

INSPECTION REPORT

KNIGHTWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chandler's Ford

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 131717

Headteacher: Mrs Chris Nuttall

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey
3764

Dates of inspection: 26 - 30 March 2001

Inspection number: 230633

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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bellflower Way Chandlers Ford Hampshire
Postcode:	SO53 4HW
Telephone number:	02380 261900
Fax number:	02380 261919
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Andrew Payne
Date of previous inspection:	This is the school's first inspection

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Stephanie Lacey 3764	Registered inspector	English, Equal opportunities and English as an additional language.	The school's results and pupils' achievements, How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Derek Bowers 9528	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Fred Riches 23235	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, art and design, geography.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Dave Lee 12492	Team inspector	Physical education, religious education and mathematics.	
Carol Slade 23812	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage, science, design and technology and special educational needs.	
Anna Sims 23945	Team inspector	History and music.	

The inspection contractor was:

Primary Focus
22, Church View
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX16 9NB

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	20
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	22
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	28
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	29
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Knightwood is a new community school, which was opened in temporary accommodation in September 1998 to serve a new housing development. It moved into its permanent building just under a year ago. It has grown rapidly and there are now 232 boys and girls on roll. At the moment the school is an average size, but set to expand further. Almost all of the pupils live close to the school, with a few coming from further afield. Less than one per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well below average and reflects the advantaged background of the pupils. Most of the families have their cultural roots in the British Isles, with seven per cent of the pupils coming from other ethnic backgrounds. Three per cent of these pupils are learning English as an additional language, with two pupils at the very early stages. When they start school, children's knowledge, skills and understanding are above average. Sixteen per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational need and none has a statement of special educational need. The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Knightwood is a very good school. It lives up to its vision of '*Working together to achieve excellence for all*'. The headteacher is an excellent leader. Standards are high, teaching is very good and pupils are achieving very well. Parents are very supportive of all that is being done for their children. The school is very effective and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are high in English and science and very high in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) by the time pupils leave the school.
- All pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching. This includes very good provision for more able pupils.
- There is an excellent ethos, with outstanding provision made for pupils' personal development; as a result pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good.
- The headteacher is an excellent leader; she is very well supported by talented staff and proactive governors.
- The school works very closely with parents.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing, although improving quickly, still need further development.
- Teaching and learning in class music sessions.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED

Knightwood opened in September 1998 and this is its first inspection. It has made very good progress since that time in the face of substantial difficulties. These include managing in temporary buildings until last year and an escalating school roll, leading to rapid expansion and resulting changes in classes and staff. While dealing with these challenges the headteacher, staff and governors worked hard and systematically to establish routines, procedures and policies so that the school now functions very efficiently. Standards are rising, pupils have settled happily into the well-designed and attractive new building. Monitoring by the local authority and the headteacher indicates that teaching has improved since the school opened and is now very good. The school is now in a very good position to move forward into the next stage in its development.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	N/A	B	A	B
mathematics	N/A	A	A*	A*
science	N/A	B	A	B

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

Similar schools are those with up to 8% of pupils entitled to free school meals

It is clear from statutory tests in summer 2000 that attainment in Year 6 was well above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils did particularly well in mathematics and were in the top five per cent of all schools in England. Two years does not constitute a trend, but standards were higher last year than they were in 1999. Pupils at Knightwood did better than their peers in similar schools in English and science and did very much better in mathematics. The school has set suitably challenging targets for pupils' performance in Year 6 tests in English and mathematics this year, which it is likely to meet. Standards in tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 were not so high last year. They were average in reading, writing and mathematics and above average in science. Pupils at Knightwood did not do so well as their peers in similar schools, with writing being the weaker area.

The inspection found that standards in speaking and listening are high throughout the school. Drama activities make a significant contribution to work in this area. In reading, pupils' attainment is broadly average by the time they reach the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6. Standards in writing are improving as a result of the school's concerted efforts. They are still broadly average by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. In mathematics, standards are above average in Year 2. They are well above average in Year 6, with many pupils working at high levels. Standards in science are average at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6. Throughout the school standards are above average in geography and history and average in religious education. Standards in art and design, ICT and physical education are average in Year 2, and above average in Year 6, with pupils here doing very well in ICT. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in design and technology in Year 2. In Year 6 standards are average. Standards in music are average in Year 2. In junior class music lessons they are not as high as they should be, although pupils learning to play instruments are doing well. All pupils make very good progress in their personal, social and health education (PSHE). This area is a real strength. Throughout the school all pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching. This includes those with special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils and those learning English as an additional language.

The present difference in standards between Years 2 and 6 is due to a number of factors related to the rapid expansion of the school. These include a high percentage of pupils moving to Knightwood from other schools and necessary changes in staffing to create more classes as numbers rose. This had an unsettling effect on younger pupils particularly. This year the situation is much more stable and pupils in the reception, Year 1 and 2 classes have moved forward very well. Many in the reception classes have already reached the early learning goals for the end of the foundation stage and pupils in Year 1 are doing better than other pupils of their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school and work hard. They are very well motivated and very enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well. Most are very sensible in lessons and in the lunch hall and playgrounds. They show great respect for each other and adults.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are excellent. This is a real strength of the school. Pupils respond extremely well to the many opportunities to take responsibility.
Attendance	Very good. It is well above the national average, with very little unauthorised absence. Most pupils are very punctual.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is very good. In the lessons seen, 52 per cent of the teaching was very good or better, with nine per cent of lessons excellent. Thirty four per cent of the teaching was good and the remaining 14 per cent was satisfactory. This is an extremely positive picture. The quality of teaching is consistently high throughout the school, with individual teachers having particular strengths. This ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieve well. Higher attaining pupils are particularly well challenged. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught very well and teachers are using appropriate strategies to raise standards in writing. Particular strengths in teaching include very good pupil management, planning of imaginative and interesting activities and very effective use of time, resources and learning support assistants. Marking and teachers' confidence and subject knowledge in the teaching of music are areas for development.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Broad, rich and relevant to pupils' interests and needs. Half-termly planning is a particular strength. Planning for ICT, mathematics and PSHE stand out. The time allocation and half-termly blocking for music is not effective. There is a very good variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are well supported. Their problems are usually identified early and they are given appropriate help. Learning support assistants work closely with teachers to plan and provide sensitive help.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. There are only two pupils at the early stages of learning English and they are cared for well in lessons. They receive a small amount of extra help from a visiting specialist.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for pupils' personal and social development is excellent and is a significant strength of the school. Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual and moral development and there are good arrangements for pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has very good arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of pupils, with excellent child protection procedures. Assessment systems are good. There is a very good partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is an excellent and imaginative leader, with a clear educational vision. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, key stage leaders and subject managers. During a difficult transition from temporary buildings, and with a growing pupil population, they have established a very calm and positive ethos, ensuring that everyone aims for excellence.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors work very effectively in the best interests of the school. They use their many talents very well to best advantage. Many visit the school during the working day and all are fully involved in meetings. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has very good procedures to evaluate how well it is doing. It uses its analysis of strengths and weaknesses very effectively to move the school forward.
The strategic use of resources	The staff and governors have managed financial planning very well during a time of rapid expansion. The school's application of the principles of best value is excellent. General administration is also excellent. Staff are well deployed. The very attractive accommodation is efficiently used and the resources are of good quality and sufficient for work in all subjects and used well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. (100%) • The school expects their children to work hard. (99%) • Their children are making good progress. (98%) • They feel comfortable approaching the school. (97%) • The school is well led and managed. (97%) • The teaching is good. (97%) • The close partnership with parents. (94%) • The school is helping their child to become more mature. (94%) • Behaviour is good. (90%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about how their children are getting on. (13%) • Car parking arrangements.

122 parents responded through the questionnaire and 40 parents attended a meeting held for them before the inspection.

The partnership with parents is very strong. Inspectors agree whole-heartedly with the positive views listed above. The inspection does not support the views of a minority of parents who feel that there is insufficient information on progress. Termly written reports are of very good quality and the frequency of these far exceeds that provided by most schools. There are two formal consultation evenings a year and staff are happy to discuss pupils' progress at other times. Car parking was not perceived to be a problem during the inspection, but there is very little spare capacity to manage any substantial increase in car usage by parents dropping off or collecting their children. The school has addressed this problem by providing a school bus and encouraging parents to take advantage of its services.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

Starting school

1 When children start school at Knightwood in the September after their fourth birthdays, their skills, knowledge and understanding are wide ranging, but above average overall in all areas of learning. They are further ahead in their personal, social and emotional development than in their communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. Children have made very good progress in the reception class this year. They are on target to achieve the early learning goals set for the end of the reception year in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. A few children had already reached them when they started school and some others have reached them during the course of the year.

Results in national tests and assessments

2 Standards in Year 2 national tests last year were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, with a slightly stronger profile in mathematics. Writing was the weaker area. Pupils at Knightwood did not do so well as their peers in similar schools in mathematics and standards were much lower than those in similar schools in reading and writing. Standards had dropped from the previous year, when they were above average. In science, standards were above average. With only two years' data available it is too early to identify trends. One of the significant reasons for the difference in attainment levels between the two years is the higher number of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2 in 2000.

3 Standards in Year 6 national tests rose in 2000 and were well above average in English, mathematics and science. In mathematics, pupils' attainment was in the top five per cent of all schools, with higher attaining pupils doing particularly well. Pupils did better in reading than in writing, which is similar to the national picture. At Knightwood pupils reached much higher standards than their peers in similar schools.

Inspection findings:

4 The inspection found that standards this year are very similar to those last year in Year 6. In Year 2, standards remain average in reading and writing. There is some improvement in mathematics, where standards are now above average. Standards have dropped to broadly average in science. Throughout the school all pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching.

Reasons for the differences between standards in Years 2 and 6

5 The current difference in standards between Years 2 and 6 is due to a number of factors. One of the most significant is the rapid expansion of the school, with many pupils moving from other schools. This has more of an impact on younger pupils, who take time to settle into their new classes. Last year, for example 34 per cent of the pupils in the reception and Year 1 and 2 classes joined during the year. In the current Year 2 there is again a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and this lowers the overall performance of the group. Another factor, again connected with expansion, is the changes in staffing arising from the need to create more classes as numbers rose. This also had an unsettling effect on younger pupils. This had a particular impact on the present Year 2, who had an unsettled time in Year 1. This year the situation is much more stable and pupils in the reception, Year 1 and 2 classes have moved forward very well.

English:

6 Standards in speaking and listening are high throughout the school. Pupils are articulate and confident and achieve very well because there is a good emphasis on providing opportunities for them to develop their skills. Drama activities make a significant contribution to work in this area. In reading, pupils' attainment is broadly average by the time they reach the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6. This year all pupils are achieving very well. The national literacy strategy is used effectively to develop pupils' phonic skills and knowledge about language. Pupils are clear about the kind of books that they enjoy and many have favourite authors or genre. However, their knowledge of authors and texts is satisfactory rather than good. Standards in writing are improving as a result of the school's concerted efforts, but they are still not as high as they should be. There is a good emphasis on writing for a real purpose and pupils are developing spelling and handwriting skills well. They are still broadly average by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6.

