

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARK'S C of E VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Farnborough

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116389

Acting Headteacher: Mrs F Hodgson

Reporting inspector: Mr M S Burghart
20865

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 4th October 2000

Inspection number: 224616

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 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Queens Road

Postcode: Farnborough
GU14 6DU

Telephone number: 01252 544155

Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs F Milne

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M S Burghart [20865] Registered inspector	English as an additional language; English; Design and technology; Information and communications technology; Music.	What sort of school is it? Results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr M Whitaker [9644] Lay inspector		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?
Mr R I Hancock [13307] Team inspector	Mathematics; Geography; History; Physical education; Special educational needs.	
Mrs J Watson [25554] Team inspector	Equal opportunities; Science; Art; Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mark's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is situated on the edge of Farnborough in Hampshire. The school is housed in Victorian buildings, modified significantly to provide good accommodation for four classes. The school has its own small hall. It makes use of a local recreation ground. There are 107 children on the school roll aged from four to eleven. Numbers have decreased slightly since the last inspection. All classes contain a mixture of year groups. Children in Year R start their schooling part time in the autumn term. There is an average of almost 27 pupils per class.

Pupils are drawn from the local surrounding area from a combination of private and rented accommodation, some from nearby army bases. All of the children have had some kind of pre-school education. Their attainment on entry to the school, aged four, varies, but overall is a good average.

The deputy head is currently acting as headteacher following the retirement of the previous head. She is supported by four full time, and one part time, teacher.

There are 19 pupils on the special educational needs register. This accounts for 17.75 per cent of the school roll, and is slightly below the national average. All but five such pupils require a relatively low level of support. One pupil has a formal statement under the terms of the DfEE Code of Practice¹, which is below the national picture. No children are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average of 20 per cent. No pupils require extra support as a consequence of having English as an additional language.

A representative of the diocesan council inspected the school's acts of collective worship and religious education under Section 23 of the Education Act. Her report appears under a separate cover.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

In keeping with its mission statement St Mark's is a friendly, happy community where children and staff get on well. The learning environment is good, and together with good teaching, this provides pupils with an overall sound standard of education. Pupils make good progress and do well in English, mathematics and science. The acting headteacher, staff and governors are committed to raising standards. The school gives satisfactory value for money. It is appropriately placed for future development.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school.
- Behaviour, attitudes and relationships are very good.
- The learning environment is good.
- Teaching is predominantly good, especially in literacy.
- Developments in assessment, and its use in planning are going well.
- The school maintains very good links with parents.
- Provision for pupils' moral development is very good.

What could be improved

¹ The DfEE Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

- The balance of the timetable to ensure all subjects receive appropriate emphasis.
- Standards of information and communications technology.
- Monitoring of the curriculum to include teaching, planning and standards.
- A scheme of work for physical education identifying how skills will be built on progressively.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last report raised six key issues for improvement. The school has made adequate progress in addressing these. Art and music planning now provides for all requirements of the National Curriculum. Schemes of work have been developed for most curriculum areas (although there is still more to do in some subjects, notably information and communications technology (ICT) and physical education). Improvements to monitoring are having positive effects and being used to inform management decisions. However, monitoring of subjects by co-ordinators is still not as effective as it should be. The required curriculum review has taken place, but more work is needed to guarantee all subjects are afforded sufficient time. Statutory teacher appraisal is still not happening, but staff do have informal professional interviews and undertake training. Strategic management has been improved and current work on the school improvement plan is having positive effects. In addition, substantial improvements to the building and site, and the successful introduction of literacy and numeracy, are having positive effects on pupils' learning. Generally, standards have been improved since the last report.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	A	B	B	D
Mathematics	A*	B	A	C
Science	A*	A	A	B

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

Similar school comparisons are based on the number of free school meals and this school has none. St Mark's similar school comparison for English was below average because a smaller proportion of pupils achieved the higher levels than in most schools. Indications from Year 2000 results show improvement in all three subjects, most marked in English and science where 57 per cent and 50 per cent of pupils in Year 6 respectively, attained higher than average levels. In mathematics a creditable 7 per cent of pupils achieved Level 6, which is very high. Standards in other subjects for eleven year olds are satisfactory with the exception of ICT and physical education, where gaps in planning mean not all work is covered effectively. Standards are, however, acceptable in work which is completed.

At the end of Key Stage 1 when pupils are seven standards in all subjects except physical education are satisfactory, with strengths in speaking, listening and reading.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils are keen and interested and show respect for staff, each other and the building. One hundred per cent of parents reported via the Ofsted questionnaire, that their children like coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond very well to the rules and routines of the school. They know what is right and wrong and show very good self control.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils show initiative and take responsibility for their actions. Pupils play a good part in school life. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Good: low unauthorised absence and above average attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory with good features.	Satisfactory with good features.	Good with very good features.

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 overall profile of teaching is good. All lessons observed were satisfactory or better with 52 per cent good and almost 8 per cent very good. Very good teaching was evident at the top of Key Stage 2. All full time staff had at least one session judged good. Strengths in teaching are in literacy, science and some numeracy and Foundation Stage² lessons. Good features are in questioning, relationships, control and expectations. Teachers manage mixed age classes effectively with a good impact on learning. Special educational needs teaching is satisfactory. Relative weaknesses in teaching are in: a lack of pace in some lessons with introductions overlong; some planning which does not identify objectives clearly enough, especially in physical education; and a lack of teachers' knowledge, understanding and confidence in some subject areas, which results in underemphasis.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

² From September 2000, the term Foundation Stage refers to children's education from the age of three until the end of the reception year.

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good for the Foundation Stage. Satisfactory overall for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Good features in literacy and numeracy. Weaknesses in planning for ICT where not all requirements are met at Key Stage 2, and some subjects where schemes of work are incomplete (notably physical education). Weekly timetable not always balanced with some underemphasis on music. Some sessions of the school day are of unsuitable length for planned activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory provision enables pupils to make good progress. Some targets for pupils' individual education plans are not clear enough and withdrawal times are too often at the same time.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall: sound provision for spiritual; satisfactory cultural opportunities (with more to do in multicultural aspects). Good social and very good moral opportunities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: staff know pupils well. A good learning environment is provided. Good initiatives in assessing and recording pupils' performance, are having positive effects. Homework and visits well used.

The school maintains very good links with parents and the community. Parents support the school very well and are very successful in fund raising.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Currently satisfactory. The very new acting head has made a good start in seeking to confirm the school's educational direction, evaluating policy and procedures. The management role of co-ordinators has been recently reviewed, but still needs developing. The school has a good ethos. Staff work well together and are committed to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors give good support. Good committee structure. Key governors have good understanding of issues which affect the school. Statutory requirements for ICT and teacher appraisal not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good recent analysis of data and results by the acting head for use in future planning. More work still to do in the monitoring of planning, teaching and standards in some subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Staffing, accommodation and resources satisfactorily used. A need to review non teaching staffing levels and job descriptions. Day to day running of the school and the budget efficient. Long term strategic planning appropriately under review to identify better links between intentions and finance. Principles of 'best value' are followed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Standards of behaviour. • The quality of teaching. • High expectations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extracurricular activities.

