

INSPECTION REPORT

THE HYTHE PRIMARY SCHOOL

STAINES

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125107

Headteacher: Duncan Greig

Reporting inspector: Mr Chris Warner, 20935

Dates of inspection: 9-13 October 2000

Inspection number: 225312

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Thorpe Road Staines Middlesex
Postcode:	TW18 3HD
Telephone number:	01784 452972
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Chair of governors:	Steve Turner
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Chris Warner 20935	<i>Registered Inspector</i>	Mathematics; Music; Physical education; Provision for children under five.	Standards, results & pupils' achievements; How well the school is led and managed; What the school should do to improve further.
Raminder Arora 16773	<i>Team Inspector</i>	English; Geography; History; Religious education.	How well pupils are taught?
David Major 27709	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Science; Art; Information technology; Design and technology.	Curricular & other opportunities Special Educational Needs Equal opportunities
Christine Haggerty 13807	<i>Lay Inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes and values; How well the school cares for its pupils; The partnership with parents; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social & cultural development.

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD*

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Hythe Primary School is situated in Egham Hythe in Surrey. There are 197 pupils on roll, which is close to the average for primary schools nationally. This compares with 243 pupils on roll at the time of the last inspection, in May 1998. About 32 per cent pupils are entitled to a free school meal, which is above the national average. Forty-one per cent of pupils are on the register for special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Three pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The attainment of children on entry to the school is below that typically found nationally. About five per cent of pupils are from homes where English is an additional language, mainly Bengali. There are no pupils at an early stage of English acquisition. In the last inspection the school was found to have serious weaknesses. The current inspection found this to no longer be the case.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Although standards are below average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, there has been a marked improvement in pupils' achievements since the last inspection. The headteacher manages the school well. The inspection supports the views of parents, staff and governors that standards in the school are improving as a result of good teaching and a well-managed curriculum. Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. The staff and governors are working together in a determined way to improve standards. They are well aware of their strengths, where the weaknesses are and how to improve them. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The headteacher gives effective and purposeful leadership and works closely with a committed staff.
- The contribution of the governing body is good.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- There is a very good partnership between parents and the school.
- Pupils are keen to learn, behave well and enjoy very good relationships with one another and with the staff.
- The provision for pupils' moral development is good and for their social development is very good.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education in both key stages, and in information and communication technology (ICT) in Key Stage 2.
- The management of special educational needs throughout the school.
- The contribution of the Senior Management Team to school development.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a good response to the key issues for improvement noted in the last inspection:

- * the quality of teaching for the under-fives has significantly improved and now has many good features;
- * the quality of planning has significantly improved so that work is better matched to meet the needs of different pupils, including the few higher attaining pupils;
- * a satisfactory improvement has been made to assessment procedures so that they now help teachers to plan appropriately for the next stage in pupils' learning;
- * an effective approach to monitoring and the evaluating the quality of teaching and learning has been put in place. This has contributed to the improvements in teaching and learning;
- * levels of attendance have improved.

Two key issues require further attention:

- * opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of different cultures have not made a satisfactory improvement;
- * the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus still have some minor omissions.

In addition to the above points, the school has improved:
 the overall quality of teaching;
 standards in the reception class;
 standards in English, mathematics, science and history;
 pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

Overall, the school is well placed to achieve further improvement.

STANDARDS:

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	D	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E	C	A	
Science	E	D	B	A	

The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds showed a marked improvement on earlier years. When compared with all schools nationally, the results were above average in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. When

compared with similar schools, standards in 2000 were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. However, in English pupils achieved much better in reading than in writing. Boys achieve below the girls in reading, and well below in writing.

Work seen during the inspection confirms the improved picture at the end of Key Stage 2, although standards were not judged to be quite so high among the current year group as achieved in the national tests for 2000. The discrepancy might well be explained by a difference in year group ability. The inspection confirms that writing is not as strong as reading and that boys achieve significantly less well than girls in reading and, particularly in writing.

At seven years old, results in the national tests in 2000 when compared with all schools nationally, show that standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science were well below the average compared with all schools and compared with similar schools. This is in spite of a significant improvement in 1999 and maintained in 2000 that meant that standards were higher than in previous years.

Inspection evidence shows that children enter school with below average attainment, especially in language, literacy and communication. The previous weaknesses in the quality of education noted in the last report have seriously held back the achievements of many pupils in the school. Improvements in the teaching are having an impact on standards, especially in the under-fives and in Years 5 and 6.

In spite of the improvements, standards in writing, especially among boys, are low. Achievement in science is held back by weaknesses in enquiry skills. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, but below at the end of Key Stage 2 because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding, especially in control, modelling and monitoring. Standards in religious education (RE) are lower than reported in the last inspection, and do not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

Standards in art and design, history, music and physical education are broadly in line with those seen nationally. There was insufficient evidence in design and technology and geography upon which to make a judgement.

Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, except in religious education and information and communication technology where progress is unsatisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress, and pupils in the upper part of Key Stage 2 make good progress except in religious education and information and communication technology.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They respond well to praise and most of them want to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. A small number of parents are concerned about bullying. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour during the week of the inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have very good relationships with staff, adults and with one another. Pupils in Year 6 take their responsibilities seriously, but there are not enough opportunities for personal development in other year groups.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are punctual.

The improved attitudes shown by pupils makes a substantial contribution to their enjoyment of school, their progress and the standards they achieve. A high proportion of absence is because pupils have holidays during term time. This is unsatisfactory because pupils' learning is interrupted.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
44 lessons seen	Good	good	good

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

Teaching and learning are good, and only three lessons seen were less than satisfactory. All of the unsatisfactory lessons were in religious education. Ninety-three per cent of lessons seen were satisfactory or better. Nearly 60 per cent were good or better. Twenty-three per cent of teaching was very good. The quality of teaching has significantly improved since the last inspection, when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. The good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning, including in literacy and numeracy.

A key issue identified in the previous inspection report was to set clear learning objectives for each lesson and to ensure better provision for higher-attaining pupils. On both counts, evidence from the current term confirms a big improvement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced and meets the requirements in all subjects of the National Curriculum except for information and communication technology. Religious education does not fully meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is sound. Most pupils are well supported both in and out of the classroom. However, for some pupils, details of targets and how improvements can be achieved are vague and this makes it difficult to provide pupils with the best support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There are good arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, for moral development good, and for social development very good. However, provision for pupils' cultural development is, as at the last inspection, unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides satisfactory all-round care for its pupils through good monitoring procedures. Arrangements for child protection and for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare are good. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Information from tests and assessments is collected and analysed, and is increasingly being used to assess progress and to inform target setting.

Information and communication technology fails to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. All staff are good role models and help the pupils to develop a sense of fairness, honesty and respect. There are very good links with parents, through information provided and the open access of all staff. Parents respond well to the very good opportunities to contribute to their children's learning, both at school and at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. He has a clear understanding of how the school can improve and has developed effective systems to bring about required changes. The role of the senior management team is under-developed in that it does not make a sufficient impact on school development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is good. Governors have a clear understanding of where the school needs to improve and a good appreciation of the school's strengths. Apart from minor omissions to the annual report to parents and in the school prospectus, the governing body fulfils all its statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has analysed its performance well. Improved monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum since the last inspection is increasingly focused on the school's performance, particularly in relation to pupils' achievements.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its` resources. A good start has been made at looking at ways of judging its effectiveness in relation to measurable targets, particularly around pupils' achievements.

The satisfactory match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is enhanced by a good provision for their professional development. The well-maintained accommodation provides a good environment to meet pupils' needs. However, there is no designated outdoor area for children's learning in the reception class. Resources for pupils' learning are unsatisfactory because book resources are weak, especially outside of the classrooms. However, throughout the school, staff, the accommodation and resources are used effectively.

The tight budget caused by the falling roll in the school is requiring the Governing Body to undertake careful financial planning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What a few parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like coming to school.• Behaviour in the school is good.• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.• Teaching is good.• The school works closely with parents.• The school's is well led and managed.• This is an improving school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Twenty per cent of the parents who returned the questionnaire feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons.• Fifteen per cent of the parents who returned the questionnaire do not feel their child has enough work to do at home. Some parents at the meeting thought there was not enough homework for pupils in their final year before secondary school.

The Inspection team supports the positive views that parents have of the school.

In response to the concerns of some parents, the inspection found that the current provision for activities outside of lessons is satisfactory, and the provision for homework, good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. There has been a significant improvement in standards achieved in all subjects except religious education (RE) and information and communication technology since the last inspection. Although standards in English, mathematics and science are below the national average, they are improving and are not as low as in previous years. The improvement is most apparent at the end of Key Stage 2. Although more needs to be done, a good start has been made to raising standards throughout the school.

Foundation Stage

2. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of education for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. In the short time since the appointment of the reception class teacher, a secure curriculum has been put in place and the children are benefiting from good teaching. Overall, what children know, understand and can do on entering the school is below the expected levels for this age group, and is often particularly low in language, literacy and communication skills. Children make good progress, although the absence of a planned outdoor area restricts the extent of their learning through activity. Because of their low starting point, most of the children are unlikely to reach the 'early learning goals' by the end of the reception year.

Overall standards

3. Standards in English, mathematics and science have significantly improved since the last inspection in 1998. Even so, standards are below the national average, and the average for similar schools at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards have most significantly improved in English, mathematics and science. In reading, mathematics and science, standards are now close to the national average. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, but below at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in religious education do not reflect the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards are about the same as those seen nationally in art and design, history, music and physical education. There is not enough evidence on which to make a judgement in design and technology and geography. The school analyses results in English, mathematics and science at the end of every year, and uses the findings to produce realistic and challenging targets for the end of Key Stage 2. These targets were exceeded in the 2000 National Curriculum tests and assessments for eleven-year-olds.

4. The inspection found that the main reasons for the improvement in standards include:
- * a strong commitment to raise pupils' achievements from their often low starting point demonstrated in higher expectations of what they can achieve;
 - * much improved teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2, with far more good lessons observed and far fewer unsatisfactory ones;
 - * the introduction of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy giving structure and consistency to the teaching in English and mathematics;
 - * an improved curriculum for the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2;
 - * thoughtful 'setting' for the literacy and numeracy sessions leading to a better match between the work set and the needs of different pupils, especially higher achieving ones.

English

5. In 2000, in the National Curriculum tests, the percentages of seven-year-olds reaching the expected level in reading and writing were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. Even so, as in 1999, the results in 2000 were a very significant improvement on previous years. The inspection evidence shows that pupils in Year 2 achieve below those expected for their age in reading and writing, and close to the expected standard in speaking and listening.

6. In 1999, the percentage of eleven-year-olds reaching the expected level in English was well below the national average and the average for similar schools. But the results in 2000 showed a very substantial improvement with 80 per cent of pupils reaching Level 4 compared with no higher than 50 per cent in any previous year. However, pupils achieved better in reading than in writing, and there was a big difference in the performance of boys and girls. Girls perform better than boys in reading and far better in writing. This was starkly revealed by the latest, 2000, results for eleven-year-olds where only 7 per cent of boys achieved Level 4 in writing compared with 73 per cent of girls.

7. Although writing by higher attaining pupils is well organised and shows a good awareness of structure and the conventions of writing, for many other pupils, their technical competence in spelling, punctuation and handwriting are weak. The difficulties pupils have in these areas makes it hard for them to write in a fluent and in satisfying way.

8. The regular guided reading sessions, and the support of most parents with their children's reading at home, are helping to raise standards. However, although phonics are taught, rarely does this give pupils enough help in tackling new vocabulary, and a more systematic approach needs to be adopted. Although pupils are interested in different types of books, the library research and retrieval skills of eleven-year-olds are weak, partly because library resources are unsatisfactory.

9. The school does well to encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills so that they achieve standards close to the national expectation. However, although pupils listen and 'take-in' what they hear, they find it more challenging to respond in depth through their own predictions, questions, suggestions and explanations. This is a feature in all subjects, but is

particularly relevant in science where there is further scope for pupils to develop their communication skills as part of their investigative and enquiry work. A good start has been made in some classes, including the reception class, to get pupils to talk and think about their work, but more needs to be done.

10. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in all aspects of English. However, some individual education plans do not give enough detail of the pupils' targets and the ways these can be met. Where this is the case, individual pupils do not make the progress they could, especially in their written work.

Mathematics

11. In the Key Stage 1 national tests in 2000, standards in mathematics were well below the national average, and the average for similar schools. Even so, as in 1999, the 2000 were a big improvement on previous years. The greater emphasis on numeracy is having a good impact in Year 2, with pupils building up a reasonable ability to handle numbers mentally. However, these pupils did not have the benefit of a good start to their schooling, and they are not so sure in their use and application of number in everyday situations. The improvement is even more apparent in Year 1, where pupils show good levels of knowledge and understanding for their age.