Mathematics

7 The current work of seven-year-olds shows that standards are above average, and better than last year. Current standards for 11 year olds are well above average, and in some cases very high. Thorough attention to the development of mental and oral skills in all classes has improved pupils' speed and ability in number work. Higher attaining pupils do particularly well in this subject.

Science

8 Standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' understanding of scientific knowledge and ideas develops hand in hand with their skills in scientific investigation.

Targets:

9 The school has set suitably challenging targets for pupils' performance in Year 6 tests in English and mathematics this year, which it is likely to meet. Statutory target setting has been a slightly spurious activity since the school opened because of the high proportion of pupils joining the school after targets have been set.

Foundation subjects and religious education

10 By the end of Year 2, pupils attain average standards in art and design, ICT, music, physical education and religious education. They do well in history and geography. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement in design and technology.

11 By the end of Year 6, pupils reach very high standards in ICT. They are above average in art and design, geography, history and physical education. Less work was seen in art, but standards in sketching and painting are good. Standards are average in design and technology, and religious education. In music standards are not high enough. Older pupils found it difficult to explain what they had studied. They sing tunefully, but from a limited repertoire. Pupils learning to play instruments are doing well.

Pupils with special educational needs

12 Sixteen per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs of some kind. Half of these pupils are only a little behind their peers and only three per cent of the pupils have any significant difficulties. Most of the pupils with special educational needs are in Years 1, 2 and 3. All pupils are achieving well because of the good support that they receive.

Gifted and talented pupils

13 Gifted and talented pupils do very well at Knightwood, especially in mathematics and ICT. They are identified well and set appropriately challenging work by their teachers. Some

pupils have extra support in English and others in mathematics. At the moment this support is given by the headteacher.

Pupils learning English as an additional language

14 Three per cent of pupils are learning English as an additional language. Most of these pupils are fluent English speakers, with two pupils at the early stages. All are achieving very well because of the sensitive support that they receive.

Pupils from ethnic minority groups

15 Seven per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The school does not currently analyse their progress as a separate group, but it was apparent in lessons seen that these pupils achieved as well as their peers.

Boys and girls

16 Overall there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls and all are challenged well. Last year, statistics indicated that boys did better than girls in Year 2 tests. In fact there are many more boys than girls in this particular year group, with the few girls having very wide-ranging levels of attainment. The imbalance was not in any way related to the school's provision.

Strengths:

- *Very good achievement by all pupils.*
- *Standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT by the time pupils leave school.*
- *Achievements of higher attaining pupils.*

Areas for development:

- *Standards in writing.*
- *Standards in music.*

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

A very good beginning

17 Children settle quickly into school in the reception classes. By the time of the inspection, school routines were well established. Children listen carefully to their teachers and each other. They follow instructions carefully. They put up their hands to ask questions and line up sensibly to leave the classroom for assemblies and hall lessons. They are gaining independence, changing independently for physical education, for example. They are kind to each other and most share and take turns well. Most are clearly aware of the difference between right and wrong.

Pupils' Attitudes and Responses

18 Pupils have very good attitudes to their work throughout the school day. They are very well motivated and often show great enthusiasm. For example, during the stimulating question-and-answer session in a Year 2 mathematics' lesson the pupils responded with genuine enjoyment and excitement. They concentrate well and work at a brisk pace on their individual and group tasks.

Behaviour

19 Behaviour is of a very high standard and matches the high expectations of parents and staff. This owes much to a growing self-discipline and awareness of the impact of their actions on others. The pupils follow instructions promptly and are polite and respectful to all adults. They are very reliable and trustworthy and, consequently, teachers do not have to

monitor them constantly. Lunchtimes and playtimes are very pleasant occasions with no signs of aggression or oppressive behaviour towards others. Parents feel that the behaviour at playtimes has benefited from the expansion of play areas. One pupil was excluded briefly last year and this resolved the difficulties that had been experienced. Four per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational need because they have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Teachers and learning support assistants manage these pupils very well and this prevents any disruption in lessons.

Personal Development and Relationships

20 Relationships between adults and pupils of all ages are excellent. Personal development has a high priority in the school and is a significant strength. This in turn makes positive contributions to academic progress and other aspects of school life. The pupils respond well to the many opportunities to take some responsibility for their own learning. For example, in Year 4 and Year 6 ICT lessons the pupils showed great responsibility when tackling new tasks with the minimum of teacher intervention. Pupils work well on their own or with others; they work unsupervised in central, visible parts of the school; they accept responsibility for large areas of school life. They respond very well to the high standards expected of them by staff; they are a great credit to the school. Good routines have been established so that the pupils know exactly what to do in their individual and group work and in preparing and clearing away books, equipment and materials. Co-operation in group work is of a high order and pupils show respect and appreciation for the work of others. Throughout the year groups there is wide, effective participation in duties to help with the smooth running of the school. Of particular note is the work of the play leaders, who receive training to assist younger pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes. Representatives from each class are also enthusiastic members of the School Council that meets regularly to discuss school issues.

Attendance

21 Attendance is very good and there are few unauthorised absences. Open discussion and the active support of parents and children have ensured that punctuality for lessons is now very good. Children enjoy coming to school.

Strengths include:

- *Very good attitudes in all areas of school life.*
- *Very good behaviour in lessons and around the school has a strong positive impact on learning and progress.*
- *Excellent relationships between pupils and with adults.*
- *Excellent personal development.*
- *Pupils act very responsibly and develop significant self-discipline and maturity.*
- *Very good attendance and punctuality.*

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22 Overall the quality of teaching is very strong and ensures that all pupils achieve very well. In the lessons seen, 52 per cent of the teaching was very good or better, with nine per cent of lessons excellent. Thirty four per cent of the teaching in lessons was good and the remaining 14 per cent was satisfactory. This is an extremely positive picture.

23 The quality of teaching is consistently high through the school, with individual teachers having particular strengths. Monitoring of teaching by the local education authority and the headteacher indicates that teachers have improved their skills since the school opened.

Teaching of children in the foundation stage

24 The quality of teaching and classroom support are very good. Teachers have a very good understanding of child development and use this expertise well in planning effective

learning opportunities. They have good procedures for assessment and use these particularly well to target future learning. Children with special educational needs are usually identified early and those for whom English is not their family language are very well supported. All staff are sensitive and flexible in their attitudes. Teachers have high but realistic expectations of all children and higher attainers are well challenged from the outset. The learning support assistant makes a significant contribution.

Teaching in Years 1 and 2

25 Teaching is again very good overall. Three of the four teachers in Years 1 and 2 are new to this age group this year. They have worked hard to achieve this high quality of teaching. The two Year 1 teachers plan very carefully together and this ensures that the two Year 1 classes undertake the same work. In Year 2, two teachers work with one class very effectively. In all three classes pupils achieve very well.

Teaching In Years 3 to 6

26 The quality of teaching is also very good in Years 3 to 6. There are four classes in this part of the school. The Year 6 class is taught by two teachers and the head teacher also takes small groups of higher attaining pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 for mathematics. Again, overall all pupils do very well in lessons because of the high quality of the teaching.

Teaching and learning in the area of literacy

27 In the literacy sessions seen the teaching was strong, ranging between good and very good. Teachers plan well for the development of pupils' literacy skills. Lessons are planned effectively, with due reference to the national literacy strategy. They move at a good pace and pupils are swept along by teachers' challenging questioning and clear explanations in the introductory part of the session. Phonic skills are taught well and pupils are using these to help them with reading and spelling. Very clear teaching about the structure of language is also helping pupils, especially older ones, to appreciate the subtleties of different texts. This was especially evident in the work older pupils were undertaking on non-fiction texts. Whilst teaching was very effective in the lessons seen, planning over time shows that there is not enough emphasis on the use of good quality texts to move pupils forward. In some classes the balance between exercises planned to consolidate skills and work arising from looking at texts has shifted too far towards exercises. Teachers are using appropriate strategies to improve writing skills through the school. More work still needs to be undertaken on developing writing skills in other subjects, the teaching of handwriting in Years 1 and 2 and marking of pupils' work. Homework is used well to enable pupils to move forward.

Teaching and learning in the area of numeracy

28 Teaching of numeracy is very good overall. Consequently pupils make very good progress. Lessons seen ranged between satisfactory and excellent. Teachers' planning is thorough and based on the national framework for numeracy. Activities are carefully planned to encourage group and individual work, and usually include some homework connected to the lesson. Work is appropriately challenging for all pupils and higher attaining pupils do particularly well as a result. Teachers enthusiastically make mathematics interesting and practical. As a result, pupils respond with excitement, expect to enjoy their lessons and work very hard during them. They behave extremely well, concentrate on what teachers explain, and organise themselves for work quickly and quietly. Very little time is wasted in lessons. Marking is variable and whilst it is positive, it does not always tell pupils what they have achieved and what they can do to improve.

Teaching and learning in other subjects

29 Overall teaching is strong in other subjects too. Personal, health and social education is taught very effectively and this has had a very positive impact on pupils' excellent personal development. Individual teachers have particular strengths and in some subjects, such as

music and physical education, teacher expertise lifts the lesson. However, although very few music lessons were seen, a lack of sufficient subject knowledge in music has been identified by the school as an area for development.

Teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs

30 The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers understand their pupils well and are sensitive to their personalities and feelings. They work hard to ensure that pupils experience full inclusion in the curriculum. Where pupils have emotional and behavioural problems teachers are patient and flexible in supporting them. Teachers' planning is usually good and work is mostly well matched to pupils' abilities.

Teaching and learning of pupils learning English as an additional language

31 Pupils learning English as an additional language are well supported. There are only two pupils at the early stages of learning English and they receive a small amount of extra support from a visiting specialist. At other times, teachers plan work carefully for them. Learning support assistants also give them sensitive support. Consequently these pupils are moving forward well.

Particular strengths:

a) Pupil management

32 There are particular strengths that thread through all of the teaching. One is the very good management of pupils' behaviour. This is underpinned by extremely good relationships between staff and pupils, which set a firm basis for teaching and learning. Teachers have a very positive approach. They praise good behaviour and are very good role models for pupils. They use appropriate strategies to help pupils to behave sensibly and responsibly. Consequently, pupils behave very well and very little time is wasted in lessons in managing difficult behaviour. In one particularly good lesson, for example, the pupils' behaviour was excellent because the teacher was calm and softly spoken and explained clearly what he wanted pupils to do. Staff also work well with the few pupils who have emotional and behavioural problems. They give them good support and, when it is necessary, provide opportunities for them to work away from their class group.

b) Planning of interesting activities

33 Another significant strength is the very good planning of interesting and imaginative activities, which capture pupils' interest and fire their love of learning. In a Year 2 geography session, for example, pupils carried water pots on their heads and dressed up in saris and this helped pupils to see what life was like in Chembakoli. As a result of this, pupils concentrated very well and made great strides in their learning.

c) Work with higher attaining pupils

34 Higher attaining pupils are also very well catered for. Teachers plan challenging tasks for them, especially in literacy and numeracy, and this helps these pupils to move forward well. Higher attaining pupils in older classes also have a weekly session in mathematics to challenge them even further. This has been very effective, not only because they have the opportunity to work in a small group on very challenging tasks, but because the teaching in these sessions is excellent.

d) Use of time, resources and learning support assistants

35 Teachers also use the resources available to them very well and this again makes the learning experiences for pupils very positive. Resources are well prepared and ready before lessons begin, so that no time is wasted. Equipment, like pencils and dictionaries for example, are readily available on pupils' work tables. In most sessions, time is used very effectively. There is a good pace to lessons, so that much is achieved and very good use is made of the time in the plenary session at the end of the lesson to draw the main points

together. Learning support assistants are deployed very well. They work closely with teachers in supporting small groups or individuals and this helps pupils to make good progress.