The overwhelming response of parents to the school is positive. Inspectors support these views. Inspectors find that the level of extracurricular opportunities is at least satisfactory for this size school. A minority of parents expressed concerns about the leadership and management of the school following the head's retirement. The acting head and deputy have been appointed for the academic year 2000 – 2001 pending permanent appointments, and have made a good start.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school has benefited from an increased emphasis on raising standards and improving the effectiveness of pupils' learning since the last report. There is a trend of gradual improvement overall over the last three years in English, mathematics and science.
2. Results of 1999 end of Key Stage 1 assessments showed the school to be in line with national averages in reading and mathematics. Deficiencies reported previously in writing have been addressed by modified planning and increased emphasis, with considerable improvement in Year 2000. Compared with similar schools (those having below 8 per cent free school meals) the school did badly in 1999 because too few pupils achieved higher levels. Early indications from Year 2000 results are of improvement in reading, writing and mathematics.
3. End of Key Stage 2 results in 1999 continued a three year trend of being above average for English, mathematics and science, but English results were below average compared with similar schools. There is significant improvement in Year 2000 results, where 57 per cent of 11 year old pupils achieved the higher level (Level 5) in English and 50 per cent in science. The proportion achieving Level 5 and above in mathematics was about the same as in 1999, but seven per cent of pupils achieved Level 6 which is well above expectation.
4. Children's attainment on entry to the reception year is judged as a good average with a significant minority being above this. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and most achieve the Early Learning Goals³ before Year 1.
5. Overall pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils' learning is mostly good in literacy and numeracy throughout the school and this reflects good planning and good teaching.
6. The inspection finds that pupils currently in Year 2 have above average speaking, listening and reading skills and that standards of science are above average. In all other subjects of the National Curriculum seven year old pupils' performance is in line with national expectations except in physical education where gaps in planning have a negative impact. Literacy and numeracy skills are used well to support other subjects, particularly in topic work, throughout Key Stage 1.
7. Standards of work seen for those presently in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. Assessment has been used effectively to set targets and modify planning. Good teaching (and sometimes very good) has a very positive effect on learning and pupils' responses.
8. In other subjects standards of work seen in Key Stage 2 are satisfactory with strengths in the way design and technology work is evaluated by pupils themselves. Exceptions are in ICT where the lack of a scheme of work, which shows how it will be developed as a subject in its own right, has a negative effect. Work that is covered, is completed to a satisfactory level, but by omission pupils do not reach the required standard. In physical education pupils' performance in lessons observed was satisfactory. However, the absence of a scheme of work which guarantees that pupils can build on skills previously

³ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals', comprised of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of the reception year. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literature; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; and physical development.

learnt, restricts progress and standards are below expectations at the end of both key stages.

9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with regard to their ability and experience. There is good support for pupils in withdrawal work by learning support assistants. Improvements to planning for whole class activities to allow for work at different ability levels, especially in English and mathematics, are having good effects. Where pupils' individual education plans are not detailed enough to show how objectives are to be achieved, then pupils do not do as well as they could. When withdrawal sessions are at the same time each week and pupils miss the same lessons, this has a negative effect on their progress in these subjects.

10. The school surpassed targets set by the local education authority for English and mathematics by Year 6 pupils in Year 2000 and is now working with the county to identify realistic targets for 2001. A much greater emphasis on raising and maintaining standards since the last inspection has had the desired effect in English, mathematics and science. This commitment is now to be extended to other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. On arrival, they play happily until teachers call in their classes. Older pupils are busy preparing for the day and the roles they have to play: for example preparing the hall for assembly, or acting as corridor monitors. An air of purpose pervades the school. In class, pupils are keen and enthusiastic. The youngest children in the reception class, some of whom were in their first week of formal schooling, thoroughly enjoyed activities such as creating a collage in an art lesson. The oldest pupils, in the Years 5 and 6 class, demonstrated positive responses to lessons: for example by answering confidently and eagerly in a mental mathematics session on adding and subtracting decimals. Pupils generally respond well to the school's good learning atmosphere. They show pride in their work by presenting it to a high standard. Pupils demonstrate both interest and pride in their school. The school has improved upon the good attitudes seen at the previous inspection.

12. Behaviour is very good, representing an improvement upon the good standard noted in the previous inspection report. Pupils move about the school in an orderly fashion, encouraged by the presence of their team captains in corridors. In assemblies, pupils are attentive and respectful. In lessons, they are polite and considerate. The youngest children soon learn to conform to the school's behavioural codes and know, for example, that they must put their hand up to speak. Lunch is a well behaved, sociable occasion where pupils are polite to lunchtime supervisors, but confident and relaxed as well. Play is lively but good natured. Pupils understand the need to take turns, especially on the exciting, new adventure play equipment. There is no evidence of any sort of harassment or aggression. Indeed, younger children can scarcely contain their eagerness to leave the confines of their secure play area and join in with older pupils' games.

13. Personal development is good. Pupils in Year 6 are encouraged to take responsibility for aspects of school life - such as setting out the hall for assembly, looking after the overhead projector and seeing to the music - and in their roles as team captains. Pupils with musical skills, such as the recorder group, play for assemblies, thereby boosting their self confidence. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given the opportunity to go on a residential visit to a field studies centre. Whilst pupils respond very well to the personal development opportunities with which they are presented, there is less evidence of them acting on their own initiative. Pupils are encouraged to develop the skills of independent study by researching topics at home on their personal computers or in public libraries. Pupils have a good grasp of moral issues. Pupils in a Key Stage 1 assembly on the theme of 'sharing' were able to make sensible contributions and Year 1 pupils showed real empathy with a blind man in a story they were reading.

14. Relationships are very good and a real strength of the school. Teachers value pupils' contributions and pupils respond accordingly. Pupils are mutually supportive, work well in groups and help each other without adult prompting. Positive relationships encourage pupils to 'have a go' with little fear of ridicule if they get things wrong. On the rare occasions when pupils are unkind about others' efforts, teachers intervene appropriately. In most lessons, in the playground and at lunch, positive relationships between children and all adults in the school are evident.

15. Attendance is good. At 95.3 per cent, it is above the national average for primary schools. There was no unauthorised absence over the preceding year. Pupil punctuality is good and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. As in the last report, the overall profile of teaching is predominantly good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed, but the proportion of good or better lessons increased to 52 per cent, with nearly 8 per cent (at the upper end of the school) very good. Nearly all teachers had some lessons judged as good, with particular strength in teaching of pupils nearing the end of Key Stage 2. Throughout the school teachers manage mixed age classes effectively.

17. Strengths in teaching are in organisation, good relationships which lead to good control, and very good standards of behaviour. Good questioning, which encourages pupils to respond by expressing opinions or judgements, challenges pupils. This particularly helps more able pupils to extend their learning: for example in a Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson about addition and subtraction of decimals the teacher asked, "Can you explain your methods?" and skilfully followed this up by asking a particular higher attaining child, "Have you another way of working this out?" The teacher's awareness of the potential of pupils was good and her high expectations were clear.

18. Throughout the school literacy is usually well taught. Planning is good, clearly identifying objectives and supporting teachers who may be less experienced. As a result, pupils' learning is good and good progress is made. However, on occasions when the structure defined by the National Literacy strategy was not followed: for example in a Key Stage 1 lesson about blends and sounds, time was not used as well as it could be, the pace of work was too slow and pupils were not sufficiently challenged. The teaching of numeracy was judged as sound throughout the school with strengths in mental work. Science is taught well at both key stages with good features in experimental and investigative work.

19. Monitoring by a local education authority adviser has had positive effects. Good features in teaching for those in the Foundation Stage encourage children's independence. These make good use of structured play to work towards Early Learning Goals and place good emphasis on getting children to listen as well as to speak. This results in children settling in smoothly and responding very well. The quality of teaching has been improved by the school's own monitoring: for example in literacy and numeracy. However, the monitoring role of co-ordinators in some other subjects is as yet underdeveloped and gaps have not been identified: for example in ICT and physical education.