12. The inspection evidence shows that standards of mathematics throughout the school are improving as a result of a better quality of education. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a good effect on the quality of teaching, particularly in raising expectations of what pupils can achieve. The introduction of 'setting' is making sure that work is better matched to pupils' needs and abilities. In the last inspection, higher attaining pupils were under-achieving. This is no longer the case.

13. In Key Stage 2 tests in 2000 standards in mathematics were in line with the national average, and the average for similar schools. In earlier years, no more than 40 per cent of eleven-year-olds reached the expected level. In 2000, the results improved dramatically so that 83 per cent gained the expected level. Standards are now much higher than at the time of the last inspection. Although still below the standard expected for their age nationally, pupils in Year 6 and in Year 5 are making good progress as the result of consistently good teaching. This is true of pupils of all abilities, including the few higher achieving pupils and those with special educational needs. While pupils in Years 3 and 4 are making sound progress, it will take a great effort on the part of staff to raise the achievement of many of the pupils' enough to make-up for their unsettled previous learning experiences. Some of these pupils have had up to five different teachers in two years, and some of whose earlier teaching was judged unsatisfactory in the last inspection.

Science

14. Inspection evidence shows that standards in science are higher than at the time of the last inspection. In the 1999 National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils gaining the expected level was significantly higher than in previous years, but was still well below the national average, and the average for similar schools. The results of 1999 were further improved in 2000 when the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was close to the national average, and the percentage gaining the higher Level 5 was below average. The inspection evidence shows pupils working below, but no longer

well below the standards for both seven and eleven year olds. It is also clear that pupils progress particularly well towards the end of Key Stage 2. The greater emphasis placed on scientific enquiry since the last inspection is helping pupils to think and talk about their work and ideas more clearly. This is important to maintain, especially given the need to develop pupils' communication skills across the curriculum. A weakness in both key stages is the under-emphasis of recording in all its forms. This is reflected in pupils' poor presentation skills and difficulty in expressing themselves in an appropriate written form. Although results in national tests and assessments shows that girls achieve higher standards than boys, the difference is not nearly so marked as in aspects of English.

Other subjects

15. Evidence from the inspection shows that pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is typical of the standards for seven-year-olds. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in all aspects of information and communication technology in Key Stage 1. This is a similar picture compared with the standards noted in the previous report. However, by the end of Key stage 2, their achievement is below the national expectations, because they do not have enough opportunities to develop their information and communication technology knowledge, skills and understanding. In particular, older pupils do not develop their control and monitoring skills to a high enough level. Staff lack confidence and competence in their knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology and of the requirements of the National Curriculum.

16. There are not enough links with other subjects to support work in information and communication technology, for example, to create graphs and pictures, to write music, poems and stories, and to access information.

17. The inspection shows that standards in religious education are lower than at the time of the last inspection, and do not meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of either key stage. This is mainly because pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major faiths are not developed in a systematic way. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have only a limited awareness of the main features of different faiths, such as major festivals, important characters and places of worship.

Progress

18. Progress in learning is good in the reception class and satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Progress in the final two years of the school is often good. Achievement in different classes relates directly to the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress throughout the school, and good progress in some classes. However, this is not the case when individual education plans do not have clear targets and details of how they can be achieved. The few higher attaining pupils are stretched, and this is an improvement compared with the last inspection.

Improvement since the last inspection

19. In the last inspection report, pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science was unsatisfactory, so that the school has done well in raising standards. Standards in information and communication technology have not risen as much as schools nationally, so that progress

in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory. Similarly, the school's progress in raising standards in religious education has been unsatisfactory. Standards in history have improved and those in other subjects, where there was sufficient evidence to make a judgement, are about the same as at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20. Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and their personal development are good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The improvement reflects the views of most parents and pupils in the school. Well over ninety percent of parents report that they are happy with the behaviour of the pupils and that their children enjoy coming to school.

21. Pupils have good attitudes to school and to their learning. They settle quickly to work in the mornings. For example, pupils in Year 6 worked on science words during registration. This made good use of their time and ensured a prompt start to the lesson. Pupils in a lower English set in Key Stage 2, showed very mature attitudes towards learning, collaborating well and discussing the task sensibly with each other. This had a positive effect on their learning and achievement in the lesson. Pupils concentrate well and, as they get older, they sustain attention for increasing lengths of time. Generally, they are keen both to ask and to answer questions in response to good prompts from the class teachers. In the introduction to a few lessons, pupils spent too long sitting on the carpet. Their attention wandered and they then found it hard to settle into their group activities. On the other hand, pupils at Key Stage 1 were very attentive and enjoyed reading together from the board and then recording their work using speech bubbles. This kind of involvement of pupils in their own learning has a positive effect on their progress and self-esteem.

22. The good behaviour of pupils has a positive effect on their learning and on the standards achieved. The behaviour of pupils has improved since the last inspection and the school operates as an orderly community. Pupils understand the school rules and what is expected of them. They respond well to the positive reinforcement by teachers, and support staff, of good behaviour. Behaviour in assemblies is good and often very good. This contributes positively to the family feel of the school. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff for good behaviour. They show considerable responsibility for their own behaviour in the calm way they move around the school, go to assembly, or wait for their lunch. Pupils respect the school, the premises and equipment, and there is no sign of graffiti or vandalism. Pupils with special educational needs join fully into the life of the school and mix well with others. During breaks, pupils of all age groups play well together.

23. There was no evidence of bullying in the week of the inspection. Even so, a small number of parents and a few pupils reported that, on occasions, there have been isolated incidents of bullying, mainly *outside* of the school. The school is aware of this issue and is reviewing its procedures with parents and governors. Most parents, through their responses both at the meeting and in the questionnaire, regard the school as a happy place. This view was clearly shared by the vast majority of pupils. There is no recent history of exclusions.

24. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and the relationships between pupils, and between adults and pupils are very good. Pupils are friendly and confident when greeting visitors. Pupils in Year 6 are fully involved as they have their turn as a monitor, taking the responsibilities seriously and showing great pride in acting as role models. There are

however, limited opportunities for pupils in other year groups to be given responsibilities other than simple classroom duties. Staff talk to pupils with respect and pupils respond to this in a positive way. They do their best for their teacher and for themselves. During one lesson, they worked quietly and industriously, really trying very hard, showing great consideration to their teacher who had almost lost her voice and was talking in whispers. Opportunities for pupils to become independent learners are limited. For example, too few pupils have the opportunity to use computers to develop independent research skills. However, when given the opportunity, pupils respond very well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 had prepared their song and clap routines in their own time, to present to the whole school at assembly. Four of them created a dance routine to accompany the class teacher, playing the guitar and singing. This was very well received by an appreciative audience and had a very positive effect on the personal development and self-esteem of those taking part.

25. The attendance of pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Although the attendance figures are a little below the national average, they are above the ninety per cent threshold. The improved attendance has a positive effect on the progress and achievement of those attending school. Pupils taking holidays during school time have caused over fifty per cent of the absences so far this term. Indeed, the equivalent of almost sixteen weeks' schooling has been lost so far this term due to holidays in term time. This is unsatisfactory and could have a negative effect on the progress of those pupils who miss school. The problem needs to be addressed if the school's attendance figures are to improve further. There is no evidence of truancy, and other absence is generally due to medical reasons. There is a little minor lateness, which is recorded in the late book. Registration is taken quickly and efficiently.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

26. The quality of teaching has significantly improved since the last inspection when it was noted as a key issue for improvement. It is now good across the school: good in most subjects and for children under five. Teaching within the school now has some important strengths.

27. In the last inspection, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory throughout the school, but judged particularly weak for children aged under five. Notable weaknesses included teachers' weak management of pupils' behaviour and unclear learning objectives for lessons. Too often, the needs of the higher attaining pupils were not met and work lacked challenge. Teachers' own knowledge and understanding of subjects such as English, science and design and technology skills, were weak. The assessments made by teachers during lessons were weak and contributed little to planning for the next stage of teaching and learning. The school has worked hard to tackle these concerns through a programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching, and a strong emphasis on staff training. As a result, weaknesses have been remedied in most lessons observed, and many strengths in teaching have emerged. This is to the school's credit, especially as three newly qualified teachers have joined the staff since the last inspection.

28. In 93 percent of lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory or better. Nearly 60 per cent of lessons were good or better. Twenty-three per cent of all teaching was very good compared with none in the last inspection. Teaching was unsatisfactory in 7 per cent of

lessons compared to 25 per cent at the previous inspection. With the appointment of a new teacher in the Foundation Stage, teaching has turned around from being unsatisfactory to good. Taken together, this represents a very good rate of improvement.

29. A strong feature of teaching in both key stages and in the reception class is the effective teamwork between all those involved. Support staff play a significant role in promoting pupils' learning. They understand the requirements of the lessons and the way in which they can encourage higher attainment and support difficulties.

30. The overall quality of teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good. The reception class teacher and classroom assistant have a clear understanding of how young children learn. They work very effectively together to provide an appropriate range of stimulating and well-structured activities. Lessons are well planned so that staff are clear about the purpose of the activities and of their role in supporting the children. They work closely with the children, encouraging them to talk and think, and develop their understanding through good questioning and the use of appropriate language.

31. Throughout the school, teachers have very good relationships with pupils: they know their pupils well and praise them effectively. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and work hard. Teachers' explanations of the purpose of lessons are clear and, because of this, pupils know what they are expected to do and the amount of time in which they have to do it. In very good lessons, teachers use probing questions to elicit fuller answers. For example, during a Year 1 mathematics lesson, the teacher's timely and often probing questions led to rapid recall of number facts. It also gave pupils the chance to explain their mental strategies, for example, how do they know that 64 is an even number? Most lessons develop at an appropriate pace. The teachers give very precise instructions and remind pupils at regular intervals how long they have got left. This adds a sense of urgency to the task and increases pupils' motivation.

32. Another strength in the quality of teaching is the effectiveness of teachers' planning. Most plans are detailed clearly showing the objectives of the lessons. Teachers follow the good practice of carefully explaining and sharing the lesson objectives with the whole class. Pupils are encouraged to copy out the objectives in their workbooks. However, in some lessons the language used for objectives is too difficult. In such circumstances, copying the learning objectives from the board wastes time and does little to aid the pupils' understanding.

33. The needs of the few higher attaining pupils are met well, particularly when, in mathematics and English, pupils are divided into two or three attainment sets. This is a distinct improvement since the last inspection. The pupils in the higher attaining and average groups are expected to work at a higher level, with appropriate challenge and added pace to the lesson. For example, in a lesson in Year 6, dealing with inverse operations, the teacher asked telling questions and made timely interventions to extend and challenge able pupils, and to make specific teaching points. The average and lower attaining pupils also achieve well in their groups, with tasks that are suitably matched and based on their assessed needs.

34. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in most lessons and when they are withdrawn from classes, either as individuals or in small groups, to work alongside learning support assistants. In most lessons, teachers meet the needs of these pupils well,

providing appropriate activities and support. Where this is not the case, it is because individual education plans do not provide the teacher with clear enough targets and an indication as to how these can be met. In most cases, classroom assistants play an effective role in ensuring that these pupils benefit from their tasks with close support and a good level of intervention. Additional literacy sessions in Key Stage 2 provide appropriate support, and pupils make satisfactory progress in developing language skills.

35. Literacy and numeracy are taught well across the school. The National Strategies in literacy and numeracy are effectively implemented and are already helping to raise standards of teaching, particularly in mathematics. Lessons are well structured and staff are far more confident in teaching reading and mental arithmetic skills than was noted in the last report. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop literacy and numeracy skills through their work in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 confidently research and record facts about life in Victorian times.

36. The teaching of technical vocabulary is particularly good across the school. Teachers make good use of technical terms in, for example in a Year 5 science lesson when talking about pollination and fertilisation processes. Pupils learn to use technical terms well when talking about their work and when describing what they have learned.

37. The provision for homework is good. Pupils, throughout the school, are set work to do at home and, in both key stages, they feel that it helps them with their learning. The amount appropriately increases as the pupils move through the school. The work is mainly English and mathematics based, such as spellings and tables, although pupils in Year 6 are also asked to complete research at home. They find this interesting and helpful with their learning in class.

38. The rate and pace of learning is good across the school. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They work hard and their effort, interest, and concentration contribute very effectively to the standards they achieve and the progress they make. A feature of the few unsatisfactory lessons and of lessons that were satisfactory, but nonetheless had minor shortcomings, was that they lacked pace and rigour. All three unsatisfactory lessons were in religious education and resulted from a lack of subject focus. The teachers sometimes did not have a sufficient grasp of the subject and this showed in the lack of pace and purpose. However, in the majority of lessons, teachers did have a good knowledge of the subjects and the way in which pupils learn. As a result they planned work that was effective in meeting the requirements of the curriculum and ensuring that all pupils make progress.

39. Pupils are well prepared for most lessons. Teachers use a good range of organisation matched to the needs of the curriculum and well chosen resources to promote learning. Whole class 'interactive' teaching is successfully used in many lessons, especially in Key Stage 2. Teachers ask telling questions that stimulate and promote pupils' thinking. This is particularly apparent in discussion sessions that are common features at the beginning and end of lessons. In these sessions, teachers encourage pupils to reflect on what they have learned and relate it to other lessons. A feature in the minority of less successful lessons was the overly long introduction, often on the carpet, where pupils found it hard to concentrate and sometimes became restless.