Areas for development

36 Within this very positive picture there are some minor areas for development. Daily assessments are sound overall; although marking of pupils' work is variable. The best examples inform pupils clearly what they have achieved, and what they need to do next. Here, some pupils write back to the teacher's marking and clearly read carefully what the teacher has written. Little time was given during the inspection for older pupils to read and discuss teachers' comments. In some lessons planning is not clear enough and does not anticipate possible difficulties. In one or two classrooms, books, files and equipment are not stored as tidily as they might be and this makes the rooms appear cluttered. The school has also identified the need to improve teachers' confidence and expertise in teaching music.

Strengths:

- *Pupil management.*
- *Planning of interesting and relevant activities.*
- *Work of learning support assistants.*
- *Challenge planned for higher attaining pupils.*
- *Use of time and resources.*

Within a very strong area points for development include:

- *Marking.*
- *Staff confidence and subject knowledge in music*
- *Teaching of writing in other subjects.*
- *Classroom environment in some classes.*

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

37 Staff offer a rich and broad curriculum for pupils in the foundation stage and in Years 1 to 6. The curriculum is of good quality throughout the school. It meets all statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the local religious education syllabus. Staff plan sex and drugs education very carefully, having involved parents of pupils in all year groups in drawing up these elements of the science, health, personal and social education programme. Over and above the National Curriculum, the school offers particularly strong personal, social and health education throughout the school. It provides a weekly opportunity for Year 6 pupils to learn French, and offers a wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities to extend pupils' experiences. It provides equal opportunity for all, with challenges for higher attainers particularly well planned.

Cohesive planning systems

38 Significant strengths include the school's thorough half-termly planning systems in infant and junior classes, which promote a cohesive approach to each series of lessons covering a particular theme or unit of work in each subject. The planning systems ensure that teachers consider the learning focus behind each activity and provide activities that will catch pupils' interest as well as being matched to their abilities. Planning for pupils of higher ability, including exceptionally gifted and talented pupils, receives the same thorough approach as that for pupils with special educational needs.

Imaginative planning makes learning relevant and interesting

39 The school promotes an inventive and imaginative approach to the curriculum, as is evident in the theme of Arthurian legend underpinning its life and work. There are rich opportunities for pupils' imaginations to be fired by interesting tasks. One excellent example of this was in design and technology in Year 1, where the teachers have transformed a possibly routine process of designing a fruit or vegetable salad into a magical experience. The palace chef is ill and an urgent message has arrived asking Guinevere and Tristram to prepare a special salad for the guests at Prince Charming and Cinderella's wedding feast. Similarly, the Year 4 teacher read pupils a fax purporting to be from an international company locating a hotel in St Lucia. Pupils were eager to meet the specified criteria. These imaginative curriculum approaches received the due reward of enthusiastic classes fully focussed and learning of the highest order through role-play.

Literacy and Numeracy

40 The school implements the literacy and numeracy strategies successfully. Planning is particularly strong in mathematics, where teachers find a number of opportunities to extend and apply pupils' skills in the context of other subjects, as well as planning tasks well-matched to group abilities during numeracy lessons. The impact of literacy planning has been successful in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and in promoting reading skills. Steps taken to improve curriculum planning so that six and seven-year-olds develop their writing skills more swiftly are proving successful. The school is aware of the need to plan wider opportunities for pupils to write, including using ICT to support the development of skills, particularly drafting and editing. A very thorough action plan has begun to address this issue.

ICT planning is a strength

41 The focused planning of ICT to support work in almost every subject, as well as a very clear framework for developing ICT skills, is another notable strength of the school's curriculum. Teachers plan carefully to ensure maximum use of computers in the classroom and the computer suite.

A timetable review is due to look at balance

42 An area needing development, and already recognised as such by the school, is the balance of time allocated to National Curriculum subjects at Key Stages 1 and 2. A timetable review is scheduled. Currently, four subjects, namely history, geography, art and design, and design and technology, receive a comparatively small proportion of curriculum time at Key Stage 1, well below the average of four or five per cent across the country. This limits the opportunities to develop depth and consolidate pupils' skills and understanding in these subjects. Teachers' planning and pupils' standards are often good, and sometimes very good, in the activities undertaken, but work samples in each subject show a comparatively small quantity of recorded work. Standards achieved in art and design from Years 3 to 6 are good and in design and technology they are satisfactory, but again work samples show considerable gaps between short bursts of well-focused activity. While meeting requirements, the time allowed for these two subjects does not promote consistent skills development in any depth.

43 In music, the time allocation for junior pupils is particularly low and the effect of this is compounded by two other factors. Firstly, the decision to teach music in half-termly blocks, thus leaving it off the timetable every other half term, causes a break in continuity. Secondly, music is an area where several teachers lack confidence and subject knowledge. These factors combine to have a detrimental effect on the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result, standards in music are not as high as they could be for all pupils. The school makes up for this to a degree by offering a wide range of additional musical activities. Pupils who opt to participate in these benefit greatly, but clearly they do not benefit all. The decision to raise the profile of the performing arts has had the positive

result of giving more focused attention to drama than in most primary schools, but this is currently at the expense of music.

A wealth of additional activities

44 The school's provision for lunchtime, after-school clubs and other additional activities is very good. Despite the lack of access to the school field, staff have provided a wide range of opportunities for pupils to participate in area sporting events, including cross country, tag rugby, netball, dance and swimming festivals. Several peripatetic music tutors teach a number of orchestral woodwind, keyboard and string instruments and guitar. School staff run recorder groups and a choir. They also organise dance, drama, nature, multi-sports, French and computer clubs. An after-school 'Kids' Club' operates every day after school until 6pm. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from cycling proficiency and First Aid classes. The opportunity for Year 6 pupils to learn a modern foreign language within curriculum time aims to promote a positive introduction to conversational French. Planning states a clear and appropriate emphasis on speaking and listening. However, reading and writing skills are introduced unnecessarily alongside, having a detrimental effect on the pace and directness of conversation and on pupils' pronunciation.

Very good links with the community and other schools

45 Links with the community and partner institutions are very good and have a positive impact on the school's provision and pupils' achievements. Staff in reception classes have close contacts with local nursery schools and playgroups and arrangements for pupils transferring from Year 6 to secondary school are thorough. Staff links within the Thornden pyramid of schools offer very good support and training networks as well as providing a forum for organising inter-school events. The school has positive contacts with the local church, with useful support from the vicar in collective worship and religious education lessons. As the 'millennium school', Knightwood has also developed positive links with local companies, who have supported development of the ICT suite, for instance.

Ensuring equal opportunities

46 Equal opportunities are enshrined in the school's aims. All school and curriculum policies address equal opportunities. In practice, staff ensure that the curriculum gives full access to boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with physical disability, have full access to the curriculum. Where additional support is needed outside the classroom it is directed towards the objective of full integration. Care is taken to ensure that pupils do not always miss the same lessons, teachers' introductions or periods of independent working. The school meets the needs of the small proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities, including those learning English as an additional language, very successfully. The school allocates limited extra support to the children at an early stage of developing their understanding and use of English. It also ensures that all staff assess and offer appropriate support to pupils whose first language is not English. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is very good.

Personal and social development

47 The school's excellent personal, social and health education programme is clearly at its centre, and is visible in a variety of ways. These range from the superb example of headteacher and deputy head greeting parents at the front entrance every day to the excellent atmosphere and high quality relationships within each classroom. This programme underpins everything the school holds dear. Pupils' self-esteem is high, their self-discipline secure and they thoroughly enjoy their work, their play and their daily relationships with adults and friends. As a consequence, pupils' personal development is excellent

Spiritual development

48 Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

In addition to the many opportunities provided in religious education lessons, and daily assemblies, there are frequent occasions for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs, attitudes and values. They are encouraged to respond to the beauty of the world around them, to its colours and variety. This is apparent in their drawings, paintings, writing and dancing. They are given opportunities to be moved by the experience of others, and encouraged to express their feelings in their writing. They show wonder at things from other cultures, like the length of a sari in a Year 2 lesson. They express relief when listening to the story of 'Emma's lamb' when Lamb is finally found in the hen-house, and they show happiness and understanding when Lamb finds his mother in a field full of sheep. Provision for spiritual development is very good.

Moral development

49 Provision for moral development is very good also. Pupils are involved in writing their own rules for classrooms; they also uphold them. The strong personal, social and health education programme influences their thinking about moral issues. Older pupils are given opportunities to voice their views and sympathies with the dilemmas posed by the current foot and mouth epidemic. Staff provide excellent role models for pupils; as a consequence, older pupils present equally effective models to younger pupils. The culture perpetuates itself visibly.

Social development

50 Provision for social development is excellent. Pupils are involved at every level in school life. They are appointed playleaders, after interview and showing evidence of commitment. They are given responsibility for an area of the playground at playtimes and lunchtimes, and encourage younger pupils to play a range of games. Not only do they take this role very seriously; their skill and commitment have the effect of drastically reducing incidents of poor behaviour at these times. Many are prefects, librarians, members of the school council and helpers around the school. They ensure that assembly times run smoothly, acting as guides for the school's many visitors, and being companions for younger pupils particularly at lunchtimes where they help to cut food and organise lunchtime routines. They are encouraged to raise money for a variety of good causes, most recently for Comic Relief. This helps older pupils especially to be aware of their wider responsibilities for those less fortunate than themselves.

Cultural development

51 Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils are taught about the culture of other countries. They are taught how to imitate African art techniques, about Moslem traditions and cultures and dances from different cultures. The school is fully aware that pupils do not know as much about their own culture as perhaps they might. Procedures are already in place to improve and develop this aspect.

Strengths:

- *Detail of half-termly planning ensures a cohesive curriculum.*
- *Imaginative planning catches pupils' interest.*
- *ICT planning is carefully linked to all subjects.*
- *Extra-curricular provision offers a wide range of pursuits.*
- *Links with the community and partner institutions are strong.*
- *The provision for pupils' personal and social development*

Areas for development:

- *Curriculum organisation and timetabling for music, especially for junior classes.*
- *The balance and organisation of time allocated to art, design and technology, history and geography, especially in infant classes, to ensure there is sufficient time to cover all aspects in sufficient depth.*

- *A review of the focus on conversational French.*
- *Developing pupils' awareness of Western culture.*

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Care for pupils

52 The very good care for pupils is underpinned by the close, warm relationships between staff, pupils and parents. All staff know the children very well and are vigilant in monitoring their welfare and development throughout their time at school. The excellent procedures and practice by all staff ensure great consistency in pupil management. High expectations of good behaviour and discipline are shared by staff, pupils, parents and governors. Consequently a warm, industrious, safe and secure environment has been created, which enables good academic progress and personal development. Pupils identified as having behavioural and emotional difficulties are managed very well by teachers and learning support assistants and this prevents any significant disruption of lessons. Very good liaison between all staff, pupils and parents helps to avoid aggressive or oppressive behaviour. Staff monitor absences and punctuality closely and are supported well by parents and the educational welfare officer. Active monitoring of arrivals has led to an improvement in time keeping.