20. Teaching of those pupils with special educational needs in a mixture of withdrawal and class provision is satisfactory overall. Most pupils are well supported, but some individual education plans are not specific enough to show how objectives might be achieved and the timing of withdrawal work so it is not at the same time each week, needs attention.

21. The school is aware that some teachers' lack of knowledge, understanding and confidence has a restricting effect on pupils' progress: for example in ICT, music and physical education. Recent professional interviews and programmes of in-service training are beginning to overcome this. However, over time some subjects have been underemphasised as a result, with a negative effect on the balance of the timetable. Occasionally activities do

not match the time available in different sessions of the day: for example an hour and ten minutes is sometimes devoted to 'literacy hour'. This does not always make the best use of time. A lack of pace in some lessons with introductions that are too long and some activities that are allowed too much time, negatively affect pupils' progress. For example, two hours planned for a history lesson in Years 3 and 4 and one hour ten minutes regularly used for literacy and numeracy hours makes it difficult for pupils to sustain concentration. In some subjects, for example ICT and physical education, planning does not give enough support to teachers.

22. Overall there is a very close link between the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. For example English teaching for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 is predominantly very good and the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in end of key stage national tests rose from 17 per cent in 1999 to 57 per cent in 2000. Most work is marked well. Sometimes targets for improvement are highlighted and pupils are encouraged. Homework is used effectively to extend learning.

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

23. The overall curriculum is satisfactory in both key stages. It is sufficiently broad and relevant but there is a general lack of balance due to an underemphasis of, for example, science and ICT. The school has not yet responded to the nationally enhanced status of ICT. Since the last inspection some of the weaknesses in art, music and physical education have been improved to meet statutory requirements, but there are gaps in planning and some overall curriculum imbalance remains. The school meets the requirements in the provision of collective worship.

24. Learning opportunities for pupils under six are good overall. Because provision is carefully planned to meet the known needs of children from the time they enter the school, children make good progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. There is a smooth transition from home to school and children are well prepared for the early stages of the National Curriculum.

25. All subjects have curriculum policy statements and most have schemes of work to underpin planning and support teaching and learning. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. For example, the art scheme now clearly shows the progression in skills for all aspects of the subject. However, physical education planning is underdeveloped. There are two and three year topic cycles to ensure coverage and sufficient breadth and relevance to the work planned. Topics are revisited appropriately to revise and further develop pupils' learning. Weekly and daily planning are satisfactory overall with good features such as the good practice seen in Years 5 and 6, where there are very clear objectives about what pupils are expected to learn and how activities will be matched to pupils' prior attainment. The school has made good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to help them with planning, although not all sessions follow the strategy in literacy. The strategies are well phased into the curriculum for pupils aged under six. Occasionally the length of sessions available for particular activities is inappropriate.

26. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall with good features. Teachers know pupils well and identify special needs promptly. There is a high level of support and the Code of Practice is generally implemented appropriately. However, the timing of some withdrawal support sessions prevents a few pupils from having full access to the National Curriculum which is unsatisfactory. Pupils' individual targets are sometimes insufficiently specific to promote regular, short term gains in learning with correspondingly enhanced self esteem for those pupils.

27. There is appropriate provision for pupils' personal, social and health education although the school has yet to encompass the aspect relating to citizenship. Some classes have regular 'circle time' opportunities where all pupils have scope to share their ideas and

thoughts. The school plans to extend this good practice throughout the school. It makes suitable arrangements for sex education and drugs awareness with parents having an opportunity to be involved.

28. Provision for extracurricular activities is satisfactory. Although these focus primarily on music, dance and games, there are regular opportunities before and after school and during the lunch break for pupils to engage in extracurricular activities. Opportunities for competitive sport are infrequent. Violin, flute, clarinet and trumpet lessons are attended by a small group of pupils. There is a good programme of visits, and school visitors, which enrich the curriculum and enhance learning opportunities: such as a whole school visit to the Millennium Dome. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 attend a residential activity and environmental centre which promotes problem solving skills and provides adventure challenges. Before pupils begin school good links are established with parents by home visits which have positive impacts on the rate of progress pupils make soon after entry to the school.

29. There is good liaison between the school and the secondary school to which the majority of pupils transfer. This allows for a smooth transition for eleven year olds. Homework is used effectively to support the curriculum and introduce pupils to independent learning skills required for secondary education.

30. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The fostering of pupils' spiritual development is sound and effectively promoted by the positive school ethos. The school meets its aims well and pupils' achievements are celebrated with the whole school. Poetry, music, art and opportunities for reflection, spontaneously support the spiritual dimensions of life although there is no explicit planning for this aspect.

31. Provision for moral development is very good. Teachers and adults provide good role models and are proactive in supporting pupils' suggestions for helping others: for example the annual Blue Peter appeal is usually initiated by pupils. Pupils are consistently well managed and their good behaviour has a very positive impact on learning. There is a strong emphasis on the principles which distinguish right from wrong and pupils display respect for property and care for the school environment.

32. There is good provision for pupils' social development. Older pupils take pride in their allocated responsibilities such as preparing the hall for assembly and helping teachers with administrative tasks. Pupils respond favourably when given opportunities to work co-operatively in pairs or small groups and they demonstrate good levels of social skills in their courteous and confident response to visitors. The school's biennial residential programme provides pupils with valuable social education when they attend an adventure centre. There is a high level of community spirit within the school: for example during the annual production for parents and friends of the school. Well chosen themes such as the story of Pinocchio emphasise values of honesty and fairness.

33. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There are visits to museums and exhibitions which enrich pupils' education. Visits to churches, a synagogue and cathedral widen pupils' cultural experiences. Pupils are given some opportunities to experience other cultures in music and dance: for example during an 'Indian day'. However, provision for pupils to take their place in multicultural Britain is limited. Cultural links with art and literacy are present but generally underdeveloped.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school has a caring ethos, in which all pupils are valued and well looked after, physically, emotionally and academically. There are good procedures for child protection and

health and safety. The special needs co-ordinator is responsible for child protection matters, but the headteacher, as a newly appointed head, will be undertaking training at the first opportunity. This is a small school in which all pupils are well known to all adults. The acting headteacher is confident that any cases of concern will be noticed and brought to her attention. The education welfare officer is regarded as a useful resource in such instances. As an additional safeguard, all parent volunteers are asked to agree to police checking.

35. There are satisfactory arrangements for ensuring health and safety. The premises are inspected regularly by governors and the acting headteacher. Electrical equipment, physical education and play apparatus and fire equipment are regularly checked by contractors. Fire drills are held every half term. There are satisfactory arrangements for first aid and for meeting pupils' medical needs. The school is aware of any pupils with particular dietary requirements. In the inspection team's view, the condition of the railings around the site and some holes in the playground hard surface constitute hazards, as does the carpet in the Years 1 and 2 room.

36. There are good measures in place for promoting attendance. Registers are monitored and, in the event of a pupil unexpectedly failing to arrive at school, the school office will phone the child's home. The acting headteacher makes it clear that taking family holidays in term time is undesirable. Although some families do this, it does not present the school with a significant problem. When necessary, the school has access to the services of an education welfare officer. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, all respondents agreed that their children like school. High levels of attendance result, in no small measure, from the school's creation of a happy, positive, learning environment, which children are happy to attend and which parents support.

