the summer term, and the learning of songs and dance from other countries, contribute positively to children's understanding of different cultural traditions. Members of the local community often visit the school to deepen children' understanding of their own culture, but representatives of the different cultural traditions that make up the wider society are less frequently used to enrich the children's learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school has maintained the strong caring atmosphere identified in the previous inspection. Care and

concern are apparent in all aspects of school life. The headteacher and staff know the children well and provide a level of support that contributes greatly towards their learning.

44. There are some good arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of children. Provision for day-to-day first aid and medical care is very good. Sufficient staff are qualified in first aid and a nurse is on duty daily at lunch-time. Good systems are in place to ensure that all members of staff are aware of children with special medical needs. When bumps to the head occur, the school ensures that parents are notified. The school recognises the need to comply with statutory requirements for health and safety and its draft health and safety policy will soon be presented to the governing body. Frequent informal checks of the site and premises take place; they are clearly documented and any action that is taken is recorded. The health and safety governor, together with the headteacher, has recently carried out an inspection of the premises, and the school is putting in place procedures to carry out regular and routine risk assessments of the site and premises. Equipment is subject to regular checks.
45. Arrangements for child protection are good and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is a high level of awareness amongst all staff; they know that the deputy headteacher is the designated person responsible and are familiar with the good systems in place to monitor and deal with any concerns. Although there is no current school policy or formal pattern of training, including that for the deputy, issues and procedures are regularly discussed in staff meetings so that all staff members know what to do in the event of any concerns.
46. The school has very good systems for monitoring and supporting children's personal development. A caring Catholic ethos pervades the school and this supports personal development in a positive way. Very good systems keep track of the children's social needs. Individual class teachers know their children well; they carefully record and monitor any concerns. Issues are discussed at the twice-weekly phase meetings, and where necessary, further discussions take place in cross-phase and management meetings. A personal, social and health education programme is in place, which, together with circle-time, supports personal development well. The achievements and good work of children are recognised and rewarded in weekly assemblies, and individual achievements are displayed in the corridor and in the 'Silver and Golden Books' in the foyer.
47. The school has clear expectations of the standards of behaviour it expects and has very good systems to promote good behaviour. A detailed policy emphasises a positive whole-school approach based on reward and clearly describes procedures for staff to manage discipline. The headteacher has introduced an effective system of rewards and sanctions. Children know the standard of behaviour expected and are fully aware of the consequences of any inappropriate behaviour. The staff have high expectations and are consistent in applying the school policy. Excellent systems have been developed for recording and monitoring unsatisfactory behaviour. A variety of record books keep detailed records of all incidents in the school and playground. Individual behaviour modification programmes are used for children causing serious concerns. Bullying is rare, and effective procedures are in place to deal with those instances that occur.
48. The school has very good procedures in place for tracking and supporting the children's academic progress. Procedures for assessing what they know and the quality of their learning have been greatly improved. They are very good in English and mathematics, and are beginning to be established in other subjects. In information and communication technology, for example, there are good systems to track the children's overall attainment and progress but not yet their attainment in separate areas of the subject. In design and technology, a useful portfolio exemplifies various skills, and in art there is good guidance on the skills to be taught in each year-group. In the other subjects there are sound informal procedures for ensuring that lessons build on skills already learned, but assessment of the children's attainment is still at an informal level. This is entirely acceptable, as the school has put so much in place in the key subjects of English and mathematics. The subject managers have a good grasp of what is required in their respective subjects and have plans in hand for further improvement.
49. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The school has informal systems to monitor attendance and follow up absences. Punctuality is, however, not being effectively monitored and parents are not routinely notified when children are frequently late.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Most of the parents who attended the parents' meeting and completed the questionnaire were happy with the school. They felt that their children like school; that behaviour is good; that teaching is good, and that the school helps pupils become mature and responsible. The inspection team supports these positive views parents have of the school.
51. Whilst most parents feel comfortable in approaching the school, a very small number of them feel less comfortable in approaching the school when they have worries or concerns, and feel that the school does not work sufficiently closely with parents. Some parents do not feel they receive sufficient information on progress, feel the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the curriculum and express concern about homework provision. The inspection finding is that, in the main, the parents' concerns are not justified. For example, the information provided to parents about their child's progress is in fact very detailed. The concerns expressed about the reports do raise issues that are worth considering, however. The current format and the level of technical detail included was decided upon after consultation with parents, but there may well be a number of families for whom this is not the best way of providing the information. Parental concerns about the range of activities beyond the classroom are acknowledged; however, the inspection found the school to offer a good range of activities beyond the classroom. These include visits to places of interest, visitors to school, as well as providing a range of extra-curricular activities.
52. The school has maintained its very good links with parents and many are actively involved in their children's learning. Parental support is encouraged in all areas of school life and this has a good impact on the work of the school and on children's learning. The headteacher welcomes parents into school and is available to discuss any concerns. She involves parents on a range of issues associated with the life of the school. The results of a parent-organised questionnaire led to the new reporting arrangements and a Parent Consultation Group meets regularly with the headteacher to identify areas of parental concern. A significant number of committed parents make a valuable contribution towards school life and pupils' learning. They help with the milk rota, organise the book changes and accompany swimming. They attend class assemblies and a weekly Mass. A supportive parents' association arranges many social events and raises considerable funds. This has enabled the school to lease its computers for three years. Parents are involved in working with their children at home; pupils in Key Stage 1 take reading books home daily and all classes set regular homework. Most parents share reading at home and then comment in the reading diaries. Home-school liaison books are used throughout the school and provide an effective means of communication between parents and teachers. Homework diaries in Years 5/6 provide a good link between school and learning at home.
53. The quality of information that the school gives parents is very good. Although there are some minor shortcomings, it helps parents become involved in their children's learning and to understand the work of the school. Parents receive good information about school matters, forthcoming events and key dates through the Wednesday newsletter and the termly governors' newsletter. A detailed prospectus provides useful information on school routines. The annual governors' report to parents, although very informative, does have some minor omissions. Very good opportunities are provided for parents to understand the curriculum and curriculum developments. Workshops are organised to inform parents about curriculum developments such as the literacy hour; these are well attended and useful in giving families more confidence in helping their children at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The very rapid and secure improvements that have been made since the last inspection are due in large part to the excellent qualities of leadership and management that the current headteacher has brought to the school. She has moulded together a very effective team of governors, staff, parents and voluntary helpers, given them a very clear sense of direction and purpose and established a very clear detailed programme of continuous self-evaluation and development. This is all the more remarkable in view of the degree of disenchantment and disarray that existed when she came to the school shortly after the previous inspection. Relationships within the school and between the school staff and the governors are very cordial but also extremely professional. Everyone is clear as to the boundaries of their role within the management of the school and fulfils their responsibilities to the best of their ability with the education, achievement, welfare and personal development of the children as their focus. Everyone involved deserves the highest praise and commendation for the way they have worked together to turn this school around from one with serious weaknesses in leadership and management to a rapidly improving school with very strong leadership and very efficient and effective management.

55. Central to the current successful running of the school is the excellent management structure that the headteacher has introduced. In a visit to the school in September 1999, Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools found that "this team has the potential to be an effective force for school improvement". This inspection found that this potential has been fully realised in the intervening year. The team is already a very effective vehicle for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school's work and establishing the priorities that will guide future development. The deputy head has been invaluable in this process as a support for the headteacher, which is a vast improvement since the last inspection. She has played a major role in supporting teachers and establishing clear systems for checking the children's progress, analysing test results and other data and ensuring that all the information that is gathered is put to good use. The "phase managers", who take responsibility for overseeing the work of the reception classes and each two-year age group through the school have established very clear routines for joint planning and are beginning to take joint responsibility with the headteacher for standards. Along with the subject managers, they have been given good quality training and support in their new roles and are justifiably confident in their ability to fulfil them.
56. The cordial relationships within the school, based on mutual respect, enable it fully to reflect its aims and values. The school's mission statement is based on its Catholic ethos, and can proclaim with confidence that it is enabling the children to achieve high educational standards within a framework of Christian values. The excellent provision that the school makes for the children's spiritual and moral development across the curriculum testifies to this fact.
57. The governing body plays a full and very effective part in shaping the direction of the school. Now that they have the full confidence of the headteacher and staff, they feel empowered to participate fully in strategic planning. The limits of their powers and responsibilities are very clearly defined and fully accepted, and this frees them to use their knowledge and skills to full effect, in their voluntary capacities, for the betterment of the school. They have very clear remits for visiting the school formally to check on progress in specific areas, and take this aspect of their work very seriously. In addition to this, they are kept very well-informed about all aspects of the work of the school through regular reports from the headteacher. On the basis of this good quality information, they have an excellent grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are in a very strong position, therefore, to help it continue moving forward. The governors are conscientious in ensuring that the school fulfils its important statutory duties, but there are some minor omissions in its annual report to parents and in the school's prospectus. Although the provision for Child Protection is good, the school has not yet adopted its own policy or provided appropriate training to update staff awareness and skills in this area.
58. The previous report identified significant weaknesses in the monitoring and support of teaching. Excellent progress has been made in this aspect of the school's work, which is now very strong. The headteacher has led the way in establishing a culture of coaching, in which teachers are observed with a view to helping them to evaluate their own practice and make any necessary improvements, rather than to be "inspected". This approach is paying dividends in bringing a high degree of self-evaluation and openness to advice that is helping to improve teaching throughout the school. The management team and subject leaders have undertaken some monitoring, principally in English and mathematics, and are continuing to develop their expertise in this area. The improvements that have been made in this aspect of the school's work facilitate the successful induction of new teachers and make it a very effective provider of initial teacher training. The student on placement during the inspection was observed teaching very competently under the helpful mentoring of the class teacher to whom she was assigned; recent appointments to the staff are already very settled and effective, both as teachers and as managers.
59. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is very good. The headteacher has ensured that the school has kept ahead of changing government requirements in this area. In view of the many urgent tasks that needed to be undertaken by inexperienced members of the management team, the headteacher has been responsible for most of this work up until now. The school is now in a good position to move forward and delegate this responsibility to other senior members of staff in line with the best current practice. In other areas that were identified as key issues in the last report, the school has made excellent improvements. Standards have risen sharply in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2; teaching is of a much higher standard; development planning is much better; the curriculum is broader and much more balanced and the children have much improved opportunities to be creative and to learn through exploring and investigating.
60. The current quality of development planning is very good and an excellent improvement since the last