40. Teachers, in both key stages, make satisfactory day-to-day assessments of pupils' work and this is an improvement on the last inspection. In the most effective teaching, there is evidence of the teachers having adapted their plans in the light of observations noted in earlier lessons. For example, a teacher in Year 6 deliberately repeated a number operation that she felt had not been understood by a group of pupils in the previous lesson. The marking of pupils' work is consistent and purposeful. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' abilities to set work that is generally matched to their needs and levels of achievement. This ensures that pupils are making appropriate progress in lessons.

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

41. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, enhanced by educational visits and extra-curricular activities. This is an improvement compared with the position at the time of the last inspection. However, in spite of the improvement, an appropriate statutory curriculum is not fully in place on two counts. Firstly, religious education does not fully meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Secondly, information and communication technology does not meet statutory requirements because pupils have little experience of using the computer for controlling, monitoring and modelling aspects of the subject.

42. The school has reviewed its subject documentation in the light of nationally agreed guidelines in all subjects. In order to support the development of skills, it also uses commercial schemes effectively in some subjects, such as mathematics, geography and physical education. A weaknesses noted in the last inspection lay in the undue repetition of some work between year groups. This has been rectified and there is now better continuity between years and key stages. There is also an improved balance in the time allocated to foundation subjects, particularly in design and technology which previously received too little attention.

43. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage has significantly improved since the last inspection and now provides a secure foundation for children's learning. However, although the curriculum is sufficiently broad in that it covers all recommended areas of learning, there remains a lack of balance because children do not have access to a planned outdoor area. This means that children cannot regularly extend their learning through access to equipment such as large wheeled toys and climbing apparatus. The school is aware of this shortcoming, and a new outdoor area is planned for the coming year. Otherwise, the curriculum plans for a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Short term planning takes into account the observations made by staff as to how children are getting on in their learning. This is helping teachers to plan well for the needs of different children, including those with special educational needs.

44. There has been a good response to the introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and numeracy. The curriculum takes sufficient account of National Strategy for Literacy. In numeracy, evidence of the good effect of the school's strategy on pupils' achievement can be seen in the latest results of national tests.

45. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum. Younger pupils may join a recorder group and a choir, and also participate in some sports clubs. Older pupils attend football, netball, athletics and other sports clubs. There are also clubs for art, dance and homework. There are many visits to places of interest to support work in history, geography, science, art and religious education. Residential visits, which are available to all year groups in Key Stage 2, strongly support pupils' work in a range of subjects. In the last year, visits to Charmouth and to the Isle of Wight have played a valuable part in the personal and social development of many pupils. The provision for homework is good. All pupils take reading books home. Older pupils are set appropriate tasks on a regular basis in other subjects, but with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy.

46. Although the school offers sound provision for pupils with special educational needs, there are weaknesses that affect some pupils more than others. There is a comprehensive special needs policy that meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Pupils with statements of need receive good help in lessons from their attached support assistants. They are appropriately involved in whole class activities, for example, in small group science investigations in Year 1 and Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are identified carefully, their progress is monitored, and reviews are carried out correctly. However, the individual education plans written by individual class teachers vary widely in their quality and usefulness. The targets in some of the plans are not specific enough, which means that they contribute little to the pupils' programme for improvement and make it difficult to monitor how the child is getting on. Some plans are not clear about what action needs to be taken to achieve the targets. When the plans give enough, relevant information, then they are usually, but not always, used to provide effective support to help meet the pupils' needs. As a result, although the provision for pupils with special educational needs in many classes is good, the quality across the school is inconsistent.

47. In keeping with its aims, the school provides an education designed to enable pupils to develop their potential physically and mentally, and there is an appropriate programme for personal, health and social education. Some topics arise in circle time, whilst others inform individual lessons or, are woven into other areas of the curriculum. Appropriate provision is made for sex education and for teaching pupils about the misuse of drugs. The school also takes appropriate measures to ensure equality of access and social inclusion for all its pupils.

48. There are some good links with the community to further pupils' learning. They study their own locality, making visits to places, such as St. Paul's Church. Clergy and other visitors occasionally take part in assemblies. The school is suitably addressing the need for pupils to develop a sense of citizenship. The police and representatives from other emergency services contribute to aspects of personal, social and health education, including the Year 6 programme on citizenship. Links with local playgroups are developing, with the reception class teacher making visits to meet parents and look at pre-school provision. However, the school plans to develop stronger links with pre-school providers and parents before the children enter school. There are good links with the local comprehensive school. For example, Key Stage 3 teachers have visited Hythe Primary, to observe literacy and numeracy teaching and learn more about the school. Similarly, Year 5 pupils have attended science classes at the secondary school, making good use of its specialist facilities.

49. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies play an important part in the life of the school. They give pupils a sense of belonging to a whole school community, celebrating and appreciating each other's contributions and achievements.

Pupils are given opportunities, through collective worship, to reflect upon their own and other peoples' beliefs. The reading of poetry contributes to the spiritual development of pupils and, during a science lesson, pupils experienced 'Awe and Wonder' when a solution of salt and water evaporated leaving a crystal formation at the bottom of the dish. However, 'Awe and Wonder' is rarely planned to feature in lessons, so that teachers have to rely on spontaneous opportunities to raise pupils' spiritual awareness.

50. The school's promotion of moral development is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Circle time, assemblies and religious education lessons are used consistently as a strategy for addressing issues. There is a strong moral theme of helping and caring for each other throughout the school. Staff and other adults reinforce the school's high expectations of behaviour and act as good role models. There are many opportunities to develop values, such as honesty, fairness, independence and respect. Pupils often have the opportunity to discuss moral issues in lessons, with the result that they can clearly distinguish between right and wrong.

51. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and results in strong relationships between pupils, and between pupils and the adults with whom they come into contact. This represents a significant improvement since the last report. Pupils are encouraged to get on well with each other. For example, monitors in Year 6 help with younger pupils during wet playtimes. Teachers provide good opportunities for collaborative and individual work at both Key Stages. The schools' new and very popular breakfast club provides excellent opportunities for pupils of all ages and their parents to enjoy a sociable start to their day. Pupils in Key Stage 2 enjoy residential trips, learning about living in a community, helping and supporting each other. This provides very good opportunities to extend their social and personal development. Pupils in Year 6 also take part in the 'Junior Citizen' day organised by the local emergency services.

52. Pupil's cultural development is, as at the last inspection, unsatisfactory. During an assembly, pupils sang traditional playground songs. However, opportunities for pupils to enrich their knowledge and experience of their own and other traditions and cultures through other areas of the curriculum are limited. For example, some religious education lessons have a strong moral theme, but too little in the way of a religious input. There are displays of artefacts from other religions, but there have been few visits to different places of worship. Each year group has frequent visits to support the curriculum and this has included visits to museums, a local farm and Brighton. Visitors have included a theatre group, and pupils enjoyed an Indian dance workshop. Although planned, there is as yet, no overall policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, and opportunities to learn about different cultures are not given sufficient attention. The school is aware of this shortcoming and the need to improve provision is highlighted in the school improvement plan

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

53. Pupils in the school are in a caring environment. The ethos is supportive and inclusive. Most pupils are happy and confident in the school. They are valued as individuals and treated with respect by staff. Most have a high self-esteem and want to do their best for their teachers and the support staff. This sense of well being and mutual support has a positive effect on pupils' academic and personal development. Much of the school's improvement can be attributed to better and more consistently applied procedures since the last report.

54. Taken together, procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. Procedures for child protection are very good. The head teacher and two members of staff share the role of the named person for child protection and, have all attended the appropriate training courses. The 'care committee' meets regularly to monitor and provide effective support for pupils where there are concerns. However, there is no recent history of training for non-teaching staff on first aid, medical conditions and child protection awareness. Staff have received training on the use of the epi-pen and on resuscitation techniques. The newly appointed site manager has ensured that all legal requirements for electrical and fire regulations have been met. The health and safety governor appropriately carries out risk assessments of the school premises. Good procedures are in place to attend to pupils' medical conditions, although there is no *fully* qualified first-aider on site. All incidents are properly recorded and midday assistants liaise with the office staff if there are any concerns. Pupils are well supervised at all times by a very committed and caring staff. There are good links with outside agencies. Nearly all parents report that the staff are very helpful and supportive when there are concerns about their children.

55. The school's procedures for promoting attendance are good, although monitoring procedures do have shortcomings. The school has been working hard to bring about improvements in pupils' attendance, but the number of holidays taken by pupils in term time is having a significant effect on the overall attendance figures for the school. The educational welfare officer visits the school every two weeks and works closely with the head teacher. This has resulted in improvements in the attendance of some pupils. First day contacts are made with parents if the school does not know why a pupil is absent. There is no evidence of truancy.

56. The school is currently reviewing how information on pupils' punctuality is electronically processed to ensure that accurate information is provided on attendance. The attendance figures produced by the school are not completely reliable, because pupils arriving after registration have been recorded in the registers as absent and, in some instances, as unauthorised absence. Procedures are in place to record and monitor lateness. However, the issue of some pupils taking holidays in term time requires addressing.

57. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. Pupils are well aware of what is and what is not acceptable behaviour. All staff consistently apply the whole school policy. Midday assistants have attended training courses on behaviour management and the use of playground games. They have their own stickers and certificates to reward pupils who are helpful or well behaved at lunchtime. This is very effective in promoting good behaviour, outside of the classroom. There are high expectations of behaviour, and staff act as good role models. Pupils are awarded with achievement points and certificates and there is a special, headteacher's award. Appropriate sanctions include verbal reprimands

and involve parents at an early stage. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory and lunchtime is very well supervised. Pupils report that staff always take action and follow up on any of their concerns. However, the school is reviewing its procedures to try to speed up its response when there is an on-going concern.

58. The school has effective systems for the identification of pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils who need them, and are reviewed towards the end of each term. However, the targets in some individual plans are not always sufficiently clear and specific, and do not contain examples of how the targets may be achieved. Pupils with statements of special needs are well supported, their progress is monitored, and parents and all involved staff play an appropriate part in their reviews. Assessment and record keeping for pupils with statements is satisfactory.

59. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their academic progress are satisfactory. A system for tracking the progress of individual pupils, using information gained from regular assessments and end of year tests in English and mathematics, has been introduced. The school is beginning to make good use of its analysis of test results, to assess progress made by individuals and to set new targets. In addition, the school has used a sample group of pupils from each class, to track the progress of different ability groups and to help raise the range and quality of teacher assessments in most subjects. Teachers meet together in key stage teams to compare and standardise their assessments. They keep records of pupils' achievements in English and mathematics, but inconsistent use is made of recording profiles in other subjects. For example, teachers do not keep up to date records of pupils' information and communication technology skills.

60. The marking policy has been reviewed. Teachers now follow a series of objectives and achieve consistency when marking pupils' work and making comments to inform improvements. Teachers make daily evaluation notes on their planning sheets, for example, to note which pupils have not understood a new concept. They make appropriate use of these to inform their daily lesson planning. Teachers set individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics, which are agreed together and written out formally on printed sheets for pupils to share with their parents. The headteacher has worked hard to put new systems in place, and to monitor and improve assessment procedures throughout the school. Satisfactory improvement has been made on this key issue since the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. Most parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and returned the parents' questionnaire are pleased with what the school provides and achieves. They regard 'The Hythe' as a good school, which has improved considerably and is still improving. Some parents would like a wider range of extra-curricular activities but the inspection views the current provision as satisfactory. The school's links with parents are very effective and have resulted in the school and parents working in partnership together to raise standards, both through the family literacy scheme and the homework club. Parents, staff and governors also contribute to the school through the 'improvement group' that undertakes projects to enhance the environment of the school.

62. The quality of information provided to parents about their child's progress is good. There are many formal and informal opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress. There are termly parent and teacher consultation meetings as well as termly curriculum meetings. In the latter, parents are provided with information about the topics their children will be studying and about the class routines, such as for PE and swimming. There are also termly meetings for parents of children with special needs. All these meetings are very informative and parents appreciate the amount of time staff give to them. Pupils are given termly targets for improvement, which are discussed with parents at the consultation meetings. The information provided in pupils' annual reports is inconsistent and ranges from very good to some that are weak because they do not include targets for improvement. There are regular newsletters, which keep parents well informed about forthcoming events. The schools prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are packed with useful information about the school, although they do not carry all the required information.

63. Parental involvement in their children's learning is very good, Homework, in addition to reading, is set on a regular basis in addition to reading. Most parents are fully involved in helping their children at home and confirm this commitment by signing pupils reading records and homework books. Homework books are effectively used to support informal dialogue between parents and school. Some parents expressed concerns about the quantity and quality of homework, especially in Year 6. The inspection found the provision, including that for the oldest pupils, to be good.