37. High standards of behaviour are promoted very effectively. The school's ethos and teachers' expectations underpin a reward system which promotes effort, self respect and consideration for others. A house point system helps pupils to think collectively and promotes healthy competition. Individual rewards are given for good work including homework, behaviour and effort; pupils understand and can explain the system. Rewards accumulate to generate certificates. All rewards are given out at a celebration assembly in front of the whole school, thus further reinforcing the emphasis upon positive behaviour. Unsatisfactory behaviour is recorded and when a child's name has appeared three times, parents are involved. Parents are involved immediately in cases of serious misbehaviour such as bullying or racial harassment. Such instances, however, are rare. There is an absence of any sort of racial or sexual harassment. All of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire consider that behaviour is good. Whilst effective procedures play a part in promoting the very high behavioural standards seen, most of the credit is due to the school's positive ethos and staff's consistently high expectations.

38. The school fulfils requirements for statutory seven year old and eleven year old assessments. The results are carefully analysed and targets successfully set for improvement, for example in writing. Evidence from school portfolios containing work samples, which have been assessed by staff to agree levels of attainment, show that teacher assessments are generally accurate. Optional nationally standardised tests are used for Years 3, 4 and 5 to monitor learning and set targets. Pupils have individual records of achievement containing well annotated work samples to track their attainment and progress. Improvements in assessment since the last report are having good effects on pupils' progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The school has created very effective links with parents. These begin before formal schooling starts, with visits to homes and to pre-school groups. There is an induction meeting for new parents and a meeting to explain the school's initial assessment (known as

baseline assessment) of children's abilities. Parents have two formal opportunities a year to meet staff and discuss children's progress. However, all parents spoken to before and during the inspection went out of their way to stress the accessibility of teachers. All agreed that minor problems were easily resolved with a swift word after school.

40. The information provided by the school is of good quality. The school prospectus is well illustrated, informative and written in friendly accessible language. Pupil reports are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements. Most parents find them entirely adequate. Regular newsletters are issued, giving parents good advance notice of school events. The advance information regarding the topics children will be studying is particularly appreciated. Meetings about curricular matters have been held - one on the effect of numeracy hour was particularly well received by parents.

41. Parents make a significant contribution to the work of the school. Parent volunteers work in school, providing regular help in classrooms with hearing children read and with practical subjects such as art. Parents carry out practical work in classrooms and the grounds, and run several of the after school activities. The Parent Teacher Association is a very effective fundraiser. Its efforts provided the money for the school's impressive new adventure play equipment. Parents are involved in their children's learning at home through home-school reading diaries and homework books. Both of these records are well used throughout the school and form a good medium for home-school dialogue. The school's homework policy is well understood by all parents and the majority of respondents to the pre-inspection questionnaire were satisfied with the quantity of homework set.

42. Overall, parents are very satisfied with the school. They like its friendly atmosphere, its positive ethos and the approachability of teachers. Parents are satisfied with the quality of the information they receive about school events and children's progress. A significant number, however, were unhappy about the range of out of school activities. In sport, the school provides table tennis, football and netball and in the arts, there are dance, drama and recorder groups. In addition, all Years 5 and 6 pupils have the opportunity to go on a residential visit to a field studies centre. Visits have been made to the Millennium Dome, to the British Museum, to an airport and to attend theatrical performances. Theatre groups and musicians visit the school. Having regard to the size of the school and the number of staff, the inspection team considers that the range of extracurricular activities is at least satisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The acting head has made a good start. The day to day running of the school is good and the acting head, senior management team, governors and staff are working well together and have created a good learning environment. Their commitment to raising standards, together with very good relationships, helps create a good ethos which reflects the values and aims identified in the school's mission statement.

44. Progress has been made against the areas for improvement identified in the last report. However, work is still needed to manage the balance of the timetable to ensure that all subjects receive adequate attention: for example although statutory requirements for music are now fulfilled, it is still underemphasised as a subject; and ICT being taught almost entirely through other subjects, does not allow for requirements to be fully met at Key Stage 2. Some sessions of the school day are too long for planned activities. This occasionally results in time not used efficiently.

45. The introduction of literacy and numeracy has been well managed with good effects on pupils' learning and standards: for example test scores have shown significant improvement with a greater proportion of pupils achieving higher levels.

46. Good evaluation of individual pupils' progress through good assessment, and its performance as a whole, means that the school is appropriately placed for future development.

47. The acting head and governors are aware of the need to define more clearly the strategic management of the school. The newly convened strategy committee is undertaking a review of policy and procedure to extend the links between decisions and finance in the school improvement plan.

48. Governors support the school well. Key governors – chair, chair of finance and special educational needs governor – have good insight and understanding, and all governors maintain close links with the school. The governing body has done particularly well in making full use of the budget and grants to improve and maintain the building and site, with a very good impact on the learning environment. Recently, substantial improvements to the roof and drains have significantly reduced the school's damp problem. The finance and personnel committees seek to use money wisely and to continue to develop efficiency: for example reviewing job descriptions, setting staffing levels to match needs and identifying targets for staff development. They are aware that the school spends a higher proportion of its budget than primary schools of this size nationally on administration.

49. All teaching staff are responsible for more than one curriculum area. Overall their management is satisfactory. However, the monitoring of teaching, as well as of planning and standards, still needs to be developed in order to ensure that intentions are carried out and that all subjects receive appropriate time on a regular basis. For example, completing a scheme of work for physical education and verifying that it is followed, would improve provision.

50. The school is aware that formal requirements for teacher appraisal are still not met. However, staff do have the benefit of professional interviews and in-service training. The acting head has done well, in a short space of time, to discuss teachers' personal development needs with individuals, and has begun to renegotiate job specifications where necessary.

51. The management of provision for special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Learning support is well organised and assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Although arrangements meet the requirements of the Code of Practice, some pupils' individual education plans do not show clearly enough how objectives may be achieved and the timing of some withdrawal sessions does not guarantee that all pupils have full access to the National Curriculum.

52. The management of communications with parents is a strength of the school. Parents are well informed and their response is very positive.

53. Significant management changes have been made recently to the teaching staff with the appointment of an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. The teaching staff is appropriately qualified with a sufficient number, and experience to meet the needs of the curriculum. Staff work effectively together as a team to improve standards throughout the school. Although there are no formal appraisal procedures, the acting headteacher has held individual staff development interviews with each class teacher. The school has no written induction policy but allocates a mentor to support new teachers in their work and help them settle into the school. The support staff are trained, well deployed and highly valued. They work in effective partnership with teachers to give good support, particularly to pupils with special educational needs. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are satisfactory and closely linked to priorities identified in the school improvement plan, besides providing appropriate opportunities for teachers' own development. Administrative staff, the caretaker and lunchtime staff effectively contribute to the smooth running of the school.

54. The school makes good use of its limited space. Indoor and outdoor provision has improved for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. The school has no

field; the hall is small and is cramped for some physical education activities. This has an adverse effect on pupils' learning in this aspect of the curriculum. The school has recently completed an adventure playground, with the help of Parent Teacher Association funds to make a stimulating play area for all pupils. Inspection evidence finds the building to be secure, but some issues of health and safety were drawn to the governors' attention, notably the quality of boundary fencing and playground surface. The library is in a good central position to provide easy access for pupils to use books for information. Resources are satisfactory to support pupils' learning. Improvements to the number and range of resources for ICT are having good effects.