inspection when it was very weak indeed, and a key issue. The school now has very clearly defined priorities for development. The financial and human resources required to support each initiative are identified, clear lines of accountability drawn up and criteria for measuring success are established. The priorities are very appropriate to the school's needs, reflecting as they do the excellent picture of strengths and weaknesses that has been built up in recent years. A shortlist is drawn up of the most urgent priorities for immediate attention. This is kept under constant review and as soon as sufficient progress has been achieved with one, the next one on the list is given top priority status. Currently, for example, raising achievement in science is next in line to join the list, which will happen shortly as such good progress has been made in writing and information and communication technology. The inspection findings confirm that this would be an appropriate next step. In addition to its general development targets, the school sets appropriate statutory targets for achievement in English and mathematics, and monitors its progress towards achieving them.

61. One consequence of previous unsatisfactory management of the school was the accumulation of a large budget deficit. Since they have been given access to all the necessary financial information, the governors have handled this urgent situation very well indeed. They have managed to bring the deficit down very significantly over three years while at the same time ensuring funding for all the school's important educational priorities. The headteacher has been instrumental in obtaining the maximum possible financial assistance through government and local authority grants, and all these monies have been spent on the designated areas of the school's work. Provision for children with special educational needs has been greatly improved and is now very good, for example. In addition, judicious use has been made of parental and community support, chiefly to install and run the very effective computer suite. The current financial planning very clearly supports what the school is trying to achieve and is on course to do this within budget, which is an excellent improvement. The governors ensure that the principles of achieving best value for money underpin all their spending decisions.
62. All the members of the school's administrative staff are very efficient and helpful, and make an excellent contribution, both to the smooth running of the school and its welcoming atmosphere. They have clear job descriptions that enable them to fulfil between them all the different financial and administrative duties involved in the day-to-day running of the school. This ensures that very good quality information is available to the headteacher and governors, from lists of pupils' names to current budget balances. With the confidence that she has in their reliability and efficiency in these matters, the headteacher has been free to devote her energies to the very daunting task of leading and managing the school through very difficult times since her appointment.
63. The school is a bright, welcoming hive of activity. The site manager, together with cleaning staff, keeps the building in immaculate order in a very friendly and unobtrusive way and is a valued friend of the school. One of the first initiatives the headteacher took following her appointment was to provide separate teaching areas for each class. This has greatly improved the teaching and learning environment. The teachers enhance this with colourful, educational displays of high quality that reflect all aspects of the children's work. A good feature of the accommodation is the provision of separate teaching areas for some specialist activities, for example, music and food technology. Every available space is put to good use, and now the school needs more as its educational activities expand. The computer suite, for example, is an excellent resource in which each child in the class can share a computer with one other, but there is insufficient room for the teachers and helpers to move round freely to give advice and support. The "Little Fishes" pre-school group does not currently have its own outdoor play area, and arrangements for the reception children's access to an outdoor space are also unsatisfactory. The school is aware of these shortcomings and is planning to address them as soon as funds allow. The outdoor accommodation is spacious, and a good facility for sport. Plans are in hand to develop a wildlife area, which, if realised, will provide a valuable resource, especially for science.
64. Staffing levels are very good. The appointments that the headteacher has made since her arrival have greatly enhanced the subject and management expertise of the teaching staff. All subject areas now have good leadership from competent teachers. The teaching assistants are an invaluable part of the teaching team. They, too, benefit from excellent leadership and management. On occasions, when these assistants were observed working with groups of children, the quality of their guidance and questioning was exemplary, which is a reflection of the excellent teamwork in the school. Lunch-times proceed in a very calm and civilised manner thanks to the expertise and dedication of the cook, her assistants and the very competent lunch-time supervisors. It was a pleasure to sit and eat with the children and engage in pleasant conversation in these convivial surroundings.

65. The school ensures a good level of resources for each subject. Only in geography, in Key Stage 2, was there deemed to be insufficient resources for full coverage of the National Curriculum. Provision of resources for English is good, with a well-stocked and well-used library at the heart of it. Resources are also good in mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology and history. They are satisfactory in geography at Key Stage 1, science, art and design, music, physical education and music. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to supplement its own resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. As this is such a well-organised and rapidly improving school, the inspection team found no significant weaknesses or areas for improvement that the school had not already recognised and placed on its agenda for action. The following issue is the one the team considers most important:

Raise standards in science in Key Stage 1 and in geography throughout the school by:

- Finding ways of spreading the excellent expertise in the teaching of experimental science in Year 5 and Year 6 throughout the school.
- Ensuring that the scientific knowledge and understanding that the children already have is taken into account when planning lessons.
- Ensuring that teachers are aware of the skills they need to teach in geography in each year-group and providing adequate resources to support this.
(paragraphs 7, 8, 96, 113)
- In addition, the governing body should ensure that a Child Protection policy is adopted as soon as possible and appropriate arrangements made for staff training. *(paragraphs 45, 57)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

65

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

34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	25	46	20			

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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		321
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's Special Educational Needs register		85

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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	24	24	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	23
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	41	41	44
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	85 (96)	85 (94)	92 (98)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	21	24	23
	Girls	22	21	22
	Total	43	45	45
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	90 (94)	94 (96)	94 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	22	23	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	19
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	37	37	40
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	82 (78)	82 (75)	89 (84)
	National	84 (75)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	17	17	19
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	37	37	40
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	84 (78)	84 (75)	91 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	315
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.9
Average class size	29.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	178

Financial information

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	584682
Total expenditure	576137
Expenditure per pupil	1795
Balance brought forward from previous year	-16957
Balance carried forward to next year	-8412

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires returned

321
140

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	40	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	45	5	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	49	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	46	17	5	5
The teaching is good.	51	40	2	0	7
I am kept well-informed about how my child is getting on.	29	45	19	4	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	31	8	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	39	4	1	5
The school works closely with parents.	41	40	14	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	33	5	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	40	1	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	39	16	9	14

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The parents have positive views of the school.

Other issues raised by parents

At their meeting, the parents said they approve of the literacy and numeracy hours and appreciate the many improvements that have been brought to the school in recent years. The atmosphere is better, the children are challenged more and children with special educational needs are very well supported. The school is going from strength to strength. One or two parents were unhappy with some of the sanctions the school imposes on the children who misbehave, and one or two would like to see some improvements in the information they receive about their children. Another view expressed was that the teachers and children work very hard and even more so under the intense scrutiny of an inspection, and needed time to be themselves and get on with their work.

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

67. The school has maintained very good provision for children in the foundation stage since the previous inspection. The two reception classes are very well-integrated into one unit, with teachers and teaching assistants working very closely as a team. The very well organised day-to-day routines enable all children to feel secure and safe and to grow in confidence. The very good teaching, overall, at this stage is having a very positive impact on children's learning.
68. Children start school full-time in the September of the year in which they become five. Most children have attended either a pre-school nursery or playgroup and enter the school with above average level skills in language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social development. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted with these children. Judgements relating to standards at this time of year are also based upon the work completed by children who are now in Year 1. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, most children are achieving well and are likely to exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and in their personal, social and emotional development. This is due to the very good teaching in these areas of learning. In their physical development, the quality of teaching is good and most children achieve appropriately and attain the goals set.