Child protection and welfare

53 The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are excellent. The head and deputy are thoroughly trained in child protection policies and procedures and a third teacher is to receive training shortly. Regular meetings are held with all other members of staff to ensure that they are familiar with the agreed procedures. There is very good liaison with the local welfare and social services agencies. Active staff and governor involvement helps to ensure very good practice in all aspects of health, safety and security. Designated governors and staff undertake regular risk assessments and inspections and record their findings and the actions taken fully. The sound policy and procedures handbook is currently being updated to meet latest requirements. Observations during the inspection do not support the views of a few parents that there is a problem with car parking at the beginning and end of the school day. The system currently works well, although there is little spare capacity to cope with any expansion of the number of parents delivering and collecting by car. The school provides a bus to collect pupils from different parts of the estate in order to alleviate parking problems. It is not yet fully used.

Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development

54 There are excellent procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Staff monitor the personal development of the pupils closely through the substantial PSHE programmes and regular monitoring of their progress. There is a general recognition by staff that good personal development is essential to academic progress. Every term the teachers produce written reports for parents on personal development. There is a strong commitment to building pupils' self-esteem, independence and responsibility. Pupils are given every encouragement to act independently; they have many responsibilities in classes and around the school, for example being prefects, playleaders, or involvement with the school council. They are very clear and positive role models and younger pupils clearly learn what is expected of *them* as they grow older. In these ways, staff maintain an excellent view of pupils' personal development. The school's method of rewarding achievement, the '*Knight's Charter*', is an ongoing record of pupils' individual personal development and very useful for knowing how pupils are doing.

Procedures for assessing achievements and progress

55 The school has good systems for assessing pupils' achievements and progress. Pupils in reception classes are assessed soon after they join. Teachers analyse these

assessments to see how they can meet their pupils' needs. As these assessments build up over time and clear trends appear, teachers will be better able to track pupils' progress from reception through to the end of Year 2.

56 Pupils in every class are assessed regularly against National Curriculum levels of attainment. This record is used to track their progress through the school. Teachers make thorough termly checks on what pupils know and can do in English, mathematics and science. This, linked to an equally thorough analysis of pupils' annual test results, ensures that teachers are well informed about what to plan in order to meet their pupils' needs. Recent analysis showed that pupils' writing was an area for improvement, especially with infants. In time, trends in attainment will become clearer and provide the school with more accurate information about how to improve this provision further, for example in analysing the attainment of specific groups of pupils. Year 1 pupils are soon to be more thoroughly assessed by using old Year 2 national test papers. This will help in raising standards by the end of Year 2 because teachers will be more confident about how to plan to raise attainment further. Staff are developing '*Assessment Manager*', a software program that organises pupils' assessments quickly and efficiently for further analysis and action.

57 In the other subjects of the National Curriculum, assessments are less well developed. That said, since the school opened and moved to its new building, main priorities have rightly been English, mathematics and science. Other subject managers are now beginning to prioritise attainment in their areas in order to continue the drive for consistently high standards across the curriculum.

Assessment of pupils with special educational needs

58 Children in reception are assessed using the local education authority's baseline judgement. This provides a full analysis of children's intellectual, personal and social development. The school makes good use of this data as a first reference on children who seem to have learning problems. Children are placed on the register promptly and sometimes temporarily. In Years 1 to 6, teachers know their pupils well, are sensitive to when there are problems and also take prompt steps to place pupils on the special needs register. Pupils leave the register when difficulties are resolved.

59 Individual education plans are established for pupils who need them. They are well matched to pupils' diagnosed needs. With a few exceptions they are mostly of good quality with reasonable, small-step, achievable targets and appropriate review dates. At the moment their scope relates particularly to emotional, behavioural and language needs. The school is conscious of the need to broaden its focus to include pupils who are not attaining as well as they should in their mathematical learning.

Use of assessment data

60 Staff collect pupils' work from every year group and scrutinise it in order to get a clear idea of standards and National Curriculum levels. At present, this collection does not appear to identify clearly the actual levels of attainment achieved by pupils in different classes. If it did, it would benefit staff even more in being able to identify how the quality and content of work reflected each level of attainment. This would, in turn, improve further the quality of curricular planning in all subjects.

61 Targets are written for pupils to reflect their levels of attainment and to improve them further. These targets are regularly monitored, although not always communicated to pupils. Certainly older pupils are very capable of managing some of these targets themselves.

Strengths include:

- *Excellent procedures for child protection and for pupils' health and safety.*

- *Excellent procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour.*
- *Excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting personal development.*
- *Good tracking systems for knowing pupils' levels of attainment.*
- *Target setting for different groups.*

Areas for development:

- *Continued development of assessment in National Curriculum foundation subjects so that pupils and teachers know what to do better to improve standards further*
- *Allow older pupils to manage their own targets for learning more.*

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Parents' views

62 Almost all parents have very positive views about all features of the school. They feel strongly that their children like school, make good progress, are expected to work hard and are becoming more mature. They believe that the school is well managed, that teaching is good and they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with suggestions or complaints. The inspection evidence fully supports these positive views.

Parents' views about information on children's progress and car parking

63 A number of parents (13%) expressed some dissatisfaction with information about how their children are getting on. The evidence does not support this view. The staff actively monitor academic and personal development throughout the year and are always willing to talk to parents. Consultation meetings are held each term but if there are concerns at other times in the year the teachers take the initiative to contact parents. The degree of formal reporting is well above that provided by most primary schools. The teachers produce substantial progress reports at the end of each term. These cover all subjects and include grades for effort and comments on attainment in relation to national standards in English, mathematics and science. There are also targets in the core subjects and a very good section on personal development. Some parents also expressed concern about car parking arrangements. The inspection did not find that these presented any current threat to pupils' safety, but with further expansion the present car park will be inadequate for staff.

Information for parents

64 The prospectus, governors' annual report, letters, newsletters and guidance books for parents are of a high standard. They are very informative and well presented and they include well selected, relevant contributions from the pupils. One particularly good feature is the full description of the curriculum for each year group, which is sent to parents at the beginning of each term. The written information is supplemented effectively by well-attended curriculum information evenings.

Partnership with parents of children who have special educational needs

65 The school has very good relationships with parents of its pupils with special educational needs. When problems are identified in school the parents are quickly informed and a dialogue established, which is maintained throughout the time pupils are on the register. When individual education plans are reviewed, parents participate in the process and sign the new plan to acknowledge their approval. The individual education plan does not have a separate area where parents can commit themselves to specific regular support towards agreed targets, although in practice many actually do so. The culture of listening to and acting upon parents' judgements and wishes where ever possible spreads from the excellent leadership exercised by the headteacher and permeates all staff.

Parental support

66 Parents give very good support to the school in all key areas of school life. This is evident from the time that their children start school. In the reception classes teachers have close relationships with parents and are available on an open basis to discuss problems. Parents receive a curriculum plan every half term, have termly interviews and a detailed report. They are supportive and, when asked, willingly provide resources and information for use in the curriculum. A good number of parents help regularly in lessons in the Year 1 and 2 classes. There is substantial support for the very active parent teachers' association, which raises considerable additional income for the school to enhance resources and the environment. Parents share the high expectations of staff and respond well to any action plans to improve behaviour or academic development. Most parents help their children regularly with reading at home, although there is some inconsistency in the use of the home reading record from class to class, which is potentially confusing for parents. They provide artefacts for lessons and help their children with topic work.

Strengths include:

- *Parents' positive views of the school.*
- *The effectiveness of the school's links with parents.*
- *The impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school.*
- *The quality of information provided for parents.*
- *Very good, regular information on progress.*

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67 '*Working together to achieve excellence for all*', the school's vision statement, very successfully underpins the work of the school. Knightwood is only in its third year and yet it is already a very successful school. Standards are high, teaching is very good, pupils are achieving very well and parents are very supportive of all that is being done for their children. This very good progress has been made in the face of substantial difficulties. These include a temporary building until last year and a rapidly rising school roll, leading to fast expansion and resulting changes in classes and staff. While dealing with these challenges the headteacher, staff and governors worked hard and systematically to establish routines, procedures and policies so that the school functions very efficiently with a continuing emphasis on high standards and school improvement.

Excellent leadership by the headteacher

68 The key to this success story is the excellent leadership by the headteacher, who has successfully guided the school through its early years. She has a strong educational vision, linked closely to providing challenge and opportunity for all pupils, based on years of experience as a primary teacher and headteacher. This, linked with her imagination and flair, has helped the school to establish a real identity. She has used the Arthurian legends, for example, as a basis for classroom names and established a '*Knight's Charter*' to acknowledge good work. She had some input into the design of the building and her office is at the heart of the school. When she is working there, rather than in classrooms, she can see and be seen by all who pass through the building.

69 She has a very firm grip on all that goes on at Knightwood and has a clear picture of the strengths of the school and areas for development. This is based on her careful monitoring of teaching and learning and her very good analysis of assessment data. This feeds into the support that she gives to staff and pupils. She works very sensitively with staff and governors and enables them to develop their own roles through a programme of training and support. She has excellent inter-personal skills and values pupils, staff, governors and parents. At the start and end of the day, for example, she waits by the main doors with the

deputy head to welcome and say farewell to pupils and parents.

Very good support from staff

70 The staff management structure is now established and the three teachers on the senior management team provide very good support. Consequently, staff are now working together well as a team. This is having a positive impact on teaching and learning. The deputy head is now in her second year and works extremely enthusiastically and effectively. She leads the teaching very well and brings her many talents to bear on her work in school. Two other teachers have responsibilities for the infant and junior classes. They provide sensitive support to colleagues and undertake their responsibilities very well. All teaching staff also have responsibility for managing at least one subject area. They have tackled these roles very conscientiously and as a result curriculum development is moving forward very well.

Leadership and management of work in area of special educational needs

71 The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all pupils and the leadership and management of special needs is good. The deputy headteacher is acting as caretaker for the role until a specific appointment can be made in the near future. A comprehensive policy is in place, which indicates to parents how the school's identification and support for special needs will be conducted. The co-ordinator has provided in-service training for staff, some of whom were newly appointed this educational year, to ensure uniformity of provision and support. She also acts as line manager to the able team of learning support assistants. She makes good use of outside specialists, where necessary, to advise and support developments in provision. The headteacher gives excellent overall leadership in establishing priorities for special needs and directing additional financial resources towards support. The governing body is kept very well informed by an expert on the legal aspects of special needs provision.

Very effective governing body

72 The governing body undertakes its work very well. There has been quite a high turnover of governors since the school opened, largely related to heavy work commitments. The present governors have a wide range of talents and expertise, which they use very well in the best interests of the school. Many are also parents and are frequent visitors to the school. Their involvement has increased as the school has grown and they are now effectively working with the school staff to monitor what the school is doing and plan for improvements. A range of committees has been established and much of the work is undertaken in these and then reported to the full governing body. All the necessary policies and procedures are in place and one governor has compiled a very useful handbook to keep colleagues well informed. The governors account well to parents and their most recent annual governors' report is of a very high quality. The chair of governors provides very good support and is very committed to his work in school. All statutory requirements related to the work of governors are met.