55. Day to day running of the school's budget is efficient. The school's expenditure per pupil is above average, but is in line with its income. Finance is used effectively to support planning. When spending is considered in the light of standards achieved and provision on offer, it is possible to say the school continues to give satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to further improve the school the acting head, governors and staff should;-

- **Raise** standards in information and communications technology by:
 - Revising school policy and planning for the subject to take on board current requirements, and consider its position as a core subject;

- Continuing to improve teachers' knowledge, understanding and confidence in the subject through in-service training;
- Increasing the time devoted to teaching ICT as a subject in its own right at Key Stage 2.

Paragraphs: 8, 19, 20, 21, 23, 81, 87, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109.

- **Improve** the use of time and the balance of the curriculum by:

- Ensuring that all subjects are appropriately emphasised and are allotted sufficient time on a regular basis;
- Reviewing the daily and weekly timetable to ensure that sessions are not too long for planned activities;
- Improving the pace of some lessons.

Paragraphs: 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 44, 49, 60, 72, 80, 81, 87, 103.

- **Develop**, still further, the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators to include the quality of teaching and planning, in addition to pupils' performance: for example to ensure better challenge for higher attainers in mathematics.

Paragraphs: 19, 49, 78, 81, 88, 93, 100, 104, 108, 115, 121.

In addition to the above issues the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:

- Raising standards and improving provision for physical education by implementing a scheme of work which will show how skills will be systematically built upon.

Paragraphs: 6, 8, 21, 23, 25, 49, 118, 119, 121.

- Ensuring that all pupils on the special educational needs register have appropriate individual education plans which clearly identify how objectives will be achieved, and that withdrawal sessions are not at the same time each week.

Paragraphs: 9, 20, 26, 51, 51, 120.

- Attending to matters of health and safety with regard to the fence and the playground surface, as discussed with governors.

Paragraphs: 35, 54.

- Ensuring that arrangements for teacher appraisal are fully met.

Paragraphs: 50, 53.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	44	49	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons. Due to rounding percentages do not equal 100.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	107
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	5.4

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
	1999	6	9	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (74)	93 (100)	93 (87)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (87)	93 (80)	100 (87)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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
	1999	10	8	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (87)	78 (67)	100 (85)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (59)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (87)	83 (87)	100 (87)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	92
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.45
Average class size	26.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	40

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	307358
Total expenditure	308405
Expenditure per pupil	2804
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	-1047

These figures are distorted by the inclusion of a DfEE grant of £77030 towards building improvements. The apparent deficit has been overcome in the 2000 – 2001 budget and the school's projected carry forward is within acceptable limits.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	108
Number of questionnaires returned	43

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	42	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	58	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	62	10	0	0
The teaching is good.	60	38	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	51	12	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	37	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	40	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	26	62	7	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	36	50	14	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	41	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	5	33	50	5	7

Due to rounding the percentages do not always equal 100.

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

57. Provision for the education of children in the foundation year is good overall. Children start school at the beginning of the year in which they are five. There is a phased entry, and some children attend on a part time basis until the second half of the autumn term when they commence full time schooling. The attainments of children on entry to the school are a good average overall with strengths in personal and social development. Children have usually received some pre-school provision and settle well into school life. Good home-school links are initiated by home visits and a series of preliminary visits to school. Provision for pupils with special needs is good. By the time children are five, a majority have reached the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning.

58. The teaching of personal and social skills is good and children respond well to both the class teacher and classroom assistant. Good learning is effectively nurtured by an appropriate balance of teacher led and own choice activities. Children co-operate with each other and share materials well when engaging in role play in the play deck. Most dress and undress independently for physical education lessons and these skills are effectively promoted by their teachers. They listen with interest to stories with a good level of sustained concentration and answer the register when their name is called using high or low voices to mimic their teacher.

59. By the age of six, the majority of children achieve the Early Learning Goals for language. A wide variety of relevant experiences are provided to enable them to make good gains in their learning. These are well planned by the teacher using a multi-sensory approach. For example, a hands on display of 'what makes different sounds' and a dramatised story of an elephant and some blind men contributed effectively to children's above average speaking and listening skills. Early writing skills are being well developed by activities such as writing letters and cards to characters in their reading scheme books; Kipper and Floppy. Most children use some initial sounds of letters correctly and some write a few words independently. They develop a flowing style of handwriting by an early introduction to cursive writing. Children enjoy sharing books, joining in with sounds, actions, and repetitive sequences and they understand that print carries meaning. By the end of their first year in school some will be reading confidently due to well structured activities and parental home support.

60. By the time they are six children's attainment in mathematics is in line with the nationally recommended outcomes. They readily join in with number rhymes and respond correctly to instructions, such as selecting and counting a given number of toys from a box. Children engage in counting activities when playing a fishing game and count spots on their sharks, pointing and counting accurately. They understand and use mathematical language such as 'most', 'least' and 'the same'. They begin to understand the idea of zero. Appropriate teaching strategies are employed, although these have more successful learning outcomes when all pupils in the group are actively engaged in the activity and a brisk pace is maintained throughout the teacher input. Occasionally the pace of sessions is too slow.

61. Children develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world around them and standards meet expectations. They look closely at similarities and differences such as the colour of their eyes, and find out and identify the position of eyes in other living creatures. They learn about church celebrations such as Harvest Festival and begin to know about their culture. Children identify sounds and name the objects that make them with much enthusiasm. They enjoy taking a lead role for other children. Children experiment with

musical percussion instruments and everyday objects to identify loud, soft, short and long sounds. They investigate herbs on a class display table by using their other senses such as taste and smell. Children manipulate the buttons on the mouse when selecting pages from a reading book displayed on the computer screen. The teacher's good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and how they learn ensures good preparation for subjects such as science in the National Curriculum.

62. Children's creative development is sound and meets recommendations. Teachers provide a good range of purposeful learning opportunities to develop children's creative skills: for example drawing, printing, painting, collage and playdoh. Children enjoy video stories and choose from a variety of materials to make an elephant collage. They are developing competence in using creative tools such as scissors, paintbrushes, glue and spreaders. Children engage in imaginative role play in the home corner and respond to music showing basic control in the movements they use, such as spinning. They predict what happens next when listening to stories and communicate their ideas to others. Children become very absorbed in creative activities and behaviour is good.

63. By the age of six children's physical development meets expectations. They are developing the use of space in the hall and outdoors, in warm up times and during singing game activities. They have access to the new outdoor climbing equipment in the adventure playground and easy access to a secure outside area with wheeled toys, sand and large equipment. Provision has improved since the last inspection. Children display confidence and enjoyment with increasing control when they engage in physical activities.

64. Children respond very well to their teacher. Relationships are good and children show keen interest and involvement in their activities. They share resources well and handle them with care. They relate positively to all the adults who come into contact with them. Teaching is satisfactory overall with good features. Children are well managed, the basic skills are taught effectively and assessment procedures are good. There are limited opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills: for example by being involved in planning or recording their activities. There is currently no system in place for monitoring children's choice of activities such as personal record charts, to ensure that all children experience the full range of activities available to them.

ENGLISH

65. The last report found attainment in English to be average throughout the school. The introduction of the literacy hour and improved planning for the subject, have resulted in steady progress. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are now judged to be good, being above average. This is confirmed by pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests, which has improved at both ages seven and eleven. Results for 2000 are particularly improved in writing for Year 2 (a target of the school improvement plan); and for the proportion achieving the higher level (Level 5) in Year 6, an increase of 40 per cent.

66. Pupils throughout the school respond well to English and demonstrate their good speaking and listening skills, not only in literacy time, but in other subjects: for example Years 5 and 6 explaining their science experiments to the class; and Years 3 and 4 discussing lifestyles in Ancient Greece.