Personal, social and emotional development

69. Standards are above average in this area of learning. By the time they leave the reception class most children will have exceeded the early learning goals in this area. This shows good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching, where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can accomplish. The children settle in very well, and quickly learn to share and take turns while exploring the variety of activities on offer. They play and work together well in groups. They show consideration towards each other and learn how to apologise effectively if they upset one another by their actions. During a class assembly conducted by the school's curate, on the theme of Baptism, the children behaved well and participated enthusiastically. The children attend to their personal hygiene appropriately. Most of them undress and dress themselves independently before and after physical education but may sometimes need help with footwear. The children are enthusiastic about their learning. For example, they enjoyed creating vehicles with the large construction equipment, exploring materials in readiness for making Advent wreaths and cooking scones with the teacher assistant. Already, the children have learned to settle to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy, and show ability to concentrate for appropriate periods of time. Personal and social development is strongly promoted in all areas of learning and the planning is comprehensive for this element. A strength of the teaching is the warm, caring and encouraging relationships that the adults have with the children, enabling them to feel secure and to grow in confidence. The adults provide very good role models for the children, always treating one another and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to develop an awareness of others. The teachers ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for the children to choose activities for themselves and to initiate their own ideas through play. There is a good range of resources available to support this aspect of their learning. During group activities all adults take every opportunity to encourage the children to talk about their own experiences, take turns, listen to others and to develop an awareness of the feelings of others.

Communication, language and literacy

70. The children make good progress in this area of learning and, by the time they have completed the reception year, most are likely to have exceeded the recommended early learning goals. Their communication skills are particularly strong and many children use a broad vocabulary and speak fluently with clear diction. All adults use discussion to good effect and are good active listeners. Throughout all the areas of learning, both the reception teachers and helpers talk to the children individually and in groups, to ensure that all children extend their vocabulary and have the ability to use their language and communication skills for a range of purposes. For instance, when cooking with the

teaching assistant, the children confidently used vocabulary such as 'ingredients' and 'dough' to describe the process of making scones. All adults show the children that they value their efforts at communicating. The children sustain attentive listening, for example, to stories, and participate confidently in discussions. They readily share books with adults and experiment with words and text. When listening to the story of *'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'*, for example, they joined in with the repetitive phrases and rhyme with the teacher. They 'have a go' confidently at writing and make phonetically plausible attempts at words. For example, when writing a line for the beginning of a story, one child wrote 'wos pon tim ve wos a dog cold flopey' (once upon a time there was a dog called Floppy.) The children make good progress and by the time they leave reception, many write independently for a range of purposes. High-attaining children develop their ideas well in a sequence of sentences. For instance, one child wrote: My last holiday was in Frans. In Frans there was a swimming pool. I swam in it', and then carried on at some length recounting many more details. Children handle books well and most know that print carries meaning and that text is read from left to right. Many are beginning to recognise familiar words in simple reading books and are confident enough to share their reading books with adults. Consistent strategies used by the teachers enable pupils of all abilities to recognise and say the initial sounds of words. The shared partnership with parents for reading has a positive impact on the child's development and learning. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy are well used by the teachers. A good understanding of phonics is developed through effective word, sentence and text level work, for example, using well-known stories and rhymes. Children are provided with a good range of purposeful activities to develop their use of language for reading and writing whatever their stage of development. For example, in the role-play area, they are provided with paper and pencils to take details of the telephone calls for the fire crew. Through the effective interaction and high expectations of the quality of work that can be achieved, all children extend their communication, language and literacy skills extremely well.

Mathematical development

71. This area of learning is well taught and by the end of the reception year most children are on course to exceed the early learning goals for mathematics. Most children can count to ten and many count confidently to twenty. They can copy-write their numbers and by the end of the reception year are able to record their numbers unaided. High-attaining children count, order, add and subtract numbers when solving problems involving ten or more objects. The few children who find learning more difficult count up to five accurately and, with support, record and match the correct number of pictures to the numbers. In their early work, children are provided with a wide range of practical experiences, such as dice games, shape puzzles, building with bricks, measuring ingredients for cooking and exploring water and sand. The more formal activities for mathematics are introduced effectively to the children through the national framework for teaching numeracy. Children use everyday mathematical language to describe position and show an awareness of time. For instance, when working during the literacy time, they identify half-past the hour on a clock and know that they have to finish their written work within a set time. Many children name the simple shapes of triangle, circle and square and begin to use mathematical names for 'solid' shapes such as a cone. The work is well planned and children are encouraged to see mathematics all around them. They develop their mathematical ideas through a variety of planned play situations and routines. For example, when singing rhymes, making sandwiches and at the beginning of the day when time is spent discussing the day, date and month of the year. All the adults encourage the children to become mathematicians by using their growing understanding to solve problems.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. Children enter reception with a good general knowledge which teachers build on, helping them to learn more about the world around them. The teaching and learning is very good and most children are on course to exceed the expected standard by the time they enter Year 1. Lessons are very well organised, and the detailed planning, which is linked to the early learning goals, shows clearly how both teachers and teaching assistants are to be involved. Taking themes such as Me and My Family, Transport and Celebrations with Light and Food, activities are well planned to enable children to explore aspects of the environment and to relate the work to their own experiences. Discussion forms a very important part of the work and children are encouraged to be observant and describe and what they see. Effective questioning focuses children's attention and probes their understanding. In work related to scientific enquiry the children explore the materials used to make Advent wreaths and talk about the similarities and differences between those that are natural and those that are manufactured. They know about healthy food, and while making scones, learn about the changes that occur to the ingredients

when they are mixed to make dough and then cooked. Many children talk about where they live, their families and their immediate environment and they recall their wide range of experiences through role-play. They talk and write about places beyond their own locality, such as those they go to for their holidays and of places such as Africa being very hot and that the people there wear different clothes. They learn about past and present events in their lives and draw pictures of themselves growing, from the time they were in their Mother's tummy to the age they are now. Visitors invited in, such as the police and fire brigade provide the children with the opportunity to learn about people who help them in the community. A wide range of construction toys and materials are provided for the children to explore and use their skills to make models. Their skills in design and technology are well-developed, as seen in their drawings and use of materials, such as boxes, sellotape and straws to make models of hamster cages. When working in the food technology area the children are extremely well supported by a teaching assistant, who not only extends their experiences of cooking different foods but also is very skilful in questioning. For instance, when discussing the ingredients for scones, she skilfully used questions to develop their knowledge of where ingredients such as flour and sultanas originated and then went on to focus the children's attention to the change in materials when they are mixed and cooked. It is also a time of great pleasure and enjoyment for the children. The children make good progress when using computers in the computer suite and members of staff keep a good oversight of their progress, providing regular support as they work in the classroom. Most children demonstrate skills in advance of those expected for their age in their control of the mouse and in their understanding of the different functions of the tool bar, as when using a paint program. The children are introduced to a suitable range of cultures and religions. For example, they gain an awareness of their own and the beliefs of others by celebrating festivals such as Christmas, Easter, Hanakkuh and Diwali.

Physical development

73. Children's physical development is in line with expectations for their age and they make sound progress. On entry to the school, the children's abilities to handle tools such as scissors, and to operate a computer mouse, are variable. Many opportunities allow them to learn, practise and refine their manipulative skills and children were seen using scissors skilfully to cut out shapes of simple figures, handling cutters carefully to make shapes with playdough and building quite complex models of vehicles with the large construction toys. Teaching fully maximises what the children can do in this aspect of their physical development. The enclosed outdoor play area adjoining the classroom, however, only has a small space for children to develop co-ordination and control by riding tricycles or pushing prams. It has no sheltered area, only a limited number of wheeled vehicles and very little equipment to engage them in learning or refining their skills in balancing or clambering. The Early Year's manager has identified this as an area for improvement. On some occasions, however, when the children are playing outside, they are not sufficiently guided towards purposeful play and consequently their play becomes too boisterous. When in the hall, children follow instructions and work well as a team, for example, when using the parachute to control a ball and roll it on to an identified colour. In this lesson, the very good attention given to developing the children's physical skills not only ensured that they all learned how to recognise the changes that happen to their bodies when they are active but also succeeded in promoting their personal and social development. They show appropriate skills for their age and move in a range of ways, such as running, bending and stretching. The main strength in the teaching in this area is the range of opportunities provided for the children to improve their skills in manipulating tools and the very good guidance given to the children while they are involved in using and exploring different materials.