64. The school goes to great lengths to enable parents to become involved in their children's learning. For example, the family literacy group meet regularly and this provides parents with ideas of how to help their children learn through play. Parents, staff and governors worked with the pupils to make their own, very attractive 'Millennium Dome'. Parents also help in the classroom and on trips. Parent governors are very supportive of the school and hold meetings for parents every half term. The fund-raising committee works hard at arranging various events throughout the year and these are well supported financially by parents and the local community. The committee is professionally organised with annual general meetings and elections. The very good level of involvement of parents has a positive effect on the attainment and progress of pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The effective and purposeful leadership of the headteacher has enabled the school to move forward significantly after the last inspection found there to be serious weaknesses. He has gained the respect of pupils, parents and governors for the way in which he works with people in facing up to the school's shortcomings and for his commitment to providing a better deal for the pupils.

66. Following the last inspection in 1998, several members of the teaching staff left and new appointments were made. From the outset, the new staff team and governors were involved in drawing up an action plan aimed at tackling the weaknesses that included the quality of teaching, curriculum and assessment, provision for children aged under-five, pupils' attendance and their cultural development.

67. The staff are very supportive of the headteacher and share a common desire to improve. In all their efforts, the need to keep the pupils at the top of the list of priorities is paramount. The shared commitment to improvement is evident in the work in the classrooms that focuses around the needs of the pupils. In a short time, a good start has been made in tackling the most important issues for improvement. Although more still needs to be done, the action so far taken has brought about real improvements in many areas of provision and in standards achieved by the pupils.

68. A follow-up visit to the last inspection was made by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) in October 1999 to check on the improvement of the school. The findings concluded that satisfactory progress had been made in addressing the key issues that related to the school's serious weaknesses. The current inspection found that the momentum for improvement has been maintained and that good progress has been made in tackling most of the key issues.

69. Deficiencies in the curriculum have been addressed. Sound assessment procedures have been put in place. Serious weaknesses in the quality of teaching have been tackled with very good effect. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage has been turned around from being poor to good. These and other efforts have been achieved in a short time and against a background of staff change. Already, pupils' behaviour and attendance have improved, and there are clear signs that the very low standards achieved by the pupils are being raised, especially at the end of Key Stage 2.

70. The school is aware that further work needs to be done to improve the opportunities for pupils' cultural development, noted as a weakness in the last inspection. At the same time, inconsistencies have emerged in the quality of provision for special educational needs, and neither the curriculum for religious education or information and communication technology fully meet the statutory requirements.

71. Soon after the last inspection, the headteacher brought all the staff and governors together to review the aims and values of the school. The clearly stated aims of the school give equal emphasis to meeting pupils' pastoral needs and to raising their standards of achievement. This is reflected in much of the work of the classrooms as well as in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Most parents strongly subscribe to the school's aims and values and feel that the motto, 'learning for life' relates well to the school, as they know it.

72. Staff with responsibility for the management of a subject, have had their roles reviewed in the light of recent audits. Subject co-ordinators take their responsibilities seriously and offer at least a satisfactory level of support and guidance to one another. All co-ordinators have prepared an action plan that provides a useful basis for improvement in each subject and relates particularly well to financial planning.

73. Since his appointment, the monitoring of teaching and learning has been overseen by the headteacher. The observation of lessons has rightly focused on supporting the newly qualified teachers and on raising the quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science. The significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection can largely be attributed to the systematic approach to monitoring and, very often, to the action that follows. For

example, recent staff training has built on the monitoring of teaching and learning and helped teachers to be clearer about what they want pupils to learn. The good effect of this ‘in-house’ evaluation was seen in many of the more purposeful lessons during the inspection. As a result, a weakness noted in the HMI visit in 1999 is being addressed.

74. At its most effective, as in mathematics, strengths and weaknesses in teaching are increasingly being evaluated in relation to pupils’ achievements in national, and other, tests and assessments. This helps the school to see what works well and what needs to be improved and, importantly, to take specific action to bring about improvements. A good example of this is seen in the way the school is checking on the effectiveness of ‘setting’ in English and mathematics. However, in most subjects, the evaluation of teaching and learning in relation to pupils’ achievements needs to be strengthened to ensure further improvement. The monitoring and evaluating of teaching has included good planning for a programme of support for the three recently qualified teachers, the satisfactory implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and good implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The subject co-ordinator needs to play a prominent role in this process. This is particularly important in relation to raising standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education.

75. The role of the senior management team in supporting school improvement is not well defined and this shortcoming limits the effectiveness of its contribution. In spite of increased delegation, there remains too much dependence on the headteacher in monitoring and evaluating the school’s performance, and in steering the school on its course of steady and sustained improvement. The existing structure of the senior management team lacks coherence and its role is not clearly understood, either by its members, or by other staff. There are no clear lines of communication and there is no apparent accountability. As a result, there is not an effective team approach for implementing the many high quality policies for improvement. The deputy head contributes to many important aspects of the school, particularly in promoting good day-to-day relationships with parents. However, the deputy’s contribution to the strategic management of the school is not so well developed.

76. The staff and governors are aware of the pressing need to review and clearly define the role of senior staff in the management structure, especially in relation to ensuring the successful implementation of the action plan. To this end, an external audit was undertaken earlier in the year. Later this term, the findings and suggestions of the review will provide the basis for a revised management structure.

77. Although there are satisfactory systems in place so that the school meets the requirements of the special educational needs Code of Practice, the monitoring of special needs provision is unsatisfactory. Individual education plans do not always contain clearly written targets that relate to the specific needs of the pupils concerned. There is not a close enough working relationship between the special needs co-ordinator and class teachers in the writing of the targets, and in monitoring how well pupils are moving towards achieving them.

78. In the last inspection, the governing body was found to have shortcomings on two counts. It did not fulfil its role in monitoring the quality of the school’s work, nor did it fully meet its statutory responsibilities in relation to the annual reports to parents and the school prospectus. The governing body has greatly improved its contribution to the management of the school, so that it is effectively involved in working with staff to improve pupils’

achievements. There is a very good working relationship between governors and staff, built around a strong desire to raise expectations and to improve. Although the governing body fulfils most of its statutory obligations, there remain some minor omissions in the annual report to parents and school prospectus,

79. Through well-planned visits to classrooms, discussions with staff and a very good flow of information from the headteacher, governors are well aware of the issues surrounding the priorities for improvement. The praiseworthy uptake of training opportunities has given the governing body increased knowledge and confidence that has been directed to both raising standards and having higher expectations of pupils' performance. Governors actively support areas of school improvement, including the introduction of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy and provision for special educational needs. Their contribution has helped the school to successfully address many of the serious issues noted in the last inspection and to be in a very good position to continue with the improvements.

80. The governing body uses its insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the school to set appropriate targets for the headteacher and to appraise his performance. There is a strong commitment to professional development for all staff that closely relates to the needs of the school and the drive for improved standards of pupils' achievement. In turn, each teacher's professional interview effectively reviews their roles, responsibilities, strengths and needs on a regular basis.

81. Following the last inspection, the school improvement plan was reviewed in a process that brought staff and governors together in a positive way. This initiative provided the first step in gaining a shared understanding of the needs of the school and had a lasting impact on its work, speeding it along the road to recovery. The priorities in the revised plan include the most important issues for improvement. Clear targets are suitably linked to pupils' performance wherever this is relevant. However, now that these are in place, they need to be used more exactly to help the school assess its overall performance.

82. Educational priorities are supported well through the school's financial planning. The last inspection noted the school's large budget deficit inherited by the headteacher upon his appointment in 1998. Good guidance from the local education authority has helped the school to stabilise its budgetary position. The school budgets systematically so that spending relates closely to its priorities for improvement. The school administrative officer attends the finance committee meetings and is very efficient in keeping records and in ensuring a flow of information between the headteacher, the full governing body and the finance committee. The inspection confirms the findings of external audits conducted since the last inspection, that secure administrative procedures are in place and that the governors carry out appropriate financial checks and controls.

83. All the more so because of its tight financial position, the school is very aware of getting best value in important areas, for example in getting various quotes, or seeking guidance before making a major purchase. Seeking best value is particularly apparent in relation to spending to bring improvements in standards. A good example of this is in making important decisions about the deployment of classroom assistants. A good start has been made in using a detailed analysis of assessment results to target spending on support for individuals and groups of pupils, as in 'setting' for some subjects.

84. There is a team of appropriately qualified teachers and support staff to meet the needs of all aspects of the curriculum, including that for children aged under-five. However, across the school, further professional development is needed in the monitoring and control aspects of information and communication technology, the investigative aspects of science and, for some staff, the individual planning to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Classroom support staff work hard, and are very much members of a staff team. The additional training taken on by many staff, including classroom assistants has a noticeable effect on aspects of pupils learning, such as questioning techniques in the numeracy sessions.

85. The school makes insufficient use of new technologies, in particular to support the management of assessment procedures. Increasingly, information and communication technology is used to present data, including analysis of pupils' performance, in a format that is easy for staff and governors to understand and to use.

86. Specific grants received by the school, such as funding for staff training, statemented pupils, 'booster' classes and the additional literacy support (ALS) are soundly used and for the intended purpose.

87. The school buildings provide a good level of accommodation. They are clean and well maintained, and the learning environment is enhanced by imaginative and pleasing displays of pupils' work. Classrooms are light and adequately spacious. Good use is made of the extensive grounds, both for recreation and as a year-round learning resource. However, although planned for the near future, the children in the Foundation Stage do not currently have access to an outdoor area to support different aspects of the curriculum. This means that children under the age of five cannot regularly and easily extend their learning on a larger scale and in a more active way, beyond the adequately sized indoor classroom.

88. Although many of the resources for learning in the school are adequate, the shortcomings make the overall provision unsatisfactory. The school is reasonably resourced in most areas of the curriculum, including information and communication technology and numeracy. Resources for the under fives are satisfactory. There is a satisfactory ratio of computers to pupils but they are not sufficiently used. A particular deficiency lies in the important area of books for children. Each classroom has a reasonable range of suitable books, but there are not enough fiction or non-fiction books beyond the classrooms, including the library. To its credit, the school is aware of this, and advanced plans to improve the book provision include a new library. Most resources are well organised and accessible and have, in many cases, benefited from recent refurbishments to classroom and corridors. The school makes good use of the immediate environment, and of resources further afield, to support learning. These include the very good use of residential excursions in Key Stage 2.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

89. In order to build on the existing strengths of the school and to improve the quality of pupils' learning and the standards they reach, the governing body, head teacher and staff should:

- Improve the contribution of the senior management team to the improvement and development of the school by:
 - * Completing the current review of the composition, function and accountability of the senior management structure;
(Paragraph: 76)
 - * Ensuring that all members of staff fully understand the roles, responsibilities and procedures of the senior management team so that clear lines of communication are established.
(Paragraph: 75)

- Continue to raise standards in English, Mathematics and Science by:
 - * Raising expectations with regard to the accuracy of spelling, handwriting and presentation of written work;
(Paragraph: 123)
 - * Ensuring a more consistent approach to the systematic teaching of phonics, spelling and handwriting skills;
(Paragraph: 123)
 - * Giving more attention to the analysis of the low-achievement of boys in reading and writing and devising appropriate strategies to meet their needs;
(Paragraph: 120,122)
 - * Give greater emphasis to the development of pupils' enquiry skills in science;
(Paragraph: 156)
 - * Strengthen the role of the subject co-ordinators in English, mathematics and science in developing, monitoring and evaluating the school's work.
(Paragraph: 132,149,163)

- Raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by:
 - * Strengthening teachers' knowledge and confidence in the teaching of information and communication technology.
(Paragraph: 182)
 - * Teaching a curriculum that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum;
(Paragraph: 181)
 - * Increasing the amount of time that pupils spend on computers;
(Paragraph: 181)
 - * Providing pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, with a greater range of opportunities to develop their skills in monitoring, modelling and controlling;
(Paragraph: 181)

- * Ensuring that pupils use and develop their information and communication technology skills whilst supporting work in other subjects of the curriculum;
(Paragraph: 181)
 - * Improving the quality and range of software;
(Paragraph: 182)
- Improve the management of special educational needs throughout the school, by ensuring that the co-ordinator:
 - * Makes certain that all individual education plans have clearly written targets which are closely matched to pupils' specific needs;
(Paragraph: 58)
 - * Works closely with each teacher to write appropriate targets, and monitors pupils' progress towards achieving them.
(Paragraph: 77)
- Raise standards in religious education by:
 - * Ensuring that the content of lessons more fully reflects the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus.
(Paragraphs: 196-198)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	22.5	36.5	34	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	197
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	64

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	81

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	10	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	7	10	9
	Girls	9	8	8
	Total	16	18	17
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	68 (69)	75 (74)	71 (62)
	National	86	88	93

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	7
	Girls	9	7	8
	Total	16	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	67 (74)	62 (69)	62 (67)
	National	(82)	(86)	93

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	14
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	23	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	80 (48)	83 (40)	97 (81)
	National	78	75	89

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	12
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	23	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	80 (56)	86 (54)	90 (75)
	National	(68)	(69)	(75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	6
Chinese	1
White	156
Any other minority ethnic group	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)	9.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	29

**Education support staff:
YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	117.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	456,518.00
Total expenditure	491,850.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,497.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	-20,777.00
Balance carried forward to next year	-56,109.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	204
Number of questionnaires returned	75

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	42	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	39	7	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	53	5	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	47	14	1	4
The teaching is good.	45	49	4	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	49	6	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	41	9	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	45	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	37	56	3	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	46	45	7	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	49	7	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	51	11	8	5

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

90. There has been a big improvement in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. The serious weaknesses in the curriculum for the under-fives and in the quality of teaching have been successfully addressed. There is a good emphasis on developing literacy and mathematical skills. Consistently good teaching is having a positive effect on children's learning.