67. In reading children are successfully helped to build on the basic skills most of them have been introduced to at pre-school groups. In Years R and 1 children learn the link between sounds and letters and are taught good strategies for deciphering words.

68. Pupils read well for their age at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 where a significant proportion read at higher than average levels, showing good understanding of various texts and being able to identify crucial features and themes. For example, Year 6 pupils analysed 'The Secret Garden' and justified their own views.

69. Improving writing standards has been a specific target of recent planning, following disappointing results compared with similar schools in tests for seven and eleven year olds in 1999. Pupils' performance has been improved in quality and quantity, and standards are now average at Key Stage 1.

70. Year 2 pupils write with a good awareness of the reader and use interesting vocabulary. Their spelling is generally accurate and handwriting standards are at least satisfactory. Year 2 'Three Little Pig' stories written in the first person are good examples of their work.

71. By the end of Year 6 pupils have made good progress, and writing standards are above average for the majority. Written work is often varied, imaginative and well constructed. Poetry is emphasised effectively in all classes. Writing skills are applied very well to other subjects especially in geography and history work on Tudors: for example some very good creative writing about life on the Golden Hind, well presented. Standards of spelling are at least satisfactory. Pupils learn spellings for homework and are regularly tested.

72. Planning for English is based on the National Literacy Strategy and this supports the subject well, enabling English to be well taught with good consideration of different ability levels. Teachers use good questioning techniques which require pupils to voice opinions and explain preferences: for example "What do you think?" and "How does this make you feel?" There are occasions when some lessons in Key Stage 1 do not follow the structure of the National Literacy Strategy closely enough with a negative effect on pupils' progress. This sometimes leads to a lack of pace and challenge. However, most lessons have clear objectives, are well communicated to pupils, and teachers lead appropriate review sessions to confirm what has been learnt. National Curriculum requirements are fully met.

73. Improvements to the quality of teaching have been partly the result of monitoring by the head and local education authority adviser, and partly due to better detailed planning. Assessment of pupils' performance is thorough and good use is made of information to plan for the future.

74. Teachers make good use of homework to consolidate class work in English and there is a good dialogue between home and school in reading records and homework notebooks.

75. English teaching and provision for the below average proportion of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Such pupils make good progress with regard to their ability and previous learning. Learning support assistants make a good contribution to special educational needs support.

76. Although the co-ordinator does not manage a budget for English, there are adequate resources and a good range and number of books available. The library is well placed and appropriately stocked and helps to reinforce pupils' good attitudes towards reading. Suitable use is made by pupils of word processing to present their work and this is especially effective in the production of class books: for example Years 3 and 4 poetry about school days, which form part of the library.

MATHEMATICS

77. In 1999 national tests for pupils aged eleven the school's standards were above the national average but below the average when compared with similar schools. During the last four years 1996 - 1999 pupils' performance was well above the national average. Test results this year show a slight improvement from the previous year including one pupil reaching the very high Level 6 in mathematics. In 1999 tests for seven year olds performance was above the national average but close to the average when compared with similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is average but above average for pupils in Year 6. The school has rightly identified the need to improve standards for higher attaining pupils at the end of both key stages.

78. By the age of seven the majority of pupils can add and subtract to 20 and higher attainers confidently use numbers to 100. Pupils can measure length and weight with an acceptable degree of accuracy using metre sticks and kilograms. Most pupils can recognise and identify the properties of two-dimensional shapes and understand basic symmetry. They have a basic understanding of simple fractions and can interpret block graphs. However, there is an over dependence on using workbooks where much of the work is not sufficiently differentiated. This has an adverse effect on higher attaining pupils who are not sufficiently challenged to reach their full potential in mathematics. Increased monitoring of the subject would help to overcome this.

79. By the age of eleven pupils have made good progress in mathematics and have extended their knowledge of number, measurement and shape and developed a sound understanding of data handling skills. They have a good understanding of the properties of three-dimensional shapes and can explore rotational symmetry to create designs of regular and irregular shapes. Most pupils can use a range of methods to add, subtract, multiply and divide accurately and are developing good strategies for mental recall. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of the relationships between these functions and can check their answers by inverse operations. Work is well planned for less able pupils who make good progress with numeracy skills. Most pupils have a good knowledge of fractions and decimals and fully understand place value.

80. Pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes and are keen to succeed. Their behaviour in mathematics lessons is very good which has a positive impact on standards achieved. Most pupils listen well and are eager to answer questions. However, when lessons are too long or not well planned to cater for all abilities, pupils lose concentration, which slows the pace of their learning. Pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to solve problems and complete tasks. The majority of pupils work well individually and collaborate well when asked to work in groups. They have respect for their teachers and each other.

81. The quality of teaching is satisfactory for infant pupils and good overall for junior pupils, which is a similar picture to the previous report. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection and there were many good lessons. In the best lessons learning is effective because pupils are well motivated and challenged by the tasks teachers prepare and the pace of lessons is brisk. Where teaching and learning is less effective, expectations are too low, pupils are insufficiently challenged, time is not used effectively and insufficient attention is given to planning appropriate activities for different abilities and age groups. Where homework is set regularly, it is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' learning. However, insufficient attention is paid to ICT to support pupils' learning when presenting findings of investigations undertaken in mathematics. Assessment procedures in mathematics are good and assessment is beginning to be used effectively to inform planning. The school successfully analyses intermediate and national tests to set appropriate targets. The acting headteacher, who is mathematics co-ordinator, has given good support to staff, to implement appropriate practice in the teaching of the numeracy strategy. Numeracy skills are promoted adequately in other curriculum subjects. However, the co-ordinator recognises that the monitoring of teaching and learning is underdeveloped and she intends to address this issue in order to raise standards in the teaching of mathematics throughout the school.

SCIENCE

82. The 1999 teacher assessments showed that seven year old pupils attain results well above the national average for expected levels, but well below average for higher levels. National test results for eleven year old pupils were well above average for expected levels. For pupils achieving higher levels standards were above the national average and those of similar schools.

83. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment in science is average overall for seven year olds and above average for eleven year olds. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was reported that overall standards throughout the school were average. This is because the school is consistently raising standards for the number of seven and eleven year olds attaining higher levels than expected. The higher attaining seven year olds now have more challenging lessons and there is an overall rise in attainment at the end of Year 6, largely as a result of the good teaching and the high profile given to experimental and investigative science.

84. By the age of seven, pupils collect evidence and record their observations using pictures and diagrams. They investigate tastes they like or dislike by testing foods and finding out which parts of their tongue register sweet, salty, sour and bitter tastes. They understand that for humans food and water are essential for life. They know that certain foods are necessary for growth and strong bones, energy and protection against disease. Challenging tasks ensure that higher attainers develop their learning by finding out about different food types and the heart's role as a pump. They investigate and compare the properties of materials around the school and at home and they discover how materials can be sorted and changed by processes such as stretching. Pupils identify appliances that use electricity both at home and school and they investigate making a simple electrical circuit. They begin to understand the cause and effect principle such as 'the circuit is broken, therefore the bulb does not light'.