Creative development

74. The children make good progress in developing their creative skills and many are on course to exceed the nationally recommended levels of attainment by the time they enter Year 1. The quality of teaching is very good and many worthwhile opportunities are provided for children to engage in or choose from a range of activities. The children are particularly able in role-play, largely due to the way in which adults provide for and extend these opportunities for them. They use props and other resources with imaginative skill and are able to sustain aspects of characters for long periods of time and talk about what their character is doing. For example, while at play in the Fire Station, the children re-enacted a scenario of the fire crew being called out to a fire; children on the desk took the telephone call, 'wrote' down the details and organised the crew to attend the fire. They play co-operatively as part of a group and engage with delight in the activities, which often link well with their literacy and mathematical development and to their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their creative play outdoors, however, is somewhat restricted by the lack of a suitable sheltered area and equipment for children to

be able to access freely on a daily basis throughout the year. In their artwork children paint freely and produce very good pictures, for example, about Christmas. They are encouraged to mix their own colours when painting and the effective support and guidance given to children by adults while they paint is influential in developing their knowledge and skills. The classroom is attractively displayed with collage work where the children have depicted a firework scene, painted pictures of themselves and used charcoal for sketching. Although no music was directly observed during the inspection, the children know a variety of nursery rhymes and action songs, which they sing tunefully from memory. When in the hall with the older children they keep time with the singing by tapping with their hands and join in with learning new songs.

ENGLISH

75. Results in the 2000 national tests show that standards in English are above the average for seven-year olds nationally in both reading and writing and are broadly similar to those attained in similar schools. The percentage attaining the higher level in reading has risen slightly since 1999 and there has been a considerable rise in the percentage achieving the higher level in writing; both of these percentages now compare very favourably with what is found nationally. Inspection findings reflect these test results, and confirm that standards have improved since the previous inspection.
76. The national tests for eleven-year olds in 2000 show that attainment is well above the national average and also well above what is found in similar schools. There has been a considerable increase since the previous year in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level and this compares very favourably with the national figure. The inspection evidence confirms that attainment in both reading and writing is well above what is seen nationally. In general, the results in national tests show that the attainment of girls is higher than that of boys, but this disparity is less than the national average. During the course of the inspection no significant differences were seen between the attainment of girls and boys.
77. This represents considerable improvement since the previous inspection for both seven and eleven year olds, especially in writing for eleven-year-olds. In the previous report the improvement of attainment in English was identified as a key issue for action.
78. A particular strength of the attainment of seven-year-olds is their speaking and listening, which is well above average. Children across the range of attainment speak confidently and articulately and use the full range of their vocabulary to express their ideas clearly and precisely. They value the opportunity to join in discussions and listen to other people carefully and considerately. They particularly enjoy performing some of the poetry they study, when they learn the words by heart, delivering them with very good expression and linking their actions to the mood of the poetry very effectively.
79. Attainment in reading is above average in Key Stage 1. Nearly all children read confidently for their age and with great enjoyment. Their response to literature is thoughtful and very mature, for example, a group of Year 1 and Year 2 children reading a poem about a lighthouse showed an emotional response, unerringly selecting the most beautiful phrases for discussion and praise. Higher-attaining children read with very good expression, making use of punctuation and rhyme to emphasise the more significant words and phrases. All children have a good sense of rhyme and can recognise it, predict it and offer alternative rhymes. They know how to use the school library in order to locate the information they require as well as how to select their reading for pleasure.
80. Attainment in writing is above average in Key Stage 1. All children are able to write in complete sentences, sequencing several sentences in order to present a clear narrative sense. The children have a wide vocabulary, which they use very effectively. All but the lowest-attaining children use capital letters and full stops accurately. Some children spell inaccurately, but some of the mistakes are made when they are attempting to make their writing more effective by using adventurous and sophisticated vocabulary.
81. The speaking and listening of eleven-year-olds is well above average and is a strength of the school, as they use these skills very effectively across all areas of the curriculum. All the children express their ideas with great clarity and maturity, using a very wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas with precision. They make very good use of discussion as an effective learning tool to explore and revise their ideas by listening to the ideas of others. For example, a group planning some non-fiction report writing made very good use of discussion with their "response partners" to plan what should be

included. As the children have a wide and varied vocabulary, they can express disagreement clearly but diplomatically and sensitively.

82. Children aged eleven generally read very well. They are familiar with books and have well-developed tastes in their reading material. They use books effectively to extend their knowledge and understanding and also value the practice of leisure reading. The children are able to discuss and write about the books they read in terms of characterisation and setting and use references to the text to make their points.
83. Attainment in writing of children aged eleven is well above average. They make effective use of planning and drafting to produce written pieces, which are interesting and lively. They make good use of detail and a wide vocabulary to produce writing of a very good standard for a variety of purposes and audiences. The standard of spelling, punctuation and paragraphing is good. Handwriting is generally neat and well-formed, with children using a cursive and flowing script from a very early age. This assists them in writing at speed as the demands of their written assignments grow.
84. The attitude and response of children is always at least good in both key stages, and in half of the lessons seen it was very good. In some lessons the response was excellent. Children's response is thoughtful and mature. They respond with great enthusiasm to the wide variety of activities with which they are presented and are eager to participate. Children rise well to the high expectations that teachers have of them by working hard and maintaining high levels of concentration. All children work well with partners and in small groups and make effective use of the opportunity to do this, learning from considering the ideas of other people. All children show great consideration for the feelings of others and take care to voice their ideas diplomatically. As they know that their views will be treated with respect, the children have the confidence to participate fully, regardless of their level of attainment. The children's attitudes were judged to be positive in the previous report; the current situation represents an improvement on this.
85. The standard of teaching is consistently good, overall. It was at least good in all the lessons seen, very good in about half of them and excellent in one lesson. Planning is in good detail and teachers are very clear about their objectives for lessons, which they often discuss with the children. The teachers use a wide range of challenging and stimulating activities to which pupils respond with interest and sustained concentration, making good progress. For example, pupils in Year 4 made very good progress when analysing a passage in order to evaluate the amount and nature of factual information which could be extracted from it, using a grid to record their findings accurately and succinctly. Very good use of discussion and effective use of questioning by the teachers promotes high standards of reflection and understanding. The teachers set a high level of challenge and this is made very clear to the children, who work hard to rise to these expectations. The marking of work is regular and helpful, informing children clearly what they need to do to improve. There has been considerable and widespread improvement in teaching since the previous inspection report.
86. Throughout the school, the children make very effective use of their literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in history they use their knowledge of *Great Expectations* to inform their knowledge and judgements of life in Victorian Britain, and they use evidence in narrative texts to sequence a series of photographs of Isambard Kingdom Brunel. In science, pupils draw up response grids on which they write notes on their findings as their investigation into the properties of paper. In art and music, the children's ability to express their responses to what they see and hear and to articulate their own ideas greatly enhances their learning.
87. The subject is very well managed. Priorities for the raising of attainment have been correctly identified and very effectively addressed. A rigorous programme for the teaching of spelling has been consistently implemented and is showing positive results. The introduction of "writing workshops" in addition to the time devoted to the National Literacy Strategy has had a very positive impact on attainment in writing. The proportion of eleven-year old pupils attaining the higher levels in national testing has been raised considerably since the instigation of extremely challenging extension groups for higher-attaining children. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and teachers have the confidence to adapt it to meet the requirements of individual lessons. The practice of grouping children according to prior attainment is used very successfully to match the level of work to the needs of children; the potential problems of teaching children in mixed age classes are very effectively turned to good advantage. Children with special educational needs are particularly well catered for through careful supervision with their Individual Educational Programmes and they achieve well in relation to their targets. Procedures for the assessment and recording of attainment are good

and the information generated is used in the planning of the curriculum. There is a good selection of books available for children in lessons and in the library and although some of these do become rather worn, it is a sign of the frequency with which they are used rather than neglect. The library is an attractive and welcoming area; along with the help that is given to children, especially the younger ones, in the selection of books, it does much to promote regular reading habits and good levels of achievement.