Strategic planning

73 Strategic planning is very good because it clearly identifies what needs to be done to push standards higher. At the moment the plan is for the short term. This has been entirely appropriate. The school has been unable to plan further ahead because the numbers of pupils and thus the finances available were unknown. This is no longer such a problem and the school now intends to plan for longer-term developments. Alongside strategic planning there are very good systems in place to ensure that there is a clear programme for monitoring and review for governors and staff through the year. Subject managers also have their own management plans, which provide a useful agenda for their year's work.

Financial planning

74 The staff and governors have managed financial planning extremely well since the school

was formed two years ago. This has been achieved during a period of substantial uncertainty about the new buildings and the rate of arrival of new pupils. The planners had no historical information on expenditure patterns and budgets were based on pupil numbers in January each year. In common with most new schools, the senior staff and governors recruited additional teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the new pupils and consequently costs exceeded income during these early years. The staff and governors have therefore planned very effectively over a rather shorter period to eliminate the deficit by the end of the next financial year. Forward planning is also well advanced and estimates of costs are made for the priorities outlined in the action plan. These form the basis of the financial planning which reflects the school's educational priorities. Resources are used very effectively and specific grants are used properly for the purposes intended. A very strong feature of school development is the identification and application of training needs. This applies to all staff and governors.

The principles of best value

75 The application of the principles of best value is a strength in the school. All staff and all governors have received training in this area and they are expected to apply the principles in all expenditure decisions. There is wide consultation. A very good level of challenge in seeking sources of funding from parents and other organisations has resulted in substantial additional income. The governors, particularly the chair of finance, and the staff have put considerable effort into securing additional funds from local companies. Of particular note are the generous donations from local companies towards the development of the computer room and library. Full competitive tendering is employed and the school seeks and uses comparative information effectively. The school is giving very good value for money.

Day to day running of school

76 The general administration is excellent and owes much to the competence of the headteacher and administrative officer. They have been innovative in building excellent systems to manage the school's development. The accounts are in very good order and provide accurate, regular information for staff and governors. There is very good support and monitoring by governors who have relevant financial expertise. The most recent financial audit confirms the very good records and procedures in the school. The few suggestions for minor changes have been implemented. The staff make very good use of new technology. For example, a second-hand optical mark reader was purchased to reduce the time taken to monitor attendance. Assessment and annual reports have also been computerised.

Staffing

77 Since it opened two years ago, the school roll has grown from an initial 83 pupils to its current number. As a result, teachers have been appointed in quick succession to cope with the expansion. This made it difficult initially to establish a team. Induction procedures are good and there is now a stable staff team, with an appropriate range of expertise, with each teacher taking responsibility for a specific curriculum area. There are sufficient class teachers to meet the needs of the pupils. In addition, several visiting teachers give instrumental lessons each week. Very comprehensive job descriptions have been reviewed and updated, and cover professional duties, subject leader responsibilities and key tasks to be addressed. Performance management procedures are in place and the headteacher has instigated a monitoring programme to identify training needs. Teachers attend a wide range of courses which focus on their personal preferences as well as complementing the school's own development programme. There is an appropriate number of learning support assistants, who mostly work with pupils with special educational needs. The very efficient administrative staff, the site agent and his team and the kitchen staff and lunchtime supervisors all contribute to the effective care of the pupils.

Accommodation

78 The modern design of the school, completed less than a year ago, is striking. It is very attractive and welcoming. A spacious library greets visitors as they enter. There is a very well equipped computer suite, which can accommodate a whole class. Classrooms are arranged off one side of a wide corridor, with smaller teaching rooms and lavatories on the other side. Classrooms are small, but adequate for the number of pupils. Pupils' personal possessions are housed in open lockers above their coats in the classroom and this gives a cluttered appearance to the rooms. Generally staff have worked hard to make rooms as attractive as possible by displaying pupils' work well. The two reception classes are currently in temporary accommodation, very close to the school. This large room has been arranged well to meet the needs of the children and has an enclosed outside play area. The hall provides a very good environment for assemblies, lunch and lessons. A vibrant curtain, designed by the pupils, covers one wall and has improved the acoustics considerably. There are still some repairs outstanding. Particular concerns are the leaking roofs and the thermostats for the under-floor heating, which cannot be adjusted correctly for different parts of the building.

79 The grounds are spacious and offer a good view over distant forest. Outside each classroom there are attractive patio areas, where pupils may spend their break time. There is also a playground for running or games activities. These areas are small for the number of pupils in the school. The field still needs a substantial amount of work before it can be used and this restricts the work that can be planned in games lessons. Some pathways are not yet finished and are slippery in icy weather and in autumn, when the leaves fall.

Learning resources

80 Learning resources are adequate to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. In the majority of subjects they are of good quality, with some really exciting additions in science and ICT. As well as the new computer suite, there are computers in each classroom and in the library, and one specifically for pupils with special educational needs. The library is still developing. Its original budget was based on the small group of pupils admitted initially. Excellent fund-raising by the parent-teacher association has enabled the school to buy some good quality books and the ongoing priority is to double the number of books currently available for pupils. Resources in music are satisfactory overall, but there is a need for more percussion instruments.

Strengths include:

- *Excellent leadership by the headteacher.*
- *Very good support from staff and governors.*
- *Clear identification of school's strengths and weaknesses, with clear plans for improvement.*
- *Very good financial planning.*
- *Very effective identification and use of training in all areas of the school.*
- *Excellent application of the principles of best value.*
- *Excellent administrative support.*
- *Very attractive school building.*

Areas for development:

- *Playground space.*
- *Condition of playing field.*
- *Music resources.*

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

81 In order to build on the many strengths of the school, the headteacher, staff and governors need to:

- (1) improve writing standards still further by:
 - continuing with the strategies already in place;
 - developing writing skills in other subjects;
 - improving teachers' marking;
 - improving handwriting in Years 1 and 2;*(Reference paragraphs: 6,43,100 & 101)*

- (2) improve standards in class music sessions by:
 - timetabling class music on a weekly basis;
 - providing training to improve teachers' subject knowledge and confidence;
 - improving resources.*(Reference paragraphs: 11,29,36 and 80)*

The headteacher, staff and governors should also consider the following minor points for inclusion in the improvement plan:

- Marking of pupils' work; *(Reference paragraph: 36)*
- Arrangements for French teaching; *(Reference paragraph: 44)*
- The school playing field; *(Reference paragraph: 79)*
- The balance and organisation of time allocated to art, design and technology, history and geography, especially in infant classes, to ensure there is sufficient time to cover all aspects in sufficient depth; *(Reference paragraphs:42, 124, 125, 134 and 139)*
- Developing manageable assessment procedures for the foundation subjects. *(Reference paragraph: 57)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9%	43%	34%	14%	0%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	232
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	2
<i>FTE means full-time equivalent</i>	
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	37
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	21	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	20	20
	Girls	4	7	7
	Total	23	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (100)	96 (100)	96 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	28	28	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	12	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	12
	Girls	11	13	11
	Total	21	25	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (92)	100 (92)	92 (75)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	11
	Girls	11	11	12
	Total	19	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (91)	84 (92)	92 (82)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	6
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	178
Any other minority ethnic group	6

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	105

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
	£
Total income	351,040
Total expenditure	363,641
Expenditure per pupil	3031
Balance brought forward from previous year	-8055
Balance carried forward to next year	-20656

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	229
Number of questionnaires returned	122

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	34	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	45	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	56	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	52	7	1	4
The teaching is good.	56	41	0	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	38	12	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	21	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	37	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	52	42	4	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	21	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	40	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	48	7	0	10

Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number and may therefore not total exactly 100.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

82 With much dedicated hard work by its teachers and support assistant, the foundation stage department moved into its present temporary building last September. It now accommodates two classes with a total of 37 children aged four and five. Most have had previous nursery or playgroup experience. Their attainment is assessed on entry to school and, whilst there are variations in children's abilities, the overall picture shows above average attainment in all aspects of their development. They are further ahead in their personal, social and emotional development than in their communication, language, literacy and mathematical development.

83 Provision is very good. The children work in a happy, stimulating well-planned learning environment and experience many varied opportunities, which provide a strong foundation for future learning. Most of them are set to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development well before the end of their reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

84 The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is very good. Staff are highly effective role models for team working. They are perceptive and have a very good understanding of individual children's personalities. Children are usually happy in reception and most are confident and keen to participate fully in activities. They enjoy their learning and work and play very well together. They are encouraged to think independently and to listen attentively during class discussions. Most have a mature respect for each other's ideas and feelings. They change their clothes for physical activities, manage their personal hygiene independently and tidy up carefully after tasks are completed.

85 From the outset, children are encouraged to behave with a sense of civic responsibility and taught how rules can benefit everyone. They learn to walk quietly and sensibly through the school whilst others are working and to be still and attentive in assemblies. There are reception children on the school council and most children are eager to participate in such tasks as taking the registers to the office.

Communication, language and literacy

86 The quality of language and communication and literacy teaching is very good. Teachers have a very good understanding of how best to help young children learn. They provide very enjoyable language experiences and plan together successfully to capitalise on every possible opportunity to develop the children's knowledge, skills and understanding in these areas. Throughout the day children experience many opportunities for speaking and listening, whether in class, group or play situations. Sensitive questioning skills by teachers and a nurturing ethos help most children to direct their thinking and to express their feelings and ideas confidently. Children listen well to each other and to their teachers. Children's vocabulary is extended through careful planning and followed through by adults in a variety of activities. Staff share books with children in a variety of contexts. They have a good understanding of book conventions, follow the correct orientation of print and know that illustrations offer clues to the story. Many children use these skills with growing accuracy to read simple books. At present there are no mechanical listening facilities available either on computer or audiotape for children to hear stories independently of adults. Most children are developing a good ear for initial letter sounds and can identify words beginning with a particular letter. They have frequent opportunities to develop their writing skills and to

practice letter formation. Good quality class displays contribute to a rich written language environment.

Mathematical development

87 With the support of very good teaching most children make significant gains in their mathematical understanding during their time in reception. Teachers provide practical and meaningful activities wherever possible. Children experience many activities with mathematical connections. Teachers and support staff are perceptive in knowing when and how intervene in the children's learning to move them forward. Inventive use of such classical number stories as *'The Three Bears'* excites children's interest and facilitates their counting and number recognition, as well as their understanding of measurement. The focus during the inspection was on the language and comparative measurement of size. A higher attaining group used multi-link cubes to compare the length of various objects including teddies. Some counted and wrote numbers to 20 accurately and confidently to do this. Another group consolidated their understanding of numbers to 6 by throwing a giant dice, counting spots accurately and deciding what will be one less than the number shown. Children enjoy singing a variety of counting rhymes and number songs. Sometimes interesting props are used to provide greater impact to learning through visual images of quantities and figures.