91. Although more still remains to be done, the teacher has made a good start to developing links with the children's pre-schools and parents. Parents feel increasingly welcome, valued, and able to work in partnership with the reception class to support their children's development and learning.

92. Plans are in hand to develop the outdoor area for the under-fives, but at the time of the inspection there were too few opportunities for children to learn by working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors.

93. Nearly all of the children have attended one of the local pre-schools, part-time, before starting in the school. Baseline assessment is conducted during the first seven weeks of the new term, so that at the time of the inspection it had not been completed. However, the inspection evidence shows that, overall what children know, understand and can do on entering the school is below the expected levels for this age group, particularly in language and literacy.

94. Children enter the reception class full-time in September if their fifth birthday falls before the end of December. Children with later birthdays enter school on a 'mornings only' basis in the autumn term, before becoming full-time at the start of the term in which they have their fifth birthday.

Personal, social and emotional development

95. The children enter the reception class with very different levels of confidence, independence and interest. However, within a few weeks of having started school, most of them respond well to the new experiences and the support from adults. They begin to feel more secure in themselves and show increasing independence in choosing and carrying out activities.

96. In one morning session, the children had to select an activity, and play with others, but without an adult's direct involvement. Most of the group in the water play area could either put on their apron by themselves, or knew how to get help. When the floor became wet, an older child got the mop and wiped up the water. When the teacher asked them to finish the activity, they did so by helping one another to tidy up and moving sensibly onto the carpet.

97. The children get on well with one another and with the adults, whether working in small or larger groups. Children working in pairs on the computer take turns to use the keyboard. The adults serve as positive role models in what they say and do, so that the children are learning to respect themselves and others and are developing an idea of what is right and wrong. The staff handle the occasional difficult situation in a sensitive and positive way. In the few weeks since starting school, the children have grown together as a group with a sense of friendship and belonging. Their trust in the adults who work with them makes them feel valued and allows them to grow in confidence and independence.

98. Most of the children are likely to reach or nearly reach the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development by the end of their time in the reception class. They receive a very good level of support, but are encouraged to develop personal independence and real responsibilities, such as getting changed for games and handing out drinks at snack time. The clear routines and rhythm to the day helps them to grow in confidence. There is a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities, and the staff understand the importance of role play in helping children to make sense of their world. In the 'café', children talked about their own mealtimes at home and learned about taking turns to be the waiter and how to share the 'food'.

99. A lot has been done to provide the children with planned experiences that take into account individual strengths. The well-defined areas of interest help the children to develop independence and self-confidence. The indoor environment reflects things that are familiar in their everyday lives although these need to be extended to take greater account of different traditions and cultures.

Communication, language and literacy

100. The children often enter the school with language, literacy and communication skills at an early stage of development and, although the inspection found that children were making good progress, few are likely to reach the expectations for five-year-olds. The teacher provides many good formal and informal opportunities to promote the children's speaking, listening, reading and writing development.

101. Many of the children listen to favourite nursery rhymes and stories and respond to simple instructions. A few can recall a story and describe a character or main event, but generally, although attentive, most children need a lot of help to get them to talk about their work or experiences in and out of school. They need considerable encouragement to ask questions or to give explanations. The staff are aware of this, and work hard to help the children to build up their vocabulary and forms of speech. They plan activities, such as sharing nursery rhymes and 'show and tell times', to encourage children to talk and listen. They set up, and join in, different practical activities, such as looking closely at autumn leaves through a magnifying glass, and engage children's interest, prompting them to think and talk. Although there is a well thought-out role-play area, more needs to be done to draw children, boys in particular, to use it and to develop their communication skills.

102. The staff are very aware of the children's low starting point in their understanding of reading and writing. Although the children make marks as a first step at writing, many of them need a lot of help in their pencil control and few have any knowledge of letter shapes. The particular reluctance of boys to attempt writing outside of structured situations has been noted, but more needs to be done about it. At present, few of the children have an

understanding of writing, or their marks, as a means of communication. Just as the staff demonstrate the use of language for reading, they should also do so for writing. In this way, children could be encouraged to attempt 'writing' for different purposes and in a range of situations, such as 'writing' in role-play, labelling drawings or sending messages.

103. As the year proceeds, the focus on language and literacy that starts each day, builds up into an adapted 'literacy session' based on the structure of the National Literacy Strategy. Although a structured approach to teaching of phonics is detailed in the year's planning, this had not started at the time of the inspection. As yet, few children show any early understanding of initial sounds. While some children recognise their names, few can write them.

104. The children are appropriately introduced to books and are beginning to be interested in stories. They enjoy stories, such as 'Five Little Chicks', shared with them as a group. Some recall the sequence of the story and the teacher uses her voice to encourage the group to chant the story, using intonation, rhythm and clapping to add dramatic effect. In discussion, children show that they are beginning to know how a book 'works'. Some of them identify the title and suggest how the story might end. Occasionally children freely choose books from the book area and share them with a friend, or 'read' alone. Children regularly take books home to share with their families.

105. What was a weak area of provision in the last inspection now has many good features. Nonetheless, it is important that the improvement continues, so that the youngest children get every chance to build on an often, low starting point.

Mathematical development

106. The provision for mathematical development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. In addition to a suitable range of planned activities, the staff are increasingly aware of using opportunities to talk 'mathematically' as children take part in their usual activities, such as water and sand play. Although few of the children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year, nonetheless, they make good progress in their mathematical development.

107. Each morning, the teacher leads a number activity in which the whole class are encouraged to count, say and use numbers and to recognise numerals. In one session, the children were asked to suggest what might be in a large box. This immediately captured their interest and, once the box was opened, they enthusiastically joined in to count the eight pinecones. Most of the children can count at least to ten, although many rely on an adult to count objects on their own. Although some of the children recognise numerals up to ten, few can write them.

108. Many of the mathematical experiences are appropriately planned alongside other areas of learning. The story of the 'Five Little Chicks' provided a very good opportunity for the children to count and to start to tackle simple problems, such as 'one went away and so how many were left?'

109. Staff are aware of opportunities to develop children's mathematical learning beyond planned sessions, often arising from other practical situations and daily routines. The classroom assistant helped the children to set the table in the 'café' and asked questions such

as, 'How many people have we got?' and, 'Are there enough spoons?' This kind of intervention is particularly important because many of the children find it difficult to talk 'mathematically' and need lots of encouragement to describe what they see or touch in their own words.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

110. The provision for this area of learning is satisfactory, although the lack of access to a designated and secure outdoor area limits the opportunities for children to learn through exploration, play and talk from first-hand experiences.

111. The children make sound progress, but are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Often, because of their limited communication skills, they find it difficult to ask questions about why things happen and how things work. There are some well-planned activities for the children to talk about their families and events in their lives, to work with materials and to use technology. Many of the children can identify parts of the body and they are developing their language and understanding through stories, imaginative play and discussions with adults. Nevertheless, the children need more opportunities to experiment, try things out and, most of all, to think and talk about their experiences. Although the staff take the children on walks to investigate and talk about similarities and differences in the natural world, it is difficult to make up for not having a suitable outdoor area.

112. In the activities planned around the theme of 'ourselves', the children show a growing awareness of their similarities and differences in facial features by using mirrors to draw their own face. The computer is used well and the children are becoming familiar with the main features of the keyboard. Some use the keys to make directional movements, although few of them can yet name parts of the computer, such as the mouse or space bar. The children are beginning to try out simple tools, such as scissors. They select and choose resources and handle them with care and increasing confidence. They can make a label for their 'body' picture, using a spreader and glue to stick it on.

Physical development

113. The children make sound progress in the developing their physical skills, but are unlikely to meet the early learning goals. The absence of an outdoor area limits the opportunities for children to extend their physical skills on a daily basis, for example on climbing frames, tree trunks or wheeled vehicles. Nonetheless, there is regular access to the school hall for the development of other physical skills such as dancing, jumping, balancing and climbing in space and on apparatus.

114. There are good opportunities for the children to develop their fine motor skills, and they handle scissors, brushes and other tools and materials safely and with reasonable control. Most hold and use a paintbrush well enough to make strokes and some children are holding a pencil correctly. Staff are aware of teaching new skills and developing children's use of equipment, such as cutting card with scissors and working with different kinds of dough.

Creative development

115. As at the time of the last inspection, there is a strong emphasis on creative development in the reception planning and provision, so that it is likely that children will achieve the early learning goals. However, the children will need a higher level of adult intervention in their imaginative and role-play, to help them to express and communicate their ideas.

116. The children experiment with different media to draw themselves. They use crayons and paints to reproduce their appearance, selecting colours carefully. Using paint, glue, paper and collage materials, they create a plate face. The children have a growing sense of rhythm in chanting the story of 'Five Little Chicks' using clapping and tapping. They sing enthusiastically and understand that by singing in a happy or sad way they can affect the 'mood' of a song.

117. The children's imaginative play is developing by their use of the 'café', which is well equipped with bright and attractive props. They cook, eat, serve food and tidy away, taking on the role of different characters. However, in order for them to explore and develop their roles and feelings and to create their own settings, the staff need to give greater emphasis to introducing language that enables the children to talk about their experiences in greater depth, paying particular attention to those children who are less confident. Children use construction material imaginatively to set up play situations, beginning to organise each other into taking different roles, for example when using the building blocks.

ENGLISH

118. There has been a significant improvement in the standards of pupils' achievements in English that can be related to improvements in the provision for the subject throughout the school. In the last inspection, pupils were found to make unsatisfactory progress in all aspects of English as a result of unsatisfactory teaching and weaknesses in the curriculum. There were particular weaknesses in the class for the under-fives. The shortcomings have been faced up to and, although further work needs to be done, a good start has been made to improving standards.

119. Children enter school at a below, and sometimes well-below average stage of development in literacy, language and communication skills. They make satisfactory and sometimes better progress, so that by the time they leave the school as eleven-year-olds, most of them will reach the expected level in reading.

120. However, while girls often make good gains in their writing, boys are significantly under-achieving.

121. The results for seven-year-olds in the 2000 National Curriculum tests and assessments were well below the average compared with all schools, and well below the average for similar schools. However, the results in 1999 had shown a big improvement on the consistently low standards of earlier years. The improved results of 1999 were matched in 2000.

122. The results of national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 showed a very big improvement over 1999 and earlier years. The results in 2000 were below the national average compared with all schools, but above average compared with similar schools. Although there was an improvement in all aspects of the subject, it was significantly better in reading than in writing. While girls improved their performance in both reading and writing to be close to the national average, the results for boys were very low.

123. The results of tests over the last three years show a modest trend upwards at Key Stage 1, but impressive improvement at Key Stage 2. In 1999, just 48 per cent of eleven-year-olds reached the average Level 4. In 2000, this rose to eighty per cent, although with a wide discrepancy between reading and writing. In reading, the inspection findings confirm a sustained upward trend in achievement for eleven-year-olds. The standards in writing across the school have also improved, although are still below average. Since the last inspection, writing has been a focus for development within the school. The effective implementation of the Literacy Strategy has supported this development further. However, there remains a lack of consistency in the teaching of spellings, phonics and handwriting. The approach to the teaching of these skills is not sufficiently systematic and, as a result, does not provide a smooth progression in learning. The under-performance of boys in writing is, at both key stages, a big issue: in the 2000, Key Stage 2 tests, only seven per cent of boys reached the expected level, Level 4, compared with 73 percent of girls. Furthermore, this difference between boys' and girls' performance in writing is a feature of the past five years and at both key stages.

124. In speaking and listening, the inspection evidence shows pupils' attainment to be close to the national average and shows significant improvement, particularly in Key Stage 1. Pupils respond readily to questions and listen carefully when explanations are given. Most pupils listen carefully to the views of others and confidently put forward own points of view. However, they do not find it easy to speak at length, to offer explanations or to ask questions of their own. Sometimes, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to speak at length or in more depth, especially at Key Stage 2, where questions may require more detailed responses and encouragement to substantiate opinions with examples or reasons.