MATHEMATICS

88. The children reach well above average standards in mathematics by the time they are eleven compared with all other schools nationally and also when compared with similar schools. The higher-attaining children reach appropriately high levels in the national tests for eleven-year olds. Many of them gain Level 5 and in the last two years some have reached Level 6, which is excellent. It is the school's success in enabling this group of children to do so well that has contributed most to the above-average trend in the Key Stage 2 test results over the past four years. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection, when these children were insufficiently challenged. The children who find learning difficult reach below average levels in the tests, but they achieve well in their time in the school because of the good support they receive. There is no significant difference between the test results for boys and girls, and the inspection confirms that both groups achieve equally well.
89. At Key Stage 1, the school's results in the national tests for seven-year-olds show a steadily improving pattern. In 1999 and in 2000, the results were well above average compared with all schools nationally, and above average compared with similar schools. Significantly, many more children reach the above-average Level 3 than in most schools in 2000, improving on the good 1999 results, reflecting the school's increasing success in catering for higher-attaining children. This is an improvement even on the good provision for these children reported in the previous inspection. The children use their understanding of place value to add and subtract hundreds, tens and units and their knowledge of some of the times-tables to solve mental problems. They know the names and basic properties of common shapes and use metric units to measure length, weight and volume. Their knowledge and understanding of tables, charts and graphs is also above average. There has also been a big improvement in the extent to which the children use their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, they measure how far a model car travels in a science experiment in Key Stage 1, and work out how to budget for a restaurant party in a lesson on spreadsheets in Year 5 and Year 6.
90. By the end of Key Stage 2, the children have an excellent understanding of number, including decimals, fractions, ratios and percentages, and they apply their knowledge very effectively to new problem-solving situations. Their understanding of algebra is also excellent for their age. The highest attainers can solve problems involving unknown numbers by substituting letters for the numbers and then deriving equations that enable them to calculate the unknown number. Their enthusiasm for the subject and willingness to persevere with a problem until they find a solution reflects very good and sometimes excellent teaching, especially in Year 5 and Year 6. The children perform well in all the different areas of the subject. They use their knowledge of shape to make general statements, for example, that the three angles of a triangle always add up to 180 degrees, and use appropriate metric units in practical situations, for example, to measure the correct amounts of substances in science lessons. They use line graphs as well as bar charts to represent data they have collected, and know the different ways of measuring the average of a distribution graph; their skills in this area are much better than at the last inspection. The children are beginning to use computers to enhance their work, for example, by producing spreadsheets that help them to plan for a party within a fixed budget; this is another important improvement since that last inspection.
91. Average attaining children are quick to spot patterns in numbers and shapes and to suggest general rules. They add humour and interest to this process by calling their rules after themselves – for example “-----’s Law, number two”. Their enthusiasm for this process, which lies at the heart of mathematical thinking, reflects good teaching and accounts for the children's general interest and creative ability in problem-solving. Some children with below average attainment have difficulty in spotting patterns in numbers. This slows down their rate of learning because they are not generalising their knowledge sufficiently to be able to solve new problems. The higher-attaining children in this group do not always achieve as well as they should because their lessons are pitched at a level to suit the slowest learners, and this is too slow for them. Children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards their individual learning targets.

92. Teaching is of a good standard, overall, and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. The teaching was very good or better in one third of the lessons observed in both key stages, and excellent in 22 per cent of the lessons seen in Key Stage 2. This is a very big improvement since the last inspection. The higher-attaining children in Year 5 and Year 6 benefit from excellent teaching. The lessons are lively and challenging; all the children are engrossed in problem-solving, and this ensures that their learning is rapid and secure. For example, they discussed how they might plot a straight-line graph to show the relationship between two sets of measurements from some flower heads. The quality of the questioning is excellent and ensures that the children learn quick and effective mental strategies for solving problems. The teacher ensures that every time the children reach an understanding of one idea, they have the opportunity either to apply it to a more difficult problem or move on to a new idea. The teachers generally encourage the children to use a variety of mental methods to solve problems, but some are more successful at this than others. In the lessons that were judged satisfactory, the teachers do not give the children enough opportunity to explain and develop their own thinking, and do not use the children's ideas to move them on to new challenges, as happens in the best lessons.
93. There is some very good teaching of the lower ability Year 3/4 set, in which the teacher uses puppets and games to make the lessons lively, hold the children's attention and encourage them to discuss their thinking. The children respond by expecting to enjoy the lessons, striving to do their best and making secure gains in their knowledge and understanding. The children in the lowest set in Year 5/6 do not all make such good progress because of the very wide spread of attainment in the class and the need the teacher feels to keep the lowest attainers interested. So far, no successful method has been found to engage the more able children in this class sufficiently without causing the lowest attaining children to lose interest, with the attendant risk of disruptive behaviour.
94. Fewer lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, but the standard of teaching in the lessons seen was good, overall, with some very good teaching. In a very good lesson, the teacher led a very lively discussion to ascertain what the children already knew about the passing of time and how it is measured. She then showed the children very clearly and quickly how to make "o'clock" using good quality plastic clocks. The children then made very good progress because their work built on what they already knew and they fully understood what they were doing and why. The teachers have a good understanding of the subject and plan their lessons well. They target questions at individual children to check their understanding, but in some lessons, they do not take sufficiently into account what the children already understand. This leads to some lack of attention and slow progress among the higher-attaining children.
95. The teachers have implemented the National Numeracy Strategy very effectively. They engage the children well in mental mathematics and encourage them to find their own ways of solving problems. As a result, interest is high throughout the school and behaviour is good and often very good in lessons. The children develop very good study habits because they are continually expected to "think on their feet", to engage in investigations and to explain their thinking to others. The standard of presentation has improved dramatically since the last inspection and very good use is now made of homework to extend the children's learning. The setting of the children by ability has enabled much more focused and efficient teaching and learning to occur in the vast majority of classes. The subject managers have a very clear picture of progress over the school as a whole and a good action plan to guide their work. They have undertaken extensive analysis of test results and some checks on teaching, and are fully committed to maintaining and building on current high standards. A good range of good quality resources is available to support all lessons.

SCIENCE

96. Standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1, which is the same judgement as was made by the school's previous inspection. Overall, the children also reached average standards in the 2000 end of key stage assessments by teachers. The percentage of children reaching Level 3, however, was well above the national average. Children with special educational needs make good progress in Key Stage 1. No significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls were observed.
97. The findings of this inspection are that children in Year 6 are on track to achieve standards that are above average, overall, in 2001. These findings are broadly consistent with the school's results in the end of key stage national tests and with those of the previous inspection in 1998. There has been good progress in increasing the amount of scientific enquiry work that the children carry out and in the

progressive learning of skills. Children, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language, achieve well for their abilities and make good progress in Key Stage 2. The 2000 national test results show that children in Year 6, attained above average results, overall, compared with all schools and when compared with similar schools. A particular strength of attainment is the above average number of children who achieved Level 5 in the national tests at eleven years; this is on course to be maintained in 2001. This inspection finds no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

98. The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and promotes sound progress and achievement. Children in Year 2 show average factual knowledge of living things, life processes, properties of materials and physical processes. Their knowledge and understanding of forces is above average for their age. Their attainment in scientific enquiry methods is average. By the age of seven, children understand that animals such as toads reproduce and change as they grow older. They know about healthy food and why exercise is an important part of a healthy life style. They describe how heating can change materials in different ways; for example they know that wax melts when it is heated, but that a wooden lolly stick will burn when heated. There is a strong approach to scientific thinking in their work on forces, for example, when children are given the opportunity to carry out tests to find out what makes a difference to how far a toy car travels from the bottom of a ramp. They predict what might happen if they change the height or surface of the ramp, decide what to do and measure the distance travelled by the cars. In their work on light and dark, children name a number of light sources, including the sun, and use words such as "shimmering" and "reflect" when talking about light. The teachers' knowledge is satisfactory and results in appropriate learning. However, expectations for higher-achieving children are less evident in lessons. For instance, in one lesson on light and darkness, many of the Year 2 children had a great deal of knowledge to share, but this was not picked up and extended. However, they were provided with a memorable experience of sitting in a darkened room to develop their understanding of the need for light and listening to the teacher read a story by the light of a candle. Most children have the ability to share their ideas and communicate them competently using scientific language and present their work in an appropriate variety of ways, such as drawings, writing, charts and tables. There was little evidence, however, of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance the children's learning.
99. The above-average attainment at Key Stage 2 is wholly due to the good teaching in the juniors, which results in good learning and very good achievement by children of all attainment levels. The quality of teaching was good in two out of the four lessons seen, and in one lesson it was excellent. In all lessons, the management of children is good and the content is pitched at an appropriately challenging level. The teachers give particularly good guidance in the group work to impart knowledge and teach the relevant scientific skills. The strength of the teaching of science and its impact on learning were well-illustrated in an excellent lesson in which children in a Year 5/6 class were set real life scientific problems to solve. Year 6 children were given the problem of a sink being blocked with sugar and other contents from the kitchen cupboard. They had to plan a method to separate the contents of the sink water so that the different bits could be returned to the cupboard and the precious sugar could be got back as there was a country sugar shortage. Year 5 children were 'scientists' studying the content of the Amazon River, and as they were far from base camp they had to separate the different size particles in the river water to provide clear drinking water. In this lesson, the tasks were well-matched to both year groups and tested the capabilities of all children. The standard of questioning was high and the teachers' clear explanations and excellent level of challenge motivated all children and made learning both relevant and extremely enjoyable. The level of interest was exceptionally high and was maintained by allowing the children to explore and take responsibility for their own learning. By the end of the lesson children had suggested and carried out methods such as sieving, decanting and filtering in order to solve the problems. Year 6 children knew that to recover the dissolved sugar they would have heat the solution to evaporate the water so that the sugar would be left behind.
100. A particularly effective aspect of science teaching is the opportunity for children to work together to discuss and develop their own ideas when planning an investigation. Lesson planning, overall, is good and the activities provided indicate that children' learning is well organised. There is good evidence of progression of skills as children move through the school. This was seen in the lessons in the Year 3/4 classes when children were investigating the strength and absorbency of different papers. Many Year 4 children showed a good understanding of the idea of a fair test and explained how this was achieved. Most teachers show confidence when teaching science and, at best, provide a good range

of opportunities for the children to become actively involved in their own learning. In these lessons, the teachers encourage the children to ask questions in order to clarify their ideas and as a result they know the reason for learning and achieve well. Resources are carefully prepared and used to provide all children with good opportunities to participate in the practical activities and to consolidate their learning. Above average attaining children confidently discuss their scientific work using accurate vocabulary. Most children record their findings accurately using graphs, charts, and diagrams. However, little use is made of ICT to record their work and extend their learning. Much of their work shows creative thinking when interpreting results and drawing conclusions.