85. By the time they leave the school at eleven, pupils suggest scientific questions to pose for their investigations, decide what to do and what equipment to use for their tests. They make predictions, know how to make fair comparisons and draw conclusions. Pupils present their findings clearly in a variety of ways drawing up their own tables, graphs and diagrams using conventional symbols. They understand and use scientific language correctly. They know how to make a bulb brightness tester using tissue paper. The majority of pupils can explain clearly how the insertion of a length of resistance wire into a circuit can alter the brightness of a bulb. Year 6 pupils learn about life processes: growth, nutrition, movement and reproduction. They know that the skeleton and muscles support and protect the human body and assist movement. Pupils understand the importance for good health of a suitable varied diet and regular exercise. They produce a 'Forceful Friction' leaflet with clear explanations and illustrations about types of forces.

86. The development in pupils' learning is satisfactory by the age of seven. Meaningful activities help pupils to form a coherent pattern of learning. For example, pupils learn about food, discussing their likes and dislikes and select a balanced meal linked effectively to the school harvest celebrations and art lessons. By the age of eleven, pupils make good progress in science, particularly in recording their work. Evidence from the scrutiny of work shows that their teacher sets high standards and the quality of presentation is very good. Pupils show good levels of concentration and interest in science throughout the school. Their curiosity in the subject is aroused because of the creation of an atmosphere of discovery and opportunities for reflection. They make good use of their time and work effectively in co-operative situations sharing equipment and ideas well. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good for classes with younger pupils and very good for older pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection and the good teaching is having a positive impact on standards. Pupils learn well when teachers employ good questioning techniques and organisational strategies and set challenging tasks. In the very good lessons, teachers ensure that pupils are absolutely clear about what they are meant to be learning: notably at Key Stage 2.

87. Science is taught as part of a cycle of topics. Pupils cover the full range of the science programmes of study and there is an appropriate range of topics recorded in teachers' planning. However, planning for Years 3 and 4 lacks balance because science is not timetabled during the first half of the autumn term. There is an imbalance of time allocated to science throughout the school to ensure sufficient depth in each programme of study. Whilst some teachers obviously redress the balance, the overall time allocated by the

school is insufficient for a core subject. The use of information and communications technology in science has yet to be developed.

88. The subject co-ordinator has developed the subject well since the last inspection. Topics have been revised into new cycles and activities planned around them to support the programmes of study. There are good curricular links with technology to enhance understanding and build concepts. An effective system has been developed for whole school tasks which are then assessed by staff to agree levels of attainment. The subject leader monitors planning but has had no opportunity to share her expertise or monitor science teaching. Overall science has improved significantly since the last inspection and has the capacity for further improvement.

ART

89. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in art. Evidence from this inspection shows that standards and the status of the subject have improved and the standard of achievement in art is now satisfactory throughout the school. A limited range of experiences and lack of continuous development of skills were identified as weaknesses at the last inspection but these issues have both been improved. This is because a new, good quality, skills based scheme of work has been introduced for the subject. This has had a considerable impact on the breadth of pupils' learning and the match of activities to develop pupils' previous experiences. For example, younger pupils explore pulling out, squeezing and pushing modelling materials, and these skills are developed using fingers and tools. Older pupils learn coiling and joining techniques and apply decorative textures, patterns and pictures to their models.

90. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make observational still life paintings of food and woven paper fruit baskets for a harvest frieze. They use painting techniques well, making careful observations. Another group of Year 1 pupils created a collage of an eye using a range of colours within the same colour group. These pictures support their class topic work about using our different senses. Pupils talk about their work using appropriate language, such as collage, and express opinions about it. They develop competence in using tools and equipment such as scissors, paintbrushes, glue spreaders and a variety of materials for two-dimensional and three-dimensional projects.

91. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make circular clay plaques to decorate in the style of the Ancient Greeks. They research Greek pattern, mythology, gods and goddesses as part of their termly project and use this knowledge as a starting point for their designs. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 develop their observational drawing techniques by focusing on pattern and texture: for example when drawing a scallop shell. Early collage skills are developed well by older pupils using the techniques of batik and stencilling to make underwater collage pictures. The work of artists is studied: such as Van Gogh, Lowry and Constable; as a stimuli, as an exemplar, and for pupils to explore drawing and painting in a similar style. However, there have been no recent visits from artists or craftspeople to enliven pupils' learning.

92. The quality of teaching was good in the two lessons seen with pupils in the younger classes. Learning was enhanced because pupils handled tools and equipment sensibly. Pupils behaved well and concentrated closely on their task. They were given opportunities to make choices and lessons had clear learning intentions. Tasks were clearly explained and materials were well organised for easy access. Pupils are taught to use materials, tools and techniques for practical work safely and in accordance with health and safety requirements. No lessons were observed in classes of older pupils. Evidence from teachers' planning, the quality of work displayed around the school, pupils' sketchbooks and a portfolio of work, support inspection findings that teaching is satisfactory throughout the school and pupils make sound progress in all aspects of the subject.

93. The subject co-ordinator has had responsibility for the recent update of the subject policy and the collection of a range of evidence, although no opportunity to monitor teaching.

Sketchbooks have been re-introduced so that pupils' work can be monitored throughout the school and a newly introduced assessment system has been devised to support the recording of pupils' achievements.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. As a result of the timetable no design and technology lessons were observable during the inspection. Scrutiny of planning and examples of past work, and discussions with staff and pupils, are the basis for judgements made.

95. By the time they are seven and eleven pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are in line with what is expected for their age. The satisfactory situation reported in the last inspection has been maintained. Pupils' learning is satisfactory. They make sound progress throughout the school with higher attainers making good progress when identifying how to make improvements to their own designs.

96. Evidence shows that in Years 1 and 2 pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop techniques such as cutting and gluing and make use of a suitable range of tools. Pupils are successfully introduced to elements of designing and good links are made with art in sketching plans before making begins: for example kites for Years R and 1, and a variety of puppets in Year 2. The quality of finished articles is good. Pupils obviously take a pride in their work and have benefited from working together.

97. By the time they leave the school pupils have had the opportunity to develop the way they plan and communicate their ideas. There is evidence to show that Years 5 and 6 pupils evaluate the effectiveness of their work. Very good use is made of pupils' good literacy skills to record what they have done and to suggest refinements. For example pupils wrote very good reviews of their designs for fuse breakers and traffic lights, and good links were made with science work on electricity.

98. With no lessons observed it is not possible to comment first hand on the quality of teaching. However, scrutiny of planning and pupils' work indicates that teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

99. Design and technology is effectively planned as an integral part of topic work. Plans are securely based on the programmes of study requirements; identifying skills and making objectives clear. The co-ordinator has recently presented a portfolio of examples of pupils' work and has identified how staff can assess and record pupils' performance. These are good initiatives and an improvement since the last inspection, but have yet to be evaluated.

100. The subject co-ordinator's monitoring of resources, plans and standards is not extended to cover the quality of teaching. The school is aware that this is an area for development and a review of the role of the co-ordinator is being undertaken. There are adequate resources for the subject, securely stored.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

101. At the age of seven and eleven pupils' performance is consistent with national expectations for their ages in geography and history and has been maintained since the last inspection. During the inspection due to timetabling arrangements it was not possible to see any geography lessons and only two history lessons. Observations are based on information from other sources including policy documents, discussion with staff and pupils, and examination of previous work and displays.

102. Infant pupils are developing an awareness of the ways of life now and in the past by comparing life today with that in Victorian times. In geography, they look at local maps to find a simple route to school. Junior pupils' knowledge of daily life and customs of various periods in the past is extended by studies such as Anglo Saxons, Tudors and Ancient Egyptians.