88 Other practical activities support the children's understanding of size and the use of correct mathematical vocabulary as they make interesting shapes from dough in three sizes. In the outside play area children excitedly build a daringly tall tower with bricks and speculate on whether one more brick can be put in place without it falling. Water play is very popular with the children as they compare the concepts of empty, half empty and full.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

89 Reception parents are particularly supportive of teachers in this area of the curriculum. The children meet a newly born baby brother of one of their peers. They ask his mother questions about his needs. Later in the week they make perceptive comparisons between their own needs and those of a newly born baby. Parents willingly provide information about family connections so that children are able to work out their own simple family trees. Earlier this term other parents also made a significant contribution to children's knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity as they provided information that helped reception children to celebrate Chinese New Year.

90 Two computers are available in the reception area and they are in constant use. The children experience interactive programmes with a mathematical emphasis as they carefully select the appropriately sized clothing and dress a family of three differently sized bears. In another motivating interactive programme, children decide which are the longest or shortest of an animated set of objects.

91 The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. Many memorable experiences are used by teachers to help children's development. Fine examples of these are shown in a recent exploration of the life of frogs. Children carefully observe the phases of the creatures' change from spawn to tadpoles in an aquarium in the classroom. They also experience these changes in the development of frogs, dramatically, as they role-play the life cycle.

Physical development

92 Physical development is promoted well in all aspects of the curriculum and the quality of teaching is very good overall. A fine example of this is through the acquisition of computer skills, which also impacts on children's physical development. As they manipulate the mouse to click on the cursor and drag it across the screen, children become increasingly

adept. The regular use of pencils, crayons and paintbrushes has the same effect, together with a range of cutting and gluing activities. Small apparatus activities in the hall enable children to combine finer and large physical movements as they keep their eyes alert and move with increasing co-ordination to catch and throw to a partner. Large gymnastics apparatus is also used regularly in the hall. During these structured activities children begin to appreciate the effects of exercise on their bodies.

93 Secure outdoor play space enables children to gain physical confidence and control on a developing range of outdoor play equipment.

Creative development

94 Provision for creative development extends through many aspects of the curriculum and the quality of teaching is very good. Drawing, painting and making things are regular experiences in reception. Children enjoy developing their ideas and their work is valued through good displays. In one session, for example, a group dramatically draped a large flowing piece of striped yellow silk on the floor and created a realistic savannah where their models of large wild African mammals could wander. Independent role-play is promoted in a designated space in reception. During the inspection the focus was on 'taking a picnic'. Most groups sustain good levels of co-operative, creative play on this theme over significantly long periods with a minimum of props. A more structured drama experience in the hall is a weekly feature of the timetable. All teachers participate fully, acting realistically and enthusiastically in role, and an impromptu play is built up around a story. During the inspection the children created a drama around the story of '*Jack and the Beanstalk*'. In music the children listen well, know the names of some instruments and begin to accurately discriminate and compare sounds which are high or low, and long or short.

Strengths include:

- *Very good teamwork by teachers and assistant.*
- *Planning which incorporates fully the early learning goals.*
- *Good early years ethos and practice of learning through play*
- *Regular role-play to aid children's understanding as well as their creativity.*

Areas for development:

- *Resources to enable children to listen to stories independently.*

ENGLISH

95 Standards in Year 2 national tests were broadly average in reading and writing in 2000. They were much lower than standards in similar schools. Standards in Year 6 national tests in 2000 were well above average overall. Pupils did better in reading than in writing, which is similar to the national picture. At Knightwood, these older pupils reached higher standards than their peers in similar schools.

96 The inspection found that this year standards are high in speaking and listening in both Years 2 and 6. Standards are again broadly average in reading and writing in Year 2. Pupils in Year 2 are doing well this year, after an unsettled time in Year 1. There is also a larger proportion than average with special educational needs in this year group, which affects the overall performance of the group. Standards are well above average overall in Year 6, with pupils doing better in reading than in writing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good support that they receive, both in lessons and when they are withdrawn for extra help. Higher attaining pupils also do very well because of the appropriate tasks set. The school does not analyse the progress of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds separately and so there is no evidence to indicate whether this group of pupils is doing as well or better than other pupils. In sessions seen, these pupils were

achieving as well as their friends. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

Speaking and listening:

97 Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is high throughout the school. Pupils speak confidently to both adults and their friends, using increasingly complex language as they get older. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other. They achieve well because of the good planning for this area of English and very skilful teaching. This is particularly evident in teachers' use of questioning, with many providing good opportunities for pupils to develop their thoughts through spoken language. Drama also plays a significant part in fostering pupils' skills. In one session seen, pupils from Year 1 developed their confidence by taking on the roles of Cinderella's sister and stepmother. The teacher played Cinderella and the pupils delighted in ordering her about, adopting appropriate language and stance. The lesson moved on to a 'hot seating' session in which pupils gave Cinderella advice about her relationships with her family. They had every opportunity to develop their thoughts at some length. Some responses showed great maturity, such as '*praying to God*'. Others were expressed at length and were listened to carefully by the whole class. The work in this area has moved forward very well this year with extra support from both the English co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for the performing arts.

Reading:

98 Pupils are learning to read well because they are taught systematically. Teachers pay good attention to the development of phonic skills and pupils are clear about the strategies to use in order to read unfamiliar words. There is also good teaching on the structure and use of non-fiction texts from Year 1 onwards. Work in the literacy hour, both in the whole class session and the group reading part of the lesson are contributing well to this. The reading scheme is used well to provide a structure for pupils' individual reading in the younger pupils' classes. Pupils are encouraged to take books home to share with their parents and carers and this helps them to make good progress. At the moment the reading record book is used to list books read. Sometimes parents make notes about progress, but in most classes teachers do not write in these books. This is a little confusing for parents because they do not know whether the diary is intended to be a record of home reading or the means of a dialogue between teacher and parent. The school is building up a stock of good quality fiction and non-fiction books and the newly opened library is fostering pupils' enjoyment of reading well. Some pupils are developing firm favourites, either authors or books and talk with enthusiasm about writers, such as Jacqueline Wilson and J K Rowling. There are also book collections in classrooms, and although pupils find the choice of books good, there is little to draw their attention to new authors or genres. Reading is taught well, but there is slight imbalance between teaching the mechanics of reading and helping pupils to appreciate a variety of books and authors. Few teachers find time to read regularly to their class, for example, and there is not yet any school guidance about the way texts can be used in other subjects. The next step would be to identify key authors and books for pupils of different ages.

Writing:

99 Standards are rising in writing because of the staff's concerted efforts to improve the quality of pupils' work. Writing is a focus for school improvement this year and good work has been undertaken already. The success of this effort is not yet reflected in higher standards in Year 2. In this year group pupils have made very good progress in the current year, but had been previously affected by changes in staff and for many a change in school. In most classes there is a good emphasis on encouraging pupils to write for a real purpose and this helps them to enter into the excitement of writing. Pupils make their own books, for example. In Year 1, both classes were making information books about animals during the inspection. Pupils confidently planned their chapters and wrote and illustrated a small piece

for each section. In Years 4 and 6 pupils have made and written books for other pupils. These are proudly displayed in the library and classroom and are well used. Very good attention is also paid to the written structure of language. This helps pupils to understand how language works and improve their own skills. In Year 6, for example, pupils studied the characteristics of formal writing in one session and in another they worked on writing a formal argument, after successfully identifying the features of this kind of writing.

100 More time is being given to opportunities for extended writing, especially in the older pupils' classes. These sessions are used well and pupils enjoy spending some time on crafting and editing their work. In one Year 3 lesson, for example, pupils wrote a summary of the beginning of *'Fair's Fair'* by Leon Garfield. This followed a very good introductory session by the teacher and pupils managed the task well. The new computer suite is being used well to help pupils to word-process their work. Spelling is systematically taught and pupils have regular spelling homework, which helps them to consolidate their understanding of spelling rules. There are still some areas for development. In Years 1 and 2, there is a very appropriate emphasis on encouraging pupils to think about the content of their writing, but more attention needs to be given to the teaching of handwriting at this stage. Older pupils write in a neat cursive style. Pupils develop their writing skills in other subjects, but closer links could be made between work in literacy and the humanities and science.

Teaching:

101 The quality of teaching in literacy hours is very good overall. In lessons seen it ranged between good and very good. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of behaviour and working attitudes and as a result pupils try hard and concentrate well. Planning is soundly based on the national literacy strategy and tasks are designed well to meet different pupils' needs. Teachers make the focus for the lesson clear to pupils at the start and this helps them concentrate well on what is being taught. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, who are supported well in the lesson and sometimes withdrawn for extra help. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to this area. Whilst teaching was very effective in the lessons seen, planning over time shows that good quality texts are not used sufficiently as a basis for work. In some classes the balance between exercises planned to consolidate skills and work arising from looking at texts has shifted too far towards exercises, with a detrimental effect on pupils' independent writing. In the better lessons, pupils learn how to write by studying the work of good writers. Marking is not used in a consistent way to move pupils forward and in some classes is only cursory.

Planning for the future:

102 The very experienced co-ordinator has a clear agenda for continuing improvement in this area, especially writing. This is based on her firm grip on standards and provision.

Strengths include:

- *Standards in reading and writing in most year groups.*
- *The implementation of the national literacy strategy.*
- *Work in speaking and listening.*
- *The contribution of drama.*
- *The new library.*

Areas for development include:

- *Classroom book corners.*
- *The use of fiction and non-fiction books in other subjects.*
- *Developing writing skills across the curriculum.*
- *Handwriting in Years 1 and 2.*
- *Marking.*

MATHEMATICS

103 The school is doing very well in mathematics. Every pupil in last year's Year 6 national tests achieved the expected level, and two thirds reached higher levels. These results place the school in the top five per cent of schools in the country, both when compared with all schools and with those similar to themselves. Results exceeded the school's target of 84 per cent predicted to reach expected or better levels. The results rather surprised the school, but staff have learnt much from a thorough analysis of pupils' work. This year, predicted targets will be more accurate and should truly reflect Year 6's attainment. A small number of pupils are reaching a very high standard that is normally expected only in a secondary school. They are expertly taught not just by their class teachers, but by the headteacher both in and outside of normal lesson times. This reflects the school's commitment to high standards and its consistent drive in challenging pupils to excel.

104 Current standards for eleven-year-olds are well above average, and in some cases very high. Seven-year-old pupils also attain well. Their results from national tests last year were slightly above the expected level; with more than average numbers of pupils reaching higher levels. In reality, only one or two pupils failed to meet the expected national levels. The current work of seven-year-olds shows that standards are above average, and better than last year.

105 Thorough attention to the development of mental and oral skills in all classes has improved pupils' speed and ability in number work. Teachers use resources effectively at the start of numeracy lessons, for example number fans which pupils use to display answers to questions. The use of counting sticks (which help pupils to count on and back in a variety of ways) is currently under-developed. In most, but not all classes, important mathematical vocabulary is shared and written on whiteboards to encourage pupils in their understanding. Pupils are always encouraged to explain how they work out answers; their very good oral skills underpin this. One Year 1 pupil clearly understood that $6 - 3 = 3$ because $3 + 3 = 6$. By Year 6, pupils explain this method as *inverse operations*. Pupils enjoy these sessions, particularly when they work to a tight time limit to solve problems. Teachers make good links with other subjects during numeracy lessons. Year 5 and 6 classes, for example, used data from science lessons to develop mathematical work.