101. The subject manager has only recently taken on the responsibility but already shows good leadership and has good ideas for developing the subject further and raising attainment. The school has successfully adapted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work to cover a two-year rolling programme for all the mixed-age classes. A new format for assessment is being developed to track the levels of attainment achieved by children in each unit covered. The subject makes an important contribution to children's spiritual and social development when teachers bring a real sense of wonder to the lessons and allow children to collaborate when carrying out investigations. Resources in science are adequate, but the school grounds are insufficiently developed and used for environmental studies. Progress since the last inspection has been good; teaching in science is now good, overall, and scientific skills are planned in sufficient detail in the units of work.

ART

102. Standards were judged on the quality of the children's work on display and in the samples of their work provided for scrutiny as well as on their performance in lessons. The attainment of seven-year-olds is above expectations for their age. The children plan their work and revise and improve it as their work progresses. For example, a group of children making owls from paper and paste began the process by making pencil sketches of the position, shape and basic features of their owl and followed these while modelling their three-dimensional version. Children have good observational skills and use these to record quite intricate detail accurately. Their use of colour is subtle and authentic, especially when portraying skin tones in both pastels and paint, and they use their good sense of form and shape to achieve interesting and unusual effects. For example, in a series of small paintings depicting successive bites being taken out of an apple until only the core is left, the shape and form of the apple went through a series of carefully observed changes. The work of many children shows good progress over time, with increasing use of detail and greater control of the media used.
103. The attainment of eleven-year-olds is also above the standard expected for their age. They develop considerable taste and discrimination when planning their work. For example, Year 6 children preparing still-life compositions were able to arrange their objects with a well-developed sense of what would be attractive and harmonious. Their increasing artistic vocabulary enables children to discuss their plans accurately and precisely and they show a good level of understanding of how the intentions of well-known artists have influenced their finished work, comparing this with their own work. Similarly, they make good use of discussion to evaluate their work and to reflect on how this could be improved. The use of pencils for drawing and sketching develops well as children grow older and, by the age of eleven, all children are able to make quick preliminary sketches, using a sketching pencil in the correct grip to produce light, feathery strokes, which can then be developed into bolder drawings. Children in Years 3 and 4 have produced some very sensitive pastel portraits of people from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, applying and blending colour effectively both to give accurate representations and also to convey mood. As paint is made available only in primary colours plus black and white, the children make good progress in colour-mixing to produce subtle effects, for example, in a colour wash to depict the sky at dusk, painted from memory and imagination.
104. These standards represent a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, when attainment at the age of seven was in line with national expectations and eleven-year olds were attaining below the standards expected for their age.
105. The children's attitude to their work, and their behaviour, was good or very good in the two lessons observed. They put real thought and effort both into the planning and execution of their work. They respond well to the range of artistic experiences and opportunities offered to them, showing enthusiasm and commitment. Older children are interested in and have respect for the work of artists from a range of periods and backgrounds and use their discussion of their works to influence their own

plans and execution. The children co-operate very well with one another. For example, children planning a still life composition in-groups did so very sensibly, making good use of the time allowed and referring courteously to one another's opinions. The children achieve very well when working together, learning a lot from considering the work and ideas of other people.

106. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers' planning includes opportunities for children to experience a wide range of activities and medium. There is appropriate emphasis on the teaching of skills, and to do this, the teachers make good use of clear explanations and demonstrations, promoting learning in key areas very effectively. The teachers encourage the children to use their imagination and creativity by offering well-planned opportunities for this. The opportunities and encouragement that teachers offer children to discuss and reflect on their work promotes the development of mature critical skills. Teachers have high expectations that children will make good use of the time allowed for tasks and lessons move along at a good pace with little fussing or time-wasting, allowing the children to make good progress within the course of a lesson as well as over time. Teaching throughout the school has improved considerably since the previous inspection, when the teaching of older children was judged unsatisfactory.
107. The subject is well managed. There is a detailed scheme of work, which places emphasis on the acquisition of skills and clearly maps the activities and skills to be covered each term. The scheme is designed so that children in mixed-age classes learn skills appropriate for their age and do not do the same activities two years running. This is accompanied by a commentary on the skills to be learned in each age group, and represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, which reported that little guidance was given to teachers on expected standards. Although the scheme of work identifies opportunities for the assessment of knowledge and skills, and teachers generally follow this advice, there is no system for recording children's attainment and, in this sense, assessment remains at an informal level. The subject is resourced appropriately. All children are provided with a sketchbook. They use these well to support the development of their planning skills. As part of the school's annual Art Week, good use is made of a visit to Southampton's art gallery, which had a clear effect on both the children's skills and their critical response.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. During the inspection it was only possible to observe the teaching of design and technology in two lessons, both in the Year 5/6 classes. However, from the evaluation of these lessons, scrutiny of planning and children's work, photographic evidence and discussion with children, indications are that standards are average in Year 2 and above average by Year 6. All children, including those with special educational needs and the few who have English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, when attainment was judged to be below national expectations at the end of both key stages. There are no differences observed in attainment between boys and girls.
109. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. The analysis of work shows that the children plan and use their ideas to make models and use appropriate tools with developing precision. Children in Year 1, develop a good standard in textile work by making finger puppets with felt and use pictures and words to describe the process for making a healthy fruit salad. They test it by making it, and describe how it looks and tastes. In Year 2, children design and make homes. They cut, join and combine materials appropriately to create the internal fittings in a home and use simple finishing techniques to improve the décor of the rooms in their model house.
110. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, at Key Stage 2, but particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. In the lessons observed, the teaching was characterised by the consistently high expectations of children's achievement and the very good use of time. Clear explanations of techniques and regular intervention encourage children to be creative and motivate them to achieve well. The challenging tasks instil the need for quality in the children's work. A particular strength is the way in which children develop and share their ideas and work collaboratively. Teaching methods are very good. For example, in the lessons observed at the upper end of the school, where children designed and made a toy with a moving part for a Victorian child, there were strong links with mathematics and history and the positive working atmosphere was infectious. Moreover, the teachers carefully balanced whole-class teaching with individual help and as a result of this the children made very good progress in designing and making inventive toys with the movement controlled by a cam mechanism.

111. Children in Year 6 have a strong understanding of the design process as they clarify their ideas well, using accurate technical vocabulary, produce step-by-step plans and draw clearly labelled diagrams. They discuss confidently design features that work well or could be improved as they use equipment from a construction kit to try out their ideas before going on to make their toy. The management of children and working relationships are very good and result in children working safely and accurately with tools to produce high quality products that show great attention to detail. The children know how materials can be combined and mixed to create more useful properties, such as using cardboard triangles on the corners of a wooden framework to strengthen it. Previous work of children in Year 6, shows they have learnt how designers of slippers must address a range of needs, such as comfort, warmth, safety and quality. In this work, they make accurate patterns, produce detailed working drawings and use a variety of sewing and decorative techniques to make some very imaginative slippers. Work is well planned and develops progressively over the two-yearly Programme of Study. The use of ongoing assessment is good and results in improvements in children's designs and in their making skills. Children show very good attitudes to learning. Furthermore, they are highly motivated and show very good concentration. Analysis of work in Years 3 and 4, showed that the children have acquired the necessary skills to design and construct packages from nets; made simple storybooks that include pop-up features, and have gained an understanding of pneumatics by making a 'power unit' with reclaimed materials.
112. The subject is very well led by a knowledgeable and competent manager. She has clear ideas of how to develop the subject further and is at present putting together a support pack of ideas for teachers that contain lesson plans, examples of good work and worksheets to help support the children's evaluation skills. There is a policy and scheme of work, which follows the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. Alongside this, the subject manager is introducing a learning programme produced by the Local Education Authority. This shows particularly good improvement in design and technology since the previous inspection, when there was no scheme of work and the work undertaken was judged to be insufficient and not challenging. Assessment procedures are sound and include a useful collection of children's work and photographic evidence to show the progressive development of skills. The subject manager is developing a more formal approach of recording individual children's levels of attainment in design and technology. Resources and accommodation are good. The school is fortunate in having food technology areas for both the infant and junior aged children. Attention to health and safety is good.