125. Standards for seven-year-olds in reading have improved as a result of school's emphasis on reading and on promoting the home school partnership in reading. Most pupils learn that reading offers both enjoyment and information and they are beginning to appreciate the qualities of different texts. Careful monitoring records kept by most teachers include clear and relevant diagnosis. However, younger pupils are not consistently taught phonics, represented by individual or combinations of letters, to enable them to gain confidence at an early stage in combining these to make words. Pupils make choices from a range of fiction available to read at home and at school. However, very few can locate books for information and most lack familiarity with the range of popular authors or series of books. Pupils read from a range of books and develop strategies to read unknown words. Although most pupils can read accurately by the time they are eleven, they do not read with enough fluency and understanding. Most pupils read only to take in facts, and few of them read for the deeper messages that the author is trying to convey. Most pupils develop reasonable skills at using a dictionary and thesaurus. However, their wider reference and information skills are limited. A few pupils are able to use non-fiction books to locate and retrieve information within the

classroom, but the independent research and study skills of most pupils are not fully developed. Most of them make satisfactory use of their reading skills in cross-curricular work. The guided reading time within the literacy sessions is skilfully structured and enhances pupils' progress in reading. Teachers keep satisfactory, on-going reading records to identify weaknesses and target pupils' learning.

126. Pupils are learning to write in an increasing number of styles across the school. Many seven-year-olds confidently produce short pieces of creative writing with meaningful sentences. As they get older, some pupils can produce interesting writing for different readers in a range of forms, for example, letters, stories, poems and descriptions. However, pupils' writing often features technical weaknesses, generally to do with skills of spelling, punctuation and presentation. The writing by some higher attaining pupils is well organised, imaginative and clear, and pays appropriate attention to sentence structure, punctuation and spelling. The majority of pupils however, lack fluency in their writing and are unaware of grammatical errors in their work. Strategies for spelling are not used well and pupils' range of vocabulary is limited. There is not enough evidence of recorded work in subjects such as science, history and geography, and what there is, is not well presented. There is only limited use of information technology to develop skills in word processing, re-drafting and editing work. The handwriting lessons are insufficiently structured and, as a result, the presentation of written work and standards of handwriting are generally unsatisfactory.

127. Most pupils make satisfactory progress over their time in school. Most pupils make good progress in Years 5 and 6. This is because activities are well designed to promote the development of literacy, and are enjoyable, so that pupils are well motivated to learn. For literacy sessions, pupils are set by ability across the whole school. Higher attaining pupils are usually appropriately challenged by the work set and make good progress. This is an improvement on the last inspection. Lower attaining pupils, where given tasks suitable for their abilities, show progress in many lessons that is better than expected. In most, but not all classes, individual education plans set out clear and helpful targets in English for pupils with special educational needs. When this is the case, then these pupils are well supported in relation to the targets and make sound progress in relation to their prior attainment.

128. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are well motivated and hard working. They show interest in a range of language activities and enjoy reading and writing. Pupils are usually attentive and conscientious in lessons. They respond positively to teachers' instructions and exposition; and apply their language skills appropriately across the curriculum.

129. In the eight lessons observed in English, five were judged satisfactory and three good. There were examples of good teaching in both key stages, although teaching was consistently good in upper Key Stage 2. This is significantly better than in the last inspection when a high proportion of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory and none good. In the best lessons, teachers prepare work with care and use questions skilfully to develop understanding and knowledge. Most teachers plan with clear learning intentions and with appropriate levels of challenge, for the full range of ability. In these lessons, teachers use a range of teaching strategies and approaches, and develop lessons in well-managed stages at a suitable pace. Pupils are well organised and managed with good control. Teachers are aware of pupils'

needs and use praise and encouragement to good effect. The learning targets for individuals are based on analysis of tests and other on going assessments informing teachers' planning. The marking of written work is regularly undertaken, offers encouragement to pupils, and is diagnostic of their progress. The range of assessment in place is used effectively to inform planning. However, teachers do not sufficiently encourage pupils to appraise their own work, recognise and identify errors and seek ways of correcting them.

130. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has ensured that all staff have a consistent approach to the planning and the teaching of English. The school has adopted realistic literacy targets. The literacy hour has been thoughtfully planned and is contributing towards raising attainment. Activities are generally well designed to promote the development of literacy and in most classes pupils are given tasks suitable for their abilities. However, the teaching of phonics and spellings as part of literacy hour is under developed. Literacy taught as part of other subjects is satisfactorily, although there is scope for improvement here. In many subjects, undue emphasis is placed on the use of photocopied material for pupils to write on. This reduces the opportunities for pupils to record own findings independently and in a variety of ways. In many subjects, due to the emphasis placed on discussion, pupils develop their listening and speaking with growing confidence and fluency. The effective questioning techniques used by many teachers encourage pupils to think clearly and develop the use of their language. The additional literacy support and the reading recovery programmes are thoughtfully planned and are contributing towards raising attainment.

131. The English curriculum is taught both as a separate subject and as a component of other activities. The improvement since the last inspection has been good and can be attributed to clear leadership and management of the subject, with a focus on raising the standards pupils' achieve. The most important reasons for the improvement can be related to:

- * the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy;
- * the introduction of 'setting' to make sure work is well-matched to the ability and needs of the pupils;
- * a systematic approach to monitoring, evaluating and supporting teaching and learning, leading to an improvement in the quality of teaching;
- * the interest and support of the literacy governor;
- * an improved curriculum with a greater level of involvement from parents in their children's learning;
- * improved provision for the under-fives;
- * Effective support from the local education authority

132. However, the role of the co-ordinator is under-developed in monitoring teaching and learning, and particularly in evaluating it in relation to pupils' performance. A sharper analysis of performance data is needed, so that the school can see what works well and what needs to be improved.

133. The school is adequately resourced for the subject although there are shortcomings. Each classroom is adequately stocked with books, but library areas are not well served and there is an unsatisfactory range of good quality fiction and non-fiction. The collection of books covering all subjects, and the range and quality of multicultural books is particularly limited.

MATHEMATICS

134. The last inspection found that pupils made unsatisfactory progress in mathematics because of important weaknesses in teaching and in the curriculum. This was particularly the case in the class for under-fives. Children, many of whom entered school with limited language and mathematical skills, did not get a good start to school. Since the last inspection, a very good start has been made to tackle the shortcomings. Although the improvement needs to continue, there is clear evidence of improved standards of pupils' achievements, notably at the end of Key Stage 2.

135. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 were much improved on earlier years, but still very low compared with the national average and with similar schools. Taken together, the results from 1996 to 1999 were consistently below the national average. The latest results, in 2000, show a further improvement on those for 1999, although they remain well below the average for all schools, and the average for similar schools. The findings of the inspection suggest that this upward trend in results at the end of Key Stage 1 is set to continue, albeit at a modest rate with the current Year 2 group.

136. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 showed little improvement on earlier years, and were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. Taken together, the results from 1996 to 1999 were well below the national average. However, the results in 2000 show a very significant improvement on the 1999 results, both in percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. The results in 2000 are in line with the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The latest results for eleven-year-olds are reflected in the findings of the inspection, which shows that the upward trend has been sustained.

137. The inspection found no compelling evidence to suggest any difference in performance or opportunities between boys and girls at either key stage.

138. Although the inspection found that pupils' achievements in mathematics are below those typically reached at the start of Year 2, they are nonetheless an improvement compared with standards at the last inspection. Pupils in Year 2 entered school at a low starting point in their mathematical development. By the beginning of the year in which they will become seven, their knowledge, skills and understanding of number is limited and they often still need a lot of adult support. They can recall number facts with reasonable accuracy, although often need time to do so. About one-in-four of the pupils needs adult help to add and subtract using small denominations of coins, mainly because their poor communication skills make it difficult for them to talk and think about their work. Other pupils are noting patterns and relationships in numbers and are beginning to relate this to everyday situations, such as finding the total and working out change when shopping. They find different ways of making a set amount, as in $20p+10p+10p+5p+5p=50p$. The few more able pupils know that $100p=£1$ and can work out ways to make £1, £5 and £10. Through their work with money, the higher attaining pupils demonstrate a good understanding of place value. Most pupils in Year 2 have a sound understanding of shape, space and measurement. They describe common two-dimensional shapes and most use the correct terms, such straight, angle and side. They can sort objects according to different reasons, make a simple tally count, and record using a bar chart.

139. Pupils now at the start of Year 1 show good levels of achievement for their age. This reflects the progress made in the reception class during the past year where, since the last inspection, provision has much improved. Nearly all pupils count in multiples of ones, twos and tens up to 100. When counting in tens using a 100 square board, they recognise patterns, in both the tens and unit digits. Most of them are quick to distinguish between odd and even numbers up to 100 by looking at the final digit. A higher proportion of pupils are working above the level typically found for their age, than is the case in Year 2.

140. Standards achieved by pupils in their final year of Key Stage 2, are a little below those typically found for their age. However, this represents a big improvement on standards at the last inspection, which were very low. The difference between the results in 2000 and the achievements of the current Year 6 group can be attributed to a difference in ability between the years. When the standards achieved by individual pupils are compared with their performance at the end of Key Stage 1, it shows that they have made good, and in some cases very good progress. The inspection found that pupils of all abilities make particularly good progress during Years 5 and 6.

141. About two out of every three pupils in Year 6 is working at or above the level typically found for their age. These pupils have a good recall of multiplication number facts. They know the relationship between multiplication and division, for example that $7 \times 6 = 42$ and that 42 divided by 6 is 7. Most of them can distinguish between ratios and equivalents; knowing that a ratio of 2:3 is equivalent to 2 in every 5. They work confidently with fractions, working out that $\frac{1}{2}$ of 100=50; $\frac{1}{4}=25$ and so $\frac{3}{4}=75$. With some adult help, most pupils relate their knowledge and understanding to solve problems, as in finding out how many CDs in one million are faulty if one in 1,000 are faulty. A few pupils could multiply or divide by 10, 100 and 1,000 by adding or removing the last zero. A scrutiny of work from this set of Year 6 pupils shows that they have a sound grasp of shape and measurement and can present their results in charts, frequency diagrams and line graphs.

142. About one in three pupils in Year 6 are achieving below the level typically found for their age. However, most of them have special educational needs and are working from the very low points from which they started school and completed Key Stage 1. Some of them have joined the school during Key Stage 2. They are making at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in relation to their prior attainment. They know most of their multiplication tables and are growing in confidence in seeing relationships and patterns in numbers. They have developed a sound understanding of approximation and the rounding up of numbers. Over half of the group could round up 7,264 (7,260 then 7,300 and finally 7,000). Most of the group made a good attempt to solve $7,264 \times 6$ using both extended and compact methods. In so doing, they demonstrated a sound awareness of place value.

143. Standards achieved by pupils further down the age range in Key stage 2 vary greatly from year to year. This is partly because there is a considerable difference between the prior attainment of different year groups, and also because some pupils' learning, in previous years, has been affected more than others by both unsatisfactory teaching and an unusually high number of staff changes. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 in particular need a lot of adult support to make up for lost ground. Pupils in Year 5 are already benefiting from greater stability and very good teaching. This shows in their achievements that are close to those typically found for their age.

144. Of the seven lessons observed, the quality of teaching was very good in three, good in another three and satisfactory in the other. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 was of a consistently high standard. The weaknesses noted in the last inspection have been tackled, and the standard of teaching, significantly improved. The very good lessons were well planned with clear learning intentions. Pupils knew what to do and what was expected of them. Learning was purposeful and the lessons were lively, with a good pace. Pupils worked hard and felt encouraged to try out their ideas without being afraid of making a mistake. The adults (including classroom assistants) helped pupils to learn from any errors and, in the best teaching, to take their learning further with a timely question or prompt. Well-prepared resources were used with good effect. The use of a 100 square board in Year 1 helped pupils spot patterns of ten, and to identify odd and even numbers. Typically, these lessons ended with a useful plenary where the teacher not only recapped on important learning points, but took the learning one step on. In Year 5, the teacher did this by relating work to an everyday problem. In all three lessons, the teachers positively encouraged pupils to talk, explain and ask questions. Lower attaining pupils in Year 6 were given the chance to be involved by the teacher repeating or rephrasing a question and giving them the chance to think mathematically. As a result pupils grew in confidence and were prepared to 'have a go'.

145. In all of the lessons, there were good relationships between the pupils and the adults, and teachers made effective use of their time and skill to support learning. Lessons that were judged satisfactory could, however, be improved by a greater sense of purpose and, in some cases, a more sustained pace. Sometimes pupils' hesitation and lack of a response to a question was too easily accepted and on some occasions, the answer was too quickly sought at the expense of the method. While the teachers work hard to introduce and re-enforce learning, there are always not enough opportunities for pupils to talk about their reasoning and methods.

146. Homework is given on a regular basis and makes a sound contribution to pupils' learning. They get positive feedback to show that their efforts are valued and to help them with any specific points for improvement.