106 By the age of seven, pupils know by heart all addition and subtraction facts to 20; many go beyond this. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher held up a card, which she thought said 18, and asked pupils to double this. In fact it was upside down and pupils read it as 81. Back came the answer: 162, rather surprising the teacher! In another lesson, a pupil explained how he had placed 42, 53 and 59 in order. He said that the 42 was a lower 10 than the 53; when the same 10 appeared, you then looked at the unit, like words in a dictionary. These examples reflect pupils' thorough understanding of number as well as a growing confidence in telling the time, tallying information and drawing graphs, then asking and answering questions based on them. They measure and compare lengths using centimetres, have a sound knowledge of simple fractions and symmetry, and show good understanding of multiplication and division.

107 By the age of 11, most pupils are competent mathematicians. They are confident in working out areas of compound shapes, plotting co-ordinates in four quadrants, drawing pie graphs, designing conversion graphs for miles/kilometres, or francs/pounds, and interpreting complicated timetables. The higher attaining pupils apply different transformations to the same shape and then describe the transformation that returns the shape to the starting position. This is work from a secondary mathematics curriculum, and well above average for their age. In other classes, pupils attain equally high standards. Year 4 pupils draw pie graphs confidently, using protractors to plot angles, calculators to help their dividing skills, and each other to solve problems incurred along the way. Year 5 pupils confidently draw

graphs of $y = x^2 + x$, as well as analysing and interpreting information from different graphs. Year 3 pupils make up written problems from numbers, for example 15, 3, 5, saying "my friend had 15 sweets and three of us wanted some. How many would we each get?" Often, pupils use their mathematical skills in other subjects such as ICT, science and geography.

108 Pupils with special educational needs are mostly well supported and make sound progress. Teachers usually ensure their planning is matched to these pupils' different needs. When learning support assistants support them, pupils make better progress.

109 Teaching is very good for infants overall, including two lessons that were excellent. It is also very good overall for junior pupils, including one excellent lesson. Teachers have made mathematics interesting and practical for pupils by sharing their enthusiasm with them. As a result, pupils respond with excitement, expect to enjoy their lessons and work very hard during them. In a Year 2 class, pupils were almost beside themselves with excitement as they counted in 20s past 200! Their teacher kept up this tension by asking them how far they could go. Pupils present their work very carefully, take a pride in it, and discuss it seriously with each other. They make very good progress because they are very well taught. They behave extremely well, concentrate on what teachers explain, and organise themselves for work quickly and quietly. Very little time is wasted in lessons.

110 Teachers' planning is thorough and based on the National Framework for Numeracy. It takes account of pupils' needs, and the targets that have been set for them. Teachers make clear what pupils are to learn at the start of each session so that all understand the purpose of the lesson. This focus is then returned to at the end of the lesson to ensure pupils have understood what they have been taught. Activities are carefully planned to encourage group and individual work, and usually include some homework connected to the lesson. Teachers use resources effectively to enhance pupils' progress, including the Internet for downloading information to use for graph work. They give high quality, well designed and challenging worksheets to pupils, with the effect that they are encouraged to think hard and work things out for themselves. Marking is variable and whilst it always praises pupils' efforts, it does not always tell pupils what they have achieved and what they can do to improve.

111 The subject manager co-ordinates mathematics well throughout the school. He has an effective action plan, which addresses the key priorities for improvement. Currently, a main area of monitoring is the way in which teachers evaluate weekly lessons in order to improve future planning. At present, this is a bit inconsistent.

Strengths:

- *Very good teaching across the school resulting in well above average standards.*
- *Pupils' very positive attitudes to mathematics learning.*
- *Thorough planning.*
- *Very good provision for higher attaining pupils across the school, especially for those in Years 4, 5 and 6.*

Areas to develop:

- *Encourage the regular use of counting sticks to promote quicker mental work from pupils.*
- *Encourage teachers to evaluate weekly lessons, using this information to start their planning for the next week's work for pupils.*
- *Develop marking so that pupils know what to do next to improve, and that they have a target to aim for.*

SCIENCE

112 In the 2000 teacher assessments, the attainment of pupils in Year 2 was above

average, with almost all the pupils reaching the expected level in all aspects of science. Some pupils did better than this in 'experimental and investigative science' and in their learning about 'materials and their properties'. National tests in 2000 indicated that in Year 6 pupils' attainment was well above the national average and well above the performance of pupils in schools of similar social context.

113 The inspection found that standards at seven are broadly average with a large majority of pupils reaching the expected level in their knowledge, skills and understanding of all aspects of science. Fewer pupils are attaining at this level than last year because the current Year 2 class has a relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Some potentially higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently stretched in their experimental and investigative work.

114 At the age of eleven standards are well above average. All pupils achieve at least at the expected level, with a significant proportion doing better than this.

115 The school is committed to developing a strong scientific language base combined with 'hands-on' science. To a great extent this ethos is well reflected in the planning and teaching of the subject. In the Year 1 classes, teachers prepare pupils thoroughly for an investigation into the ability of materials to block or filter light. They promote key descriptive vocabulary such as 'transparent' and 'opaque'. Children begin to predict thoughtfully on the basis of simple evidence. They also gain a rudimentary understanding for themselves of the notion of fair testing. By Year 2 this idea is sharpening for some pupils into an understanding that there needs to be a sameness about elements of fair testing, though in a session seen, pupils did not relate these ideas specifically to their investigation about melting. Higher attaining pupils in particular are beginning to use mathematics more extensively to quantify investigative findings, but as yet do not sufficiently analyse data to raise questions about results.

116 This 'hands-on' approach continues through the junior years, with a heavy emphasis in the use of the senses as tools for careful observation. In one session, sight and touch were used delicately, as pupils investigated with curiosity and then categorised types of rock. They adopted mature terminology in trying to decide whether examples were igneous, metamorphic or sedimentary. In one class, pupils used their understanding of heat and cold to investigate classroom temperature using thermometers. In another session pupils used their hearing to explore ways of investigating the sound insulation properties of materials. In Year 6 an ingenious role-play technique was adopted to motivate and stimulate interest. Pupils became science professors attending a delegate conference in which irreversible changes associated with burning materials were explored. Whilst there is a significant acceleration in attainment in science during the junior years there are still opportunities for even greater challenge in the interpretation of mathematical data gathered as a result of investigative science and in data handling, using ICT.

117 Across the school there is a very good match in science between the quality of teaching and how well pupils learn. Whilst the quality of both is good overall there are examples of very good science teaching and learning in both infant and junior lessons. Teachers usually make their science interesting. They establish caring relationships with their pupils and use approaches and resources, which amuse them and excite their interest. For example, in a lesson where the hardness of rocks was being investigated many pupils had brought personal examples from home. One boy proudly displayed his superb amethyst specimen, much to the admiration of his peers. There was a buzz of excitement as pupils developed their own investigative methods, working well collaboratively with peers and with intense and sustained concentration. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to frame challenging open questions, which orientate pupils' thinking and enable them to make connections with

previous learning experiences. Teachers circulate the class energetically and make effective assessment observations of pupils' understanding as they do so. Teachers manage pupils very well. In consequence pupils behave very well and they waste a minimum amount of learning time as they move in an orderly way from one phase of the lesson to another.

118 The school is well placed to improve standards further in science both in the juniors and particularly in the infants, as more pupils become settled in their new school environment. The subject manager for science is an enthusiastic and well-motivated teacher, who is a very good role model for the high quality of teaching for the subject. She evaluates national test results to assess the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' learning and helps teachers adjust their planning to address identified needs. She has already made some exciting purchases of high quality resources, which will be very effective aids to pupils' learning and has ideas for still more. When such site decisions can be made, an environmental pond and wild areas will be major assets to science resource provision.

Strengths include:-

- *Attainment is well above average at age eleven.*
- *Scientific language learning is a priority.*
- *'Hands-on' practical activities make a good contribution to pupils' learning.*
- *Good teaching supports good learning.*

Areas for development include

- *Improving the collection and analysis of mathematical data during science investigations.*
- *Developing the use of information and communication technology in science.*

ART AND DESIGN

119 Only one lesson was timetabled during the inspection and judgements are therefore mainly based on pupils' work and teachers' planning. Pupils in infant classes undertake a range of work with different media. They achieve satisfactory standards and some examples of good work were seen. Planning shows an appropriate breadth of study in Years 3 to 6, but work samples seen did not reflect this breadth. Nevertheless, standards seen in sketching and painting are good. This stems from a clear focus on the teaching of skills within each half-termly series of lessons. Pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily in infant classes. Older pupils achieve well.

120 The main strength in art is the use of sketchbooks in junior classes. These have been recently introduced, following staff training, and already show teachers urging pupils to explore pencil-sketching techniques alongside experimentation with ideas. The clear statement affixed to the inside cover of each book provides pupils with an excellent summary of the use and point of the books, which pupils clearly value. One very good example of the use of sketchbooks to stimulate a sequence of work is in the Year 6 studies of action poses. Having tried observational sketches of their peers in various action poses, in order to focus on limbs and angles, pupils used three African pictures as a stimulus for bold representations, which form a striking display in the foyer. Other impressive work on display by older pupils shows the beginning of an appreciation of perspective in landscape painting and an awareness of different styles in copies of prints by famous artists such as Turner, Klee, Kandinsky and Josephine Higgs. A further example of art from non-western cultures is the mendi patterns in Year 6. This representation of a range of cultures in art is less evident in other year groups.

121 In the lesson observed, pupils in Year 4 explored creative and imaginative ideas very successfully to complete pastel sketches of a dream image. The teacher drew pupils' attention to techniques of surrealism, showing examples of Salvador Dali's work. Pupils

were clearly intrigued by the possibilities of stretching a particular element within features or of combining objects never seen together. Sketchbooks showed careful explorations of the effects of stretching a mouth wider than a face, for example, and the use of pastels on black paper gave pupils the opportunity to put their ideas into practice. At the close of a tightly organised, very well managed session, the teacher made time for a number of pupils to show their finished pieces and explain the ideas behind their work. All pupils had shown excellent concentration during the activity and gave due recognition to the efforts of their peers, listening attentively and supportively. Items such as a giant, swollen woodworm gnawing at the school's new timbers and the school a-sail on the ocean with a tornado approaching revealed both lively imaginations and very good understanding of the ideas behind the techniques. The teacher had successfully triggered a creative response by the whole class to a very successfully presented stimulus.

122 Much of the art in infant and lower junior classes is linked to studies in other subjects. Occasionally this is successful, when teachers ensure that they focus on the artistic skills as well as the linking theme. When the theme takes over, the artistic content is occasionally forgotten. Too many examples of screwed tissue paper, felt tip pictures and adult-designed collage work are evident, given the comparatively small time allocation for art and design, particularly in infant classes. The best work by younger pupils includes pastel work by Year 2, with careful observational representations of conkers, peppers and fruit. Bold portrait paintings in the style of Picasso in Year 3, which clearly reflect pupils' understanding of the use of different viewpoints to create mixed profile and full-face features, show pupils receiving a positive and creative experience of art.

123 The school has adopted a national scheme to guide teachers' planning and preparation. Overall, pupils' work in sketch books, on display and in art portfolios shows that they concentrate well and make good progress in sketching techniques and in using these as a basis for developing work in other media. There is as yet no clear picture of the planned art curriculum enabling pupils to build progressively on their knowledge and skills. Teachers are not yet fully using achievements in the blocks of lessons from one half term to develop skills further in the next. Each series appears an isolated sequence for the most part. A little clay work was seen, but only from Year 5, and there are few examples of three-dimensional work as a whole. The low representation of this work and of printing reflects a somewhat narrow art experience in some years, with longer time slots needed to develop skills in clay, printing and with textiles, for example.

124 Leadership of the subject has recently changed hands, but the previous co-ordinator has helped provide a clear overview of the current position. Planning systems are good and the portfolios offer an opportunity to develop assessment, so that pupils can gain a clearer picture of how to improve their skills. The school has not yet reviewed the breadth of curriculum coverage or the effect of the time allocations and timetabling, in order to improve the range and continuity of skills teaching. The ICT suite has proved a very positive stimulus for pupils' imaginative artistic work, with very good use made of an art package. Pupils in Year 4 use icons, toolbar and buttons deftly to explore symmetry and to create and recreate images to give different effects.

Strengths:

- *The introduction and carefully planned use of sketchbooks for junior pupils.*
- *Planning of each sequence of lessons on a given focus.*
- *The use of displays to celebrate pupils' work and raise the profile of the subject.*
- *The use of ICT to support art and design.*
- *Stimulating teaching in the only lesson observed.*

Areas for development:

- *The allocation of time and arrangements for timetabling, especially in infant classes.*
- *Monitoring of planning to see that it covers the desired range of artistic pursuits and builds sequentially on pupils' skills.*
- *The assessment of pupils' work, in order to help them develop their skills.*

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

125 Design and technology alternates with art on the timetable. During the inspection two lessons were seen. Evidence was also gathered from teachers' planning and discussions with them and the new subject co-ordinator. Examples of pupils' finished work were seen as well as design drawings and the school's resources provision. The scheme of work and curriculum planning are based on national guidelines and time allocations for the subject are tight. In spite of this, teachers succeed in providing pupils with practical, motivating learning opportunities. As a result, progress in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject, though variable, is generally satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in Years 1 and 2. Standards by the time pupils reach Year 6 are satisfactory. The use of computer-aided design is insufficiently developed to support the subject.

126 Teaching was good overall in the lessons seen. Teachers contrive enjoyable design opportunities for pupils with some highly motivating scenarios, sometimes related to familiar children's literature. Pupils are very responsive to these fictions and in turn are imaginative and creative in their thinking. A fine example of this strong two-way influence on teaching and learning is shown when, on the theme of healthy eating, in a role play, infant pupils design exotic vegetarian salads for Cinderella's beleaguered Prince Charming. In another class, pupils designed and made popular winding devices to help Incy Wincy spider '*climb up the spout*' in spite of the rainy weather he constantly experienced.

127 In junior classes, most teachers use satisfactory subject knowledge to provide a variety of designing and making opportunities which are usually well targeted towards realistic, identified needs. Many pupils produce design drawings of high quality. Teachers provide a variety of interesting resources, which spark pupils' ideas and are used inventively. In one class, for example, pupils designed and made simple, creative, interactive books, cutting, sticking and attaching a variety of unusual appendages as they targeted the interests of a specified audience. In another, pupils worked hard to pattern, cut and sew creatively designed furry slippers, one pair clearly being produced for a Southampton Football Club supporter. Some pupils have the luxury of a second chance in developing their biscuit designs. After a previous, mixed experience of designing and making biscuits, pupils collaborated well in perceptively and honestly evaluating the whole process, including tasting. They then began another design cycle, confirming success but learning from mistakes in their plans and finished results.

128 Good examples were observed from every phase of the design process across the school but they do not always come together in the same topic. Thus design drawings may be of good quality, but the end product show immature making skills. Unimaginatively designed products sometimes show competent joining skills. The evaluative phase may not consistently be in evidence.

129 A new co-ordinator has recently taken over the management of the subject. In-service training for teachers is on his agenda for later this year. A well-organised curriculum cycle is in place to cover the recommended elements and secure progress across the school. The need for an assessment system that tracks pupils' developing skills has been identified. The school has excellent provision for food technology and a good variety of making and joining tools and materials, including wood products and fabrics. These are satisfactory in quantity

for present needs and are well organised and stored accessibly.

Strengths include:

- *The ingenuity with which the subject is presented by teachers.*
- *Pupils' interest and motivation for the subject.*
- *Excellent provision for food technology.*

Areas for development include:

- *Consistency in teaching all the skills necessary to produce well-designed, well-made and appropriately evaluated products.*
- *The development of workable whole school assessments.*

GEOGRAPHY

130 Standards are above average in both key stages. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in Years 1 and 2. Here, teachers' positive focus on learning through first-hand experience and the use of artefacts ensures that pupils find the curriculum stimulating and relevant. In Years 3 to 6, the success of pupils' learning owes more to the appropriate levels of academic challenge set by teachers than the further development of learning through practical activities. This stimulating curriculum for junior pupils is more suited to the many higher attainers, who achieve very well, rising to the challenges set. Pupils of average ability also achieve well.

131 In Year 1, pupils gain a very good knowledge of the local area and develop very good map-reading and map-making skills. The two Year 1 teachers plan together to ensure that all pupils have the same curriculum. During the inspection, teachers were using photographs, taken with the school's digital camera on the previous week's local area walk, to question pupils about the locality. Pupils recognised buildings and scenes and were able to find these on a large-scale map. Higher attainers had found the route of the walk and had traced this on a local map. They referred to road names and sites when explaining their route and discussing what they could see from certain positions. Year 2 pupils showed similarly high levels of enthusiasm and concentration, as they compared Chandler's Ford with Chembakoli. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge and provision of artefacts such as water jars and head rings, saris and dhotis, led to a lively discussion about a day in the life of Chanda, compared with a day in the life of Lancelot. Pupils showed good use of geographical vocabulary as they described the surroundings, climate and crops that grow in the Indian village, locating it in the South of India and explaining its situation in a valley. A gasp at the length of the sari showed pupils' sense of wonder and their experience of trying on clothes and balancing a water jar supported their recording, to ensure that pupils of all abilities learned successfully. Teachers provide support for pupils with special learning needs by planning tasks that need less application of literacy skills. They require diagrammatic recording for these pupils, for instance, while expecting higher attainers to list and label, using word banks.

132 A particularly striking example of an exciting and demanding activity was observed in a Year 4 lesson, where the teacher challenged pupils to find the best location for a new hotel on St Lucia. As in Years 1 and 2, it was the imaginative presentation of the activity and task that made the learning relevant for the pupils. The teacher presented the task as a brief sent to the class from a hotel chain. The teacher's reading of the fax and handing out of the sealed envelopes gave the task a sense of mystery and excitement. Pupils worked extremely well together in groups and organised themselves into pairs within the groups, in order to share the tasks. They showed very good reading and comprehension skills to follow the instruction and understand the suitability criteria. They showed very good numeracy and map-reading skills, as they used co-ordinates to locate possible sites and totalled the points awarded to

compare the suitability of each site. Pupils were set to present their findings to a team of four pupils who would make a final decision on the preferred site. In this lesson, as in another in Year 3, where the teacher had also used an imaginative idea to stimulate pupils' interest (creating a travel brochure), the pupils who found the challenge difficult did not receive sufficient support. As a result, while the majority achieved very well and enjoyed the task, a few struggled unsuccessfully.

133 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It was very good in the two infant lessons observed and also in Year 4. The other two lessons observed were satisfactory. The main strengths in teaching are teachers' planning, preparation and subject knowledge. This led to confident explanation and instruction in all lessons. Particular elements in the very good teaching were the teachers' imaginative presentation of tasks and their use of resources to stimulate pupils' interest and involvement. Work samples throughout junior classes and elements of two lessons observed show an emphasis on learning factual information through listening and note-taking, rather than through involved practical experience. While this approach has a degree of success in imparting temporary knowledge to more academic pupils, it does little to promote geographical skills and an interested, exploratory approach to the subject.

134 The subject co-ordinator has a clear picture of the curriculum planning throughout the school, which is very clear. The school appropriately blocks geography lessons into three half terms each year, with a history focus allocated to this time slot for the alternate half terms. This gives a sensible time span for each unit of work to be planned within a series of around six weeks and an appropriate length of time each week to cover the necessary ground and give time for pupils to experience, discuss and record. Although the time allocation for infant classes is low, and pupils have little recorded in their topic books, displays and lessons show learning of very good quality within the limited time slots given. With very helpful support from the local advisory service, the co-ordinator offers useful advice to staff and gives a positive lead in making the subject interesting and relevant to pupils, as well as promoting an imaginative approach to the teaching of each half-term's unit of work.

Strengths:

- *The use of imaginative approaches and helpful artefacts.*
- *Careful planning of a series of linked activities related to a theme over half a term.*

Areas for development:

- *Review the time allocation, particularly for infant classes, to provide time for further practical exploration and recording.*
- *Introduce more opportunities to promote a practical approach to the subject for junior pupils.*

HISTORY

135 History is taught in half-term blocks with geography and at the time of the inspection, no history lessons were seen. Judgements have been based on discussions with the subject manager and with pupils, an analysis of work completed this year, teachers' planning, displays and resources. Discussions with pupils about their work indicate that they have a good knowledge and understanding of chronology, and that their skills of historical investigation are well developed. Based on this limited evidence, standards are above average at seven and eleven years.

136 In Years 1 and 2, teachers use stories from the past to develop skills of historical enquiry and to give pupils a flavour of particular events in the past. In Year 1, for example, pupils used different sources of information to find out more about the Great Fire of London.

These included a portrait of Samuel Pepys and extracts from his diary. To reinforce their learning they sang the nursery rhyme '*London's burning*'.

137 Pupils also find out about famous people from the past. Pupils in Year 2, for example, have studied the life of Florence Nightingale. They discussed with great enthusiasm the difference Florence had made to soldiers' lives, and showed factual knowledge of events that happened at the time.

138 Older pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developed further in the wide range of topics they study. Pupils in Year 3 have observed the effects of invasion in their study of the way the settlement of the Romans has affected British society. In Year 4, pupils have used a range of information sources to identify features about the lifestyle of Henry VIII and they show good understanding and factual knowledge of Tudor times. Pupils in Year 5 have made a study of the Ancient Greeks, focusing on architecture, Greek gods and myths, the Olympic Games and the Trojan War. They made good use of the Internet to find further information. It is very evident that pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of Victorian life and changes that have occurred over time. They have compared life then with the modern technology, transport and electricity in use today and feel that these innovations have made life much easier for people nowadays. They explained where they had found sources for their information, for example through reference books, their local library and particular web sites on the Internet. They were equally knowledgeable about a recent topic on Tudor exploration. This theme was developed in an excellent lesson in physical education, where pupils used a series of dance activities to create a Tudor ship on rough seas.

139 Planning for the subject is good. There is a clear policy and a