GEOGRAPHY

113. By both the ages of seven and eleven, standards that children attain in geography are in line with those expected nationally, but they are not as high as they might be at either key stage. No geography lessons were seen at Key Stage 2 during the inspection, but sufficient evidence to form a judgement on attainment was gained from analysing work, interviewing children and teachers and examining planning.
114. Across the school, children make satisfactory progress in learning, and standards have made some improvement since the last inspection, when insufficient evidence was available for judgements about the subject to be made. Children of different attainment at Key Stage 1 make similar progress because they are generally set work that matches their abilities. At Key Stage 2, there is less evidence that higher-attaining children make the progress expected because the work they are set does not challenge them to develop such skills as those necessary for map-reading, map-making or fieldwork to a sufficiently high level. Children of average and lower attainment make satisfactory progress in the subject.
115. Children in Years 1 and 2 begin to extend their understanding of the environment beyond the home and school by making short walks in the locality and noting its principal features on simple sketch maps. They discuss with their teacher their views on attractive and unattractive aspects of the environment, and begin to offer reasons for their choices. Most children at Year 2 can express these simply in writing. As the children move through the school, they become increasingly aware of the relative distance and position of buildings, towns and countries. At Key Stage 2, the children compare their own lives with those of children in an Indian village, drawing particular comparisons on climate, housing, food and schooling. Older children investigate some of the factors to be considered when new amenities are introduced to a locality, and begin to weigh community benefit against environmental impact. The school makes good use of visits to enhance the geography curriculum; children in Years 5 and 6 make comparisons, for example, between localities on the Isle of Wight and Winchester. They

practise geographical skills, using map and compass for simple orienteering and learning how to read simple grid references. However, such geographical skills are not practised with sufficient frequency as children move through the school to enable them to build up the expected expertise in their use.

116. There is insufficient evidence to form a judgement on the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, overall, but some good lessons were also seen. Teachers organise and plan their lessons well, allowing children sufficient time for discussion, and probing their understanding with relevant questioning. In one good lesson, the teacher encouraged the children from the beginning of the lesson to reflect on the environmental reasons why they found particular locations attractive, and the children responded well, clearly understanding the environmental differences between litter and fallen leaves, and discussing articulately the unattractive aspects of graffiti. Teachers generally set work that closely matches the learning needs of their children. The principal difference between good and satisfactory teaching is one of expectation. In good lessons, teachers set high standards by periodically reminding their children of the focus of the lesson and insisting that work is completed, ensuring that their writing and illustrations relate directly to the task in hand. Teachers circulate well among their children once they are working alone, checking their understanding and progress, and supporting their efforts with encouragement.
117. The geography curriculum is sufficiently broad, but there is some imbalance at Key Stage 2 because geographical skills are not taught with sufficient frequency. The curriculum co-ordinator, newly appointed, is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a clear understanding of the developments necessary. For example, there are plans to write a scheme of work particular to the needs of the school, the school at present relying on national guidelines as a basis for planning. Teaching in the subject is not observed by the co-ordinator, and there is currently no systematic evaluation of children's progress. The school makes good use of visits to enrich children's geographical understanding. Resources for the subject are generally satisfactory for supporting the curriculum at Key Stage 1, but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. However, the co-ordinator is already aware of these shortcomings and is taking steps to redress them.

HISTORY

118. The school has maintained the good standards in history at Key Stage 1 reported at the time of the last inspection, and has made still further improvement at Key Stage 2, so that the attainment for children aged eleven is well above that expected nationally. The reason for the very good standards at Key Stage 2 is that children are encouraged to acquire a deeper understanding of events and personalities by evaluating the evidence presented and assessing its value. By doing this, they begin to understand the principles of historical enquiry and to appreciate the relative merit of different pieces of evidence. All children, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, achieve very well.
119. By the age of seven, children have developed some understanding of how the lives of children in the past differ from their own. For example, they recount some of the significant differences in purpose and custom between visits to the seaside in Victorian times and those of today, and cite examples of the hardship experienced by poor children in the past. Children learn of the lives of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale and Captain Scott, and some give reasoned explanations of the importance of their achievements beyond those expected at this age. Many children demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in coherent writing, sequencing events and explanations logically. Children of lower attainment, including those with special educational needs, make equally good progress, so that most are able to make a simple written record of what they know and understand by the end of the key stage.
120. Between the ages of seven and eleven, children make very good progress in the subject because they are taught to examine evidence critically and to evaluate its worth. For example, children in Years 3 and 4 are encouraged to examine how the symbolism expressed in a portrait of Elizabeth I conveys a particular understanding of her life and influence. Older children, on the other hand, evaluate the achievements of Isambard Kingdom Brunel, relating these effectively to improvements in travel by land and sea in Victorian Britain. The judicious use of a wide range of both primary and secondary sources makes a positive impact on the quality of children's learning. For example, children in Years 3 and 4 enrich their understanding of life in Elizabethan England by visiting the Tudor house in Southampton, where they are encouraged to make detailed sketches of architecture and furniture, and learn of the

use of herbs for medical and culinary purposes. Those in Year 5 and 6 examine carefully copies of Victorian photographs and documents, developing a good understanding of schools, factory life and railways in the past. A strong feature of learning among older children is that they are encouraged to make accurate links between contemporary events and personalities of a particular era, so that they develop a fuller picture of life at that time.

121. Older children at Key Stage 2 develop a real enthusiasm for history, which is communicated to them through the teaching they receive. As a result, many make very good progress, becoming well-motivated to pursue their own historical enquiry, and sharing their results with others.
122. Although no teaching was seen at Key Stage 1, the evidence acquired through a scrutiny of work and by interviewing children indicates that it is good. Teaching is equally good at Key Stage 2. Here, teachers display very good subject knowledge in lessons, and have at their disposal a wide range of resources, which enable them to illustrate their teaching effectively and to challenge children to interpret meaningfully the data they present. The teachers take time to offer careful explanations; these make a strong impact on the quality of learning. For example, children at Key Stage 1 were able to recall in detail a significant number of facts that they had learnt some months after the work had been completed. At Key Stage 2, lessons are well organised and generally proceed at a good pace. Tasks set generally offer an appropriate level of challenge, though higher-attaining children are not set with sufficient frequency open-ended work that gives them the opportunity to show what they really know and understand. Children are well-motivated, some using their initiative to research information at home, which they subsequently share with others. Children with special educational needs make good progress. They are well supported in their work by teaching assistants, some of whom contribute significantly to the quality of teaching.
123. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced, and history makes an important contribution to learning in other subjects, such as English and information technology. The experienced co-ordinator leads the curriculum well. She has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and a clear agenda for future developments in the subject. Teachers make informal evaluations of children's knowledge and understanding to plan and organise lessons, but there are not yet any formal assessments to record exactly what skills the children have. Plans have been made for the co-ordinator to observe history teaching. The school draws on a wealth of resources to enrich the history curriculum. Very good use is made of visits, for example, to Fishbourne, Southampton, Oxford and to Winchester itself. Visitors to the school recount their experiences of the past, such as wartime evacuation, and drama and role-play is used effectively, especially among younger children, to help bring the past to life.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

124. Children's attainment is above that expected nationally by the ages of seven and eleven. The school has made excellent progress in the subject since the last inspection, when standards were well below those expected. Such progress has been achieved because teachers' now demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are well supported in their work by assistants and volunteers with appropriate expertise. Furthermore, the school has invested in good facilities, which ensure that each pupil has ready access to computers and software.
125. Building on the good start they receive before they are five, children in Years 1 and 2 progressively acquire greater skill in control of the mouse, both to select appropriate toolbar buttons and to draw and fill in shapes. They use straight line and flood tools accurately to create designs, which they compare with those by contemporary artists. Children correct or improve their work in graphics programs using erasure tools, and begin to understand that care is needed when tool buttons are selected. They begin to develop word processing skills, typing simple sentences and understanding how to start a new line. By the end of Year 2, many can retrieve stored information, and most can save and print their work without assistance.
126. Between the ages of seven and eleven, children make equally good progress. Those in Years 3 and 4 select files or folders accurately, retrieving previously saved information. They insert a picture into a body of text, and use the mouse effectively to change its size or proportions. Some understand how to rectify their mistakes, although most begin a sequence of work again if they have made an error. Children display increasing dexterity in word processing; they correct mistakes by deleting work, but do not yet use insert or overwrite tools regularly. Children begin to compare the effectiveness of using

the computer with alternative means of producing similar work, and begin to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the technology at their disposal. In Years 5 and 6, children use the computer for more sophisticated purposes. For example, they employ a spreadsheet to prepare a budget for an imaginary party, using the calculator tool accurately to check their predictions and editing cells appropriately. Children display a range of word processing skills, using these increasingly to support their English or history work; for example, in centring and boldening titles or indenting text for a play script.