Pupils make good use of their literacy skills to write about different periods in history. They formulate their own topic books to a high standard of presentation. In geography junior pupils develop their geographical knowledge and multicultural awareness by a comparative study of Chembakolli, a village in India. They make good use of their numeracy skills by producing graphs on temperature and rainfall as part of a topic on weather and climate. Good links are established with science in a topic on rivers. Older pupils have the opportunity to extend their geographical skills on the biennial residential visit to Sayers Croft Activity Centre.

103. Pupils' attitudes to geography and history are good. All pupils including those with special educational needs appreciate the opportunities provided by teachers and clearly enjoy their lessons. They have positive attitudes to learning and show a lively interest in finding out about the past and other places in the world. Although pupils behave well, they lose interest and find difficulty concentrating for long periods when sessions are too long, which slows the pace of lessons: for example, a two hour history session. Pupils can be trusted to work well together and handle resources and artefacts with care.

104. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in the two history lessons seen during inspection and has been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, manage their pupils well and use good resources and strategies to capture pupils' imagination. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning, including those with special educational needs. A number of trips are arranged to support pupils' learning such as to Hampton Court, the British Museum, Portsmouth and a military museum. Schemes of work have been revised since the last inspection to help teachers plan their work. However, assessment procedures are in an early stage of development and are not yet useful as a tool for future planning. The co-ordinator has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school to support teachers and raise standards. Although there are good cross curricular links in literacy, numeracy and science, the use of information technology is underdeveloped to improve the quality of pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

105. In the last inspection standards in information technology were judged to be above average. Changes to the programmes of study and higher expectations of pupils' information and communications technology (ICT) performance, especially standards at Key Stage 2, have made such a judgement more difficult to achieve in what is now a core subject. Currently children do reach the required basic standards by the age of seven. However, pupils' attainment is below what is expected by the time they leave the school. This is because school policy to teach ICT as a support to other curriculum areas, allows too little consideration of it as a subject in its own right. What work pupils are involved in is completed to an appropriate standard, but by omission their overall attainment is unsatisfactory and, statutory requirements are not fully met.

106. As in the past report pupils throughout the school remain interested and enthusiastic towards ICT: for example Years R and 1 children are eager to use talking book computer facilities; Year 2 enjoy listening to taped stories as part of literacy work; and Years 5 and 6 are keen to work together, accessing information on CD Rom.

107. By the end of Year 2 pupils' keyboard skills are satisfactory. Pupils make suitable use of computers as word processors, often composing their work directly onto the screen. These skills are built on: in Years 3 and 4 where pupils are introduced to editing techniques such as using the spell check; and in Years 5 and 6 where more able pupils demonstrate that they can insert pictures and sound into their text. However, pupils' performance especially at Key Stage 2 is negatively affected by a lack of opportunity and too little time spent on ICT as a subject in its own right.

108. Having been created as a five year plan in 1998, school policy and planning for ICT have yet to be updated to take into account current requirements. A commercial scheme and assessment sheets are to be trialled for those in Years 1 and 2, but these have not yet had a

positive effect. Some teachers' weekly plans are insufficiently detailed to show how ICT will be taught to mixed age and mixed ability classes. However, there are good features in work being planned for older pupils and progress in Years 5 and 6 has good features. In general, teachers' and pupils' work in terms of plans, teaching and standards in ICT is not monitored effectively and this has a negative impact on pupils' attainment and progress: for example too little ICT used for data handling.

109. The school is aware of the lack of knowledge, understanding and confidence in ICT for some staff and has made good use of local education authority advisory support for in-service training.

110. Good recent improvements to resources, notably two new personal computers, fifteen notepads and connection to the Internet, are having positive effects. The long term strategic planning of the school does not yet identify how resources for ICT will be systematically replaced and developed over time. Governors and the acting head are aware of this and a new committee to consider such plans has been constituted.

MUSIC

111. Few music lessons could be observed during the inspection. However, scrutiny of plans, records of work and discussions with staff, parents and children indicate that, in an improvement since the last report, statutory requirements are met.

112. By both the age of seven and eleven pupils are doing what is expected of them, to satisfactory levels. Children in Years R and 1 are introduced to a different range of sounds, which leads to work with untuned and tuned percussion. They were observed making good progress, enthusiastically identifying the origins of different 'noises' and comparing loud with soft, and short with long, sounds. The teacher created a good interactive display for children to experiment with sounds first hand.

113. Junior age pupils are encouraged to listen and appreciate differences such as tempo (different speeds) and texture (different ways sounds are combined). Pupils have opportunities to perform and evaluate their work and are developing an appropriate musical vocabulary. For example, Years 3 and 4 experimented with speaking and singing the words of songs (linked to their topic on Greeks) at different rates. They taped their performance to review whether they had achieved their intentions and made suggestions for improvement.

114. Parents, staff and pupils report that school productions, such as Key Stage 1 Pinocchio, are fun and of a good standard. The quality of singing in some assemblies is good.

115. Overall planning developed by the co-ordinator is of sound quality and an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. However, class teachers' plans do not show that the subject is emphasised sufficiently or that the school's agreed time allocation for music is always met. In some classes there is still an underemphasis on the subject. The school is aware that the monitoring role of the co-ordinator is in need of development. Currently the music co-ordinator has no time to observe others teaching the subject and this has contributed to variable provision.

116. The quality of teaching in lessons observed was satisfactory with staff taking advantage of good relationships and pupils' good listening skills to develop their appraising techniques. There are indications that some teachers' knowledge, understanding and confidence in music are not strong enough. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for in-service training to overcome this.

117. The school provides a satisfactory range and number of extracurricular opportunities for music; including recorder clubs, and individual and group classes provided by the local

education authority peripatetic music service. There are now adequate resources for music. These are well stored and easily accessible.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118. Pupils' performance in physical education is below that expected for their ages at seven and eleven. In the previous report pupils' attainment was reported to be broadly average throughout the school. Since the last inspection the school has not developed guidance in all aspects of physical education. The subject has been neglected and some teachers lack confidence and subject knowledge to teach the subject effectively. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to attend an intensive swimming course at Farnborough every other year where they receive expert instruction. By the age of eleven 78 per cent of pupils can swim at least 25 metres.

119. Pupils know the importance of warm up at the beginning of lessons and the contribution of physical activity to a healthy life style. Infant pupils develop body awareness in dance through simple spinning, skipping and sliding movements, which they perform to music. In gymnastics, they work in groups travelling along apparatus working with slow and faster movements. However, pupils have little opportunity to develop their gymnastic skills due to the lack of structure in lessons. Junior pupils make good use of the playground in developing ball control by practising passing, dribbling and travelling. Older pupils show appropriate co-ordination when using footballs and hockey sticks but only a small minority demonstrates precision control and fluency in performance.

120. Most pupils participate enthusiastically and have positive attitudes towards physical education lessons. In the dance club junior pupils performed very enthusiastically, working closely with the co-ordinator to refine and practice various dance steps to music, where they clearly demonstrated their enjoyment. All pupils including those with special educational needs work effectively together and behave well. However, where such pupils are withdrawn for extra literacy work this has a negative impact on their physical education.

121. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Appropriate attention is given to safety issues in lessons and teachers manage pupils well. Effective use is made of resources to support pupils' learning. However, many lessons lack sufficient challenge and pace. There is no up to date guidance to help teachers plan their work to ensure progression of skills from Year R to Year 6. The school hall is cramped and provides limited space for activities such as using large apparatus. The local playing field is only used by older pupils in the summer term. The co-ordinator has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning and acknowledges that assessment procedures are underdeveloped. All these factors have negative effects on pupils' learning. The school does however, make good use of its limited facilities and the extracurricular activities organised by staff and parents greatly help to promote the subject.