147. The National Numeracy Strategy is making a good impact on teaching throughout the school and has helped teachers to give their lessons a clear and purposeful structure. A much-improved curriculum relates well to the framework of the National Numeracy Strategy and to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Where the strategy is most effective, the lesson is well structured with a crisp beginning, a middle that sustains interest and a well-rounded end. In such cases, the teacher has high expectations and pupils know what is expected of them.

148. The curriculum for mathematics has been considerably strengthened since the last inspection. There is a good balance between the different elements of the subject. However, as yet there are too few links with other subjects, such as science and information and communication technology, to contribute to pupils' mathematical development, perhaps in a practical way. Such opportunities need to be more apparent in the planning. Overall, teachers' planning is more effective than in the last inspection, so that the needs of pupils of different abilities, including the higher-attaining pupils, are now well catered for within lessons. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.

149. The subject is managed well. The co-ordinator has prepared a well thought-out action plan that has provided the subject with a clear direction for improvement. The school has been supported well by the local education authority in working with teachers to meet targets for improvement. A secure curriculum is in place and assessment procedures contribute well to planning the next stage in pupils' learning. The staff have demonstrated their willingness to improve their practice through a commitment to professional development. The numeracy governor provides a very good level of support and interest in the subject's development and he plays a worthwhile part in monitoring the subject, including visits to the classrooms. Good use is being made of a careful analysis of test and assessment results to target specific weaknesses in pupils' performance, especially in their ability to think and communicate in the subject. Although monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning takes place in a systematic and clearly understood way, its contribution needs to be secured in order to ensure the further improvement of the subject programme. In particular, the co-ordinator needs to play a greater role in this process, so that the relationship between teaching, learning and pupils' performance can be closely monitored and, most importantly, evaluated.

150. The inspection showed that important aspects of the provision have improved and has begun to raise the standard of pupils' achievement. The staff are aware that to secure this improvements they should:

- * continue to help pupils to a better understanding of mathematical ideas by encouraging them to think and talk;
- * strengthen the link between the monitoring of teaching and of pupils' performance, so that they can see what works well and what needs to be done to improve the provision;
- * strengthen the links between mathematics and other subjects.

SCIENCE

151. The improvements made in the provision for science since the last inspection has led to improvements in pupils' achievements. The last inspection found that pupils made unsatisfactory progress. The position has improved so that pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, and good progress in the final two years of Key Stage 2. Although more needs to be done, a good start has been made in raising standards.

152. The results of the 1999 national assessments for pupils at the end of Key stage 1 were below the national average, and below average when compared with similar schools. Nonetheless, they were a big improvement on previous years. The improvement was continued in 2000, when the percentage of pupils gaining the expected Level 2, was close to the national average, and the percentage reaching Level 3 was well below average.

153. In the 1999 national tests for 11 year olds, standards were close to the national average reaching the expected level, but below the average at the higher level, Level 5. The same results were broadly in line with the average for similar schools. Over the four year period to 1999, results were consistently well below the national average. However, there was a further improvement in Key Stage 2 in the latest national tests in 2000. Results from the past four years indicate that girls achieve higher standards than boys in science. Similar proportions of boys gained Level 4 in 2000, but significantly less boys than girls achieved the higher Level 5.

154. Inspection evidence shows that standards in science are improving, and although standards are below, they are approaching those expected for their ages at the end of both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. This progress accelerates towards the end of Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced a new scheme of work, following nationally agreed guidelines. This has improved the content and balance of the curriculum. More emphasis is placed on scientific enquiry, particularly in Key Stage 1, which was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching, which was unsatisfactory in more than half the lessons during the last inspection, has improved considerably. The school is committed to raising standards of attainment in science. It now looks carefully at each cohort to predict results, and provides appropriate support to help pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieve the required standard.

155. In Key Stage 1, pupils study the human body as part of their science topic work. They learn the names and functions of the main body parts, and focus on the five senses in their scientific enquiry activities. In one lesson pupils conducted sensory tests to identify different objects and substances correctly through feeling and smelling them. In another lesson Year 1 and 2 pupils learned about different food groups, then sorted a variety of foods into healthy, muscle producing and energy foods with growing understanding. They explained some reasons for their choices. The amount of recorded work is minimal for their age group.

156. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 complete experiments on mixing and separating materials. They learn about reversible and irreversible changes, and are encouraged to plan and bring their own ideas to their scientific enquiries in small groups. They improve their knowledge and use of scientific vocabulary, copying definitions of relevant terms, and developing a sound understanding of the key concepts involved in their topic work. However, pupils have not been trained to carry out a scientific enquiry methodically, predicting outcomes, selecting and using equipment, ensuring that testing is fair, gathering and checking results, and reaching conclusions. Many pupils find it difficult to record all their ideas and findings clearly, by writing a coherent explanation of what they have seen and why it has happened. Although pupils make satisfactory progress across Key Stage 2, the amount and quality of their recorded work remains unsatisfactory, and they currently achieve standards below those expected for their age and abilities. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in science lessons, and make satisfactory progress.

157. Most pupils are enthusiastic about their science lessons, make good contributions to discussions, and show real interest when engaged in scientific enquiries. For example, Year 6 pupils extended the work completed in class on saturated solutions by conducting their own investigations at home using different materials. Pupils generally listen carefully to explanations given by their teachers, and are eager to answer questions or to discuss their findings. Most pupils work well co-operatively, sharing ideas and materials when they investigate, and this supports their learning. In many classes, however, the poor quality of recorded work is a weakness.

158. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, and two out of the five lessons observed were good. Teachers use the new subject guidance effectively to plan their lessons, sharing appropriate learning objectives with the pupils. They often show a good knowledge of science in their clear explanations, questioning of pupils, and the way in which they introduce a good range of scientific

vocabulary into lessons. In a Year 6 lesson, a list of over 20 relevant questions supported the teacher's plan to prompt pupils in their group investigations. Good use is also made of available resources. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson, pupils were shown how to sort food types into groups, with quality 3-dimensional models of different foods and helpful large-scale diagrams used in whole class demonstrations. In another lesson, Year 3 and 4 pupils used a clear graphic example from the 'Ultimate Human Body' computer program to enhance their understanding of how triceps and biceps expand and contract when the elbow is bent. Year 5 pupils were given flowers and magnifying glasses, to learn about the different parts of plants, through first hand observation. Teachers now involve pupils in more activities relating to scientific enquiry in both key stages. Good support is given to pupils of different abilities towards the end of Year 6, when a structured programme of work consolidates learning in Key Stage 2, and prepares pupils for national tests.

159. The recently adopted curriculum provides a balanced coverage of science content, with a stronger emphasis on scientific enquiry. The school has identified its need to develop the teaching of systematic enquiry skills, and has scheduled in-service training for all teachers during the current school year. Health and sex education topics are effectively integrated with work in science. However, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support work in the subject, for example, to process the results of investigations. Assessment procedures are being further developed to take account of pupils' progress in each topic, using tests at the end of units of work, and collating and analysing this information. The newly appointed co-ordinator works closely alongside the headteacher, and has yet to become fully involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in classes, and in helping to develop the teaching of scientific enquiry skills. The science curriculum is appropriately resourced, and teachers make appropriate use of the environmental area in the school grounds to support work in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

160. Only one art lesson was seen during the inspection, but scrutiny of work and display shows that pupils make satisfactory progress in art during both key stages, and that standards match those of pupils of similar ages. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted national guidelines, which promote the progressive development of pupils' artistic skills and techniques as they move through the school. Teachers' planning also ensures that pupils study the work of famous artists in each unit of work, and learn from some of their techniques as they produce work using an appropriate range of media.

161. In Key Stage 1, pupils study and draw portraits in a unit linked to their main topic 'Ourselves'. They are taught to compare the size and shape of features, and begin to learn how to appraise their own work. Pupils are taught how to use sketchbooks, and draw portraits in the style of Van Gogh. They also study abstract self-portraits by Paul Klee, with their own paintings and some basic three-dimensional modelling. Pupils are taught basic colour mixing techniques when they paint, and to use materials with increasing confidence and independence.

162. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn about the importance of design, in order to achieve purpose and clarity in their own work. They use sketchbooks to experiment with patterns using pencil, chalk, pastels and charcoal and are taught ways of deepening and lightening tone. They study symbols from Aboriginal art and African sculpture, and then

create their own designs using different media. Pupils also use natural objects and materials to create works of art in the school grounds: inspired by the sculpture Andy Goldsworthy, they learn about form, texture and shadow. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 create collage work in the style of Matisse during their study of people in action. They use their sketchbooks for an appropriate range of activities, including drawing charcoal patterns in the style of Kandinsky and matching colour mixes to charts using paints. They also take their books on school visits, for example to sketch buildings on local walkabouts, and Greek artefacts on their visit to the British Museum. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their design and drawing skills.

163. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic about their artwork. They are keen to share their ideas and opinions, and enjoy learning and talking about different artists and their work. Teachers have made good use of new guidelines to improve their planning, identifying an appropriate range of tasks to teach skills progressively. They make effective use of support staff in lessons, and displays support learning and celebrate achievement. Some good links are made to other subjects, but insufficient use is made of computers and relevant software during art and design lessons throughout the school. The co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject further, and become more actively involved in monitoring teaching and learning, especially in relation to pupils' performance. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in self-evaluation of their own work, but effective assessment systems have yet to be developed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

164. No teaching of design and technology took place during the inspection. Due to lack of available evidence, no overall judgements were made regarding standards, or the progress achieved by pupils in either key stage. Since the last inspection the school has adopted nationally agreed guidelines to ensure a balanced curriculum, with an emphasis on teaching an appropriate progression in designing and making skills. The subject is now taught in units, which take place every other half term. Teachers' long-term plans show that the weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection, in terms of the subject's curriculum and time allocation, have been addressed.

165. Very little work was available during the week to make any judgements on standards. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good use construction sets to design and make skeletons when they study the human body. In Key Stage 2, a display on a project undertaken by Year 5 and 6 pupils showed how they design and make slippers. They disassemble old pairs to examine the materials and different joints, before designing and making their own. Year 5 and 6 pupils also studied 10 different varieties of bread in food technology. They considered the smell, texture, taste, use and place of origin of each variety, before learning to make their own bread. The standards of the work seen matched that of pupils of a similar age.

166. The resources for design and technology are good, with a very good range of tools and construction sets in each classroom, and a good range of different materials available for various projects. There are plans, in the current school year, to build and equip a new kitchen to teach food technology. The co-ordinator has not yet developed systems to ensure that standards are monitored, and that pupils' progress is assessed throughout the school.

GEOGRAPHY

167. It was only possible to observe one geography lesson in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. There was insufficient recorded work in books and very little evidence of geography on display. However, the evidence derived from interviews with pupils and teachers and the analysis of teachers' long and medium term planning indicates that geography is taught in each class over the year. There is insufficient evidence to provide a judgement on the overall standards in geography. The standards reported at the last inspection were satisfactory.

168. Pupils' in Key Stage 1 acquire geographical vocabulary and identify key features noted on a walk in the local area, for example, a bridge, a garage, park, playground etc.

169. In Key Stage 2, pupils' mapping skills and knowledge are under-developed: their use of co-ordinates and geographical language, for example. The discussion with Year 6 pupils indicates that they have some knowledge and understanding of the use of keys and symbols when using route maps on residential trips, for example the school journey to the Isle of Wight. A few pupils use sources of information, such books and photos with confidence to inform their learning. They demonstrate limited understanding of the subject. They are not sure about how a river is formed and in which direction it flows. They are not familiar with the language such as 'source' or 'estuary'. Some pupils have acquired a sound knowledge of directions on a compass.

170. In the one lesson observed, pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory and better where the work provides appropriate challenge. They are eager, work with enthusiasm and collaborate. They apply themselves well to practical tasks.

171. In the one lesson observed the teacher had a good geographical knowledge and understanding. The lesson was planned well and based on clear objectives. The teacher used appropriate methods and effective questioning. Praise and encouragement was used to a good effect in lesson. The teaching made sound contributions to literacy skills. Effective questioning and encouragement to use appropriate terminology improved pupils' speaking and listening skills and extended their vocabulary.

172. Teachers' long and medium term planning indicates that the curriculum is broad and generally well balanced. There is no formalised assessment in the subject. The monitoring role of the subject co-ordinator is not fully developed. The available resources in geography are satisfactory. The school has some reference books and materials, including suitable atlases, globes and large maps. Resources are well maintained and centrally organised. The local area is studied in detail and pupils are able to benefit from school journeys and visits to local places.

HISTORY

173. Standards of achievement in history are satisfactory overall. This indicates good improvement over the previous report when they were unsatisfactory in both key stages. There is currently a more coherent long-term overview of topics and the school has recently adopted national guidance that supports teachers' planning more effectively.

174. In Key Stage 1, most pupils demonstrate a developing understanding of the past and a sense of the passing of time. They show this in their ability to sequence events and objects. For example, the Year 2 pupils learn about the events in the Great fire of London and confidently sequence these in picture form. They learn about the sources of evidence and examine extracts in simple form: of Samuel Pepys's diary about the fire. A few know about the importance of 'eye witness' in their enquiries. Pupils make comparisons between their lives and those of others who lived a long time ago. They are developing confidence in the correct use of words and phrases that relate to the passing of time. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the past and understand that events in history really happened and that some happened a long time ago.

175. In Key Stage 2, most Year 6 pupils recall relevant information and demonstrate sound factual knowledge of the past. In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn about characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon period and recognise changes, through the study of Invaders and Settlers. In one of the lessons involving role-play, they ask relevant questions and effectively develop their skills of enquiry. Pupils have opportunities to develop historical skills related to the use of evidence in history. Year 5 and 6 pupils learn about the Victorians. They know something of their customs and way of life. There are limited opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support research and investigation in history. However, pupils are not sufficiently skilled in using and interpreting other historical sources and evidence, for example a wide range of artefacts.

176. The quality of pupils' learning is satisfactory. Pupils are interested and inquisitive about the past. Their attitudes and responses in history are positive. They show keen interest in finding out about how people lived in the past and how things have changed over time. They behave well in lessons and listen attentively.

177. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers make effective use of own knowledge and understanding of the subject and use suitable materials and artefacts to support lessons. Teaching of history makes satisfactory contributions to the development and use of literacy skills. However, pupils writing skills are limited and their written account lack detail. Pupils confidently use their knowledge of numbers to work on time-lines. Effective discussion about the past ensures that pupils make sound progress in speaking and listening.

178. Resources are adequate in range and quality. There is a lack of artefacts relating to different periods in the history. The out of school visits to local places of interest based on class topics effectively enhances pupils' learning. The classrooms are adequate for history lessons and learning is well supported by some good interactive displays in classrooms and corridors. There are no formal procedures for assessment of pupils' progress in history. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has clear direction for the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

179. At the last inspection, pupils' skills in using information and communication technology were in line with national expectations and attainment at the end of both key stages was in line with expected standards. Evidence gathered during this inspection shows that attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and that pupils, including those with special

educational needs, make satisfactory progress through this key stage. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is below national expectations, because pupils do not spend enough time learning about information and communication technology and practising their skills, and do not experience the full range of work required by the National Curriculum.

180. Few pupils were observed using information and communication technology during the inspection. This report is based on those few observations, discussions with pupils and teachers, a scrutiny of pupils' work across the curriculum to look for the use of information and communication technology, and examination of teachers' records and plans. During Key Stage 1, more consistent use is made of computers to develop pupils' basic skills. Pupils learn to use phonetic programs, which help to develop their reading and spelling skills in literacy lessons. They also use basic word processing programs, for example, to write about the senses in their science work. They are taught how to change their text into different fonts and sizes. In mathematics, pupils use the RM Starting Graph program to display information from their survey on shoe sizes, using a variety of different charts. Basic keyboard and mouse skills are developed progressively, and pupils learn to program a mechanical toy to follow planned routes.

181. In Key Stage 2, insufficient use is made of computers and information and communication technology skills are not taught across the curriculum. During the inspection, many opportunities for pupils' experience were missed, with computers switched on but not used. Pupils use word processing programs during some lessons, but specific skills are not taught on a planned and regular basis, to enable them to become confident and independent in their use of information and communication technology. By the end of Key Stage 2, they have not developed word processing skills appropriate to pupils of a similar age. In one science lesson, Year 3 and 4 pupils use the Ultimate Human Body program to gain a graphic illustration of how muscles in the arm expand and contract when the elbow bends. However, little use is made of CD-ROMs to research and retrieve information during lessons. Year 6 pupils occasionally use the Internet for research, for example, during their Victorian history project on Lord Shaftesbury and on their favourite authors when planning biographies in English, but little use is made of it at present. Pupils are not taught to use databases and spreadsheets to support work in mathematics and science, and little use is made of computer graphics programs in art. Pupils' experience of controlling, monitoring and modelling is weak and not all of the National Curriculum requirements of these aspects are taught. As a result, the curriculum for information and communication technology does not fully satisfy the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress across Key Stage 2.

182. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. Planning for information and communication technology is not well linked to subjects across the curriculum, and some teachers lack the confidence and expertise needed to develop pupils' skills beyond basic levels. The school has recognised this as an area of weakness. As a result, plans to provide training for all teachers and some support staff have been drawn up. The school has recently adopted national guidelines identifying which skills should be taught by the end of each year, but opportunities to develop these skills are not identified in teachers' subject plans. The subject has not been sufficiently well led, managed or monitored since the last inspection, and

standards have not been maintained during Key Stage 2. Monitoring procedures are not in place to effectively assess standards and record pupils' skills as they progress through the school. Resources are adequate, with a good quality Internet linked computer in each classroom. However, there is not always sufficient software to fully support learning across both key stages.

MUSIC

183. The satisfactory standards noted in the last inspected have been maintained. Only one lesson was observed during the current inspection, and judgements are based on a scrutiny of teachers' planning, timetables, assemblies and a discussion with staff.

184. Pupils' attainment in music is in line with national expectations for this age. Pupils make satisfactory progress in music mainly because the provision for music is sound, and there is a commitment to developing pupils' musical appreciation and skills.

185. During the inspection, pupils in both key stages were observed developing their understanding of sounds and rhythm and learning to develop compositional skills. In Key Stage 1, pupils are introduced to beat through clapping patterns, and effectively build on these skills by learning to control their performance with simple percussion instruments. They learn to follow instructions from the teacher and on prompt cards. They handle the instruments well and in Year 1 and 2 they begin to understand how the way they play the instruments will affect the sound they make. Older pupils in Key stage 2 understand how music conveys moods and emotions. They talk about different types of music and express reasons for their favourite compositions and artists.

186. Singing was observed in assemblies and as a feature in some lessons. Teachers have a good repertoire of action songs that the pupils enjoy, and sing with enthusiasm. Generally the standard of singing is good: in assembly pupils sang hymns with control and responded well to the rhythm and beat of the music. Teachers use taped music to develop skills of musical appreciation and to encourage pupils to respond to the mood and emotion of the music. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 sing together well, tunefully and with great enthusiasm.

187. In the one lesson observed in music, in a class for Year 1 and 2 pupils, the quality of teaching was very good. The content related well to the previous history lesson with a rendition of 'London's Burning'. The teacher displayed very strong skills of managing the class so as to involve all the pupils, including those with special educational needs and one or two more reluctant learners. Instruments were thoughtfully used to 'describe' the story of 'Peace At Last'. The work interested all the pupils and their behaviour was very good. They ended the lesson with a spirited performance of a song from the Caribbean.

188. The music co-ordinator gives appropriate lead to the subject and brings great enthusiasm to the role. She has developed a useful scheme of work that gives support to teachers, including the non-specialists. Together with another member of staff, the co-ordinator runs a recorder club. Although there is scope for music to develop stronger links with other subjects, a start has been made, for example in information and communication technology and science. A positive feature in the school is the growing link between music and dance that makes good use of the talents of a member of staff. Resources have recently been audited and improved and are now adequate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

189. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all aspects of physical education. This is a similar picture to that noted in the last inspection. The curriculum is broad and balanced and pupils effectively develop their skills in the areas of gymnastics, dance and games. Competitive games are a particularly strong feature of the school.

190. By the age of seven, pupils show that they understand the need to dress appropriately. They understand the need for a warm-up session and why this is necessary, and show that they can move safely and carefully. They demonstrate a good awareness of space and vary their movements with imagination. In one lesson with Year 1 and 2 pupils, they remembered the rules of a previously learnt game, which involved them in listening carefully to the instructions. They know how to throw a beanbag accurately to a partner, and they can catch with growing surety and skill. They know the difference between over arm and underarm throwing. They have developed appropriate skills in games, dance and gymnastics.

191. By the age of eleven, pupils describe the reasons for warm-up activities: for example to avoid pulled muscles. They relate this to their knowledge of sports at the Olympic Games. They can sustain energetic exercise in dance lessons, repeating and adapting their movements in the light of experience. Their co-ordination skills have developed well so that they can throw and catch with considerable accuracy and with a good awareness of their own space and that of others. They have a very good sense of fair play and understand the need for rules.

192. Pupils' attitudes to their physical education lessons are good, and they behave well. They listen carefully to instructions, and do their best to improve their performance. Older pupils listen to suggestions from each other as how to adapt and improve their efforts. Both boys and girls are prepared to try hard and rise to challenges. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and respond positively to the wide range of opportunities.

193. Of the two lessons observed, the teaching in one was satisfactory, and what small amount was seen in the other was good (until the rain came down). Clear planning provides for a good build up of skills, with tasks that are well suited to the pupils' attainment level.

194. The subject is well managed with a clear and positive agenda for improvement. The co-ordinator has done a lot to lift the status of physical education. There is a secure scheme of work, which covers all elements of the National Curriculum. Planning sheets and training opportunities have helped teachers to make the best use of 'Top Play' equipment. A long-standing reputation for a high level of involvement and success in competitive sports continues. Among the school's achievements in the past year are successes in netball and athletics. Among more recent developments, the growing link between dance, music and movement has been a notable success. The good range of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and skills in physical activities include an after-school dance club for pupils in Years 3 and 4, and clubs for football, athletics and netball. Many of these activities are encouraged and supported by the generous help of several parents.

195. The satisfactory range of equipment is well stored and effectively used. The school has its own swimming pool, making it possible to give all pupils an opportunity to swim during the second half of each summer term. Good use is made of the extensive and well-maintained grounds.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

196. Standards, both by the age of seven and eleven years, do not meet the expectations set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. This shows a lowering of standards compared with the last report. The progress of pupils across both key stages is unsatisfactory. Although religious education contributes to aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, it is quite limited. When the pupils first start school their overall attainment is below average. In the early stages, teachers make use of story telling and discussion and, because of this, pupils begin to develop own ideas about appropriate personal responses to right and wrong. However, this is not built on systematically. Throughout the school pupils make limited gains in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major faiths.

197. By Year 2, pupils know about few aspects of Christianity. They draw on class discussions and stories they have heard: The Good Samaritan, for example. Pupils learn that the Bible is a special book for Christians. The younger pupils in the key stage begin by looking at events in their own lives. Older pupils, by Year 6, have adequate knowledge of Christianity. They know that church is a place of worship, also used for christening and wedding ceremonies as well as funerals. However, they have little idea that God who is worshipped in different ways by different faith communities. Pupils' understanding is largely confined to facts about festivals, such as Christmas, Harvest and Easter. They have little knowledge of festivals of other religions, such as Eid, Diwali or Channukah. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are learning to identify special items such as the Torah and the Mezuzah of Jewish faith. They have heard stories from the Bible, but most do not understand the deep meaning of religious stories. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other major religions of the world such as Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, and the life of people from various cultural backgrounds, is unsatisfactory. They have insufficient knowledge of the festivals of other religions, the key people, the places of worship or holy books. As a result, they are unable to draw on this knowledge to help them make decisions about their own lives or to make sense of what they see around them.

198. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall. This is in contrast to the last report where teaching was described as sound. A good lesson in Key stage 1, offered stimulation with use of appropriate video story and a very effective discussion to enhance pupils' understanding of the important message in the Christian story of helping someone in need. In the unsatisfactory lessons, some teachers lacked appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject and did not plan an appropriate focus for religious education. Most lessons observed were more concerned with the literacy, or personal and social content, than the religious aspects.

199. Lesson observations and discussions with pupils indicate that their attitudes and responses to learning are satisfactory. They listen carefully when a story is told or information is given. They behave well and respond to questions with confidence. Most pupils show a positive willingness to talk about and share personal experiences.

200. The teaching of religious education makes a sound contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Appropriate discussions and questioning in some lessons supports pupils' listening and speaking skills. However, pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, are not encouraged to record their knowledge and write own creative accounts. School assemblies do not sufficiently support religious education or extend pupils' knowledge of Christianity. The co-

ordinator is enthusiastic and clear about direction for the subject, but has not yet had opportunity to monitor the quality of work in classrooms. Resources are satisfactory overall. The school has bought a few multicultural artefacts and books about other religions of the world. Pupils often visit the local church to enhance their learning in the subject. They have not had sufficient opportunities to invite visitors from other religions. Visit to other places of worship, for example the Hindu temple and the synagogue, are being planned.

201. Teachers' planning indicates a limited knowledge and understanding in the teaching of religious education especially where it relates to information about other religions. This aspect of teachers' subject knowledge was a weakness identified in the last report. The planning, often based on cross-curricular topics, only makes tenuous links to the subject. As a result, some lessons lack an appropriate focus for religious education. The absence of an agreed approach to recording and assessing the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding, detracts from teachers' ability to plan future lessons based on what pupils have already achieved. This aspect of assessing and recording pupils' achievement has not improved since the last inspection.

202. The school does not ensure that religious education is taught across the school for a consistent amount of time. Teachers' planning indicates that it is partly delivered through assemblies and 'circle times'. The requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus have not been built effectively into the school's planning, and the assessment arrangement in the subject is unsatisfactory.