127. Teaching is good across the school, and some very good teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6. Teachers display good subject knowledge, and use support staff and volunteers very effectively to ensure that children are well supported. Their efficient use of the expertise available ensures that children are not delayed when they encounter difficulty, so that the rate of learning is not diminished by technical obstacles. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of what will be achieved, offering clear introductory explanations that closely hold children's attention and enable them to form a clear understanding of the targets to be achieved and of the skills they are to practise. All teachers plan and organise their lessons well, ensuring that children are paired appropriately so that their skills are well matched and that the members of staff have ready access to those requiring the greatest support. Lessons generally proceed at a good pace, although they sometimes lose momentum towards their end because children do not complete their tasks at the same rate. Teachers generally match work well to the ability of their children. In very good lessons, tasks of different complexity reflect the teachers' good knowledge of their reasoning and mathematical ability. Teaching assistants and voluntary helpers are well deployed. Some have expertise, which makes a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
128. The curriculum is sufficiently broad, and the school has made outstanding progress in the last two years in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Across the school, great emphasis has been placed on the acquisition of fundamental computer skills. These now provide a good basis for children to develop more precise evaluative skills and to experiment with different variables or to investigate the impact of different achievable effects. Responsibility for co-ordination of the subject is currently shared between the deputy head and another teacher, but both have a good understanding of the right priorities for further development. Information technology is used well to support the English, history and art curriculums, but its use in mathematics and science is less well developed. Assessment procedures are used to produce an overall evaluation of children's attainment but are not yet regularly used to evaluate children's separate achievements in each area of learning. Parents receive detailed reports of children's progress in the subject.
129. Resources for information technology are good. There is a sufficiently wide range of software to support learning, and all children have good access and opportunities to practise keyboard skills in the computer suite. Classroom-based computers are also generally well used. The only shortcoming in the computer suite is the lack of space for teachers and other adult helpers to move freely around the whole set of machines.

MUSIC

130. The quality of provision for music has greatly improved since the recent appointment of a new subject manager. Much better singing has been the first significant consequence. Junior children sing with enthusiasm and skill, matching the dynamics of their voices to the requirements of different songs. For example, when singing as a big group in the hall, they changed from singing a lively action song to a very reflective hymn, performing both with complete conviction and equal enjoyment. They also hold their line when singing rounds or in harmony and produce a very good overall sound. Their composing and performing skills are not as strong as their singing, but are in line with expectations by the end of the key stage, and are improving. A specialist teacher provides good tuition, getting the children to sing correctly and to compose accompaniments using percussion instruments. They collaborate well, use their initiative in suggesting ideas for instruments and tunes, and listen critically to what they produce. There is good progress in this element of the subject in the lower juniors under the tutelage of the subject manager. The children at this stage have a very good understanding of the structure of music and read simple rhythms written in formal notation with confidence. They play repeated tune patterns to accompany their singing of a Tudor song and offer very incisive comments when asked to compare their efforts with a professional recording of the same piece. Their attainment is above expectations at this age, which bodes well for future improvements by the end of the key stage. No music lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, so a judgement on standards, overall, cannot be made,

but the infant children sing well in whole-school assemblies.

131. The standard of teaching and learning is very good in Key Stage 2 because of the subject manager's direct input, which is sometimes excellent. The teaching by the visiting specialist is also good. The whole-key stage singing lessons are of the highest quality. The teacher is in complete control of the children, but at the same time encourages and facilitates a wide range of varied active participation, from singing rounds to action songs. The children respond with enthusiasm, and experience the sheer enjoyment of singing. By keeping a quick pace and introducing plenty of variety, the teacher keeps the children's interest, and because they are alert, they perform well. The teaching seen in the lower juniors was very good. The teacher takes each class in turn and gives very effective lessons that cover all the required musical elements in interesting and challenging ways. The children have evidently been taught very good study habits because they sit in a circle, take turns at playing instruments or suggesting ideas and listen very attentively and critically to their own pieces and to recorded music. The teacher demonstrates excellent subject knowledge and very good teaching skills.
132. The class teachers support teaching in both the lower and upper junior lessons, so these act as a very good quality source of in-service training. The subject manager has plans to continue building the teachers' confidence through practical workshops as the subject takes its turn in the development plan priorities in 2001. This should help towards the ideal model of competent teaching of the subject by each class teacher. The separate room available for music lessons is very useful as it allows the children to make as much noise as they need to without disturbing other classes. The percussion instruments available are of reasonable quality, but provide only the bare minimum quantity, and in composition lessons there are not enough of them to keep the whole class fully occupied.
133. A large number of children take string, woodwind or brass instrumental lessons. None of these were observed, but conversations with children indicated that they enjoyed and appreciate them. The children involved occasionally bring their instruments to class music lessons when these include opportunities to play them. There is a choir, but this was not seen in operation. Overall, music has a much higher profile than previously and makes a very good contribution to the children's spiritual, social and cultural development. The children listen to and sing reflective pieces and music from a wide range of cultures and have good quality opportunities to collaborate in composing and performing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. It was only possible to observe lessons in two activities, which included only a very small sample of outdoor games, because of the way in which the curriculum is arranged and the adverse weather conditions during the week of the inspection.
135. By the age of seven standards in physical education are average. This represents a maintenance of the standards reported at the previous inspection. Children follow their warm-up routines carefully, making appropriate use of the music to vary the speed and vigour with which they carry them out. They show understanding of the way in which they can vary their body shape and the speed of their movements to interpret a given idea or mood. For example, children depicting sloths were able to make curling and uncurling movements, linked into a simple sequence, while those depicting giraffes stretched their bodies into an elongated shape. Children make effective use of practising their throwing and catching skills, using their tactical understanding to attack and defend. Little evidence was seen of children reflecting on their own performance or that of others. Although the children respond positively to their teachers' instructions and suggestions, they had little opportunity in lessons to improve their performance as a result of their own evaluations.
136. At the age of eleven standards are above expectations, overall, with strong indications that dance is a particular strength. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. In football, children develop their ball skills satisfactorily. They have a sound basic knowledge of the ways in which to strike the ball in a range of situations and the older children use strikes and passes that would be required in a "real game" situation, showing understanding of when they would be needed. They understand the importance of practising these skills and the basics of how to apply them when playing in a game. Many children use their evaluation of their own performances or those of other people to help them understand what they need to do to improve. The standard of dance in the Year 6 lesson seen was excellent. All children move expressively, using their bodies in the space around them to express emotion movingly and convincingly, responding to the mood of the music. They make very good use of the opportunity to

work together to choreograph their dances and they make extremely effective use of reflection and discussion to evaluate and improve their work. Since children do not go swimming with the school after Year 4, it is not possible to comment on how many children are able to conform to the national standard of swimming 25 metres by the age of eleven.

137. The attitude of children to their work in physical education is always at least satisfactory and, overall, it is good. Children's response in the one dance lesson seen was excellent in collaborating with one another in order to portray very effectively their mature emotional response to the music. Children work hard to fulfil their teachers' expectations of them, concentrating carefully on instructions and demonstrations. They approach their work with energy and commitment to succeed, only rarely becoming discouraged or "switching off" from the activity. The children respond particularly well to the opportunity to evaluate and discuss their own and other people's work and use their well-honed oral skills to express their ideas clearly. They use these evaluations well in order to enhance their progress. Children approach their work very sensibly and even those who were disappointed by not being able to go outside because of bad weather were nonetheless willing to do their best at the indoor activities offered as an alternative,
138. Overall, the standard of teaching in physical education is good, with some excellent teaching of dance. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that children are presented with an appropriate level of challenge, which promotes progress. For example, in a football lesson the teacher planned to introduce the skills of striking the ball at a progressively challenging level, and the achievement of lower-attaining children over a range of skills was good. There is a clear emphasis on the teaching of skills, not only in the teachers, planning but also in the way they explain the importance of this to the children and in the amount of time which teachers devote to it. A particular strength of the teaching, especially of older children is the opportunity which teachers give for the evaluation of work by the children themselves. This is further enhanced by the practice of some teachers of using demonstrations of skills by the children. Teachers place firm emphasis on the importance of warming-up and cooling-down exercises and have clear expectations that the children will carry these out effectively.
139. The subject is well managed. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection in producing a detailed scheme of work, which requires a written evaluation each half term from each teacher. Although the planning on a termly basis offers clear guidance to teachers, it does not offer separate planning for each year group and children follow the same programme two years running. Although this would not be satisfactory on a long-term basis, this situation is a considerable improvement over previous practice and there are clear plans to extend the scheme of work to cover all year groups as separate entities. Since no swimming activities are offered after Year 4, children who cannot swim 25 metres at that stage have no further opportunity to attain the national standard by the time they are eleven. There has been recent staff in-service training on some aspects of the subject and the co-ordinator has had the chance to monitor and support colleagues in the classroom on a fairly formal basis in order to ensure consistency with the scheme of work. There are satisfactory resources and equipment for the subject and the school has good facilities, including well-drained playing-fields, for outdoor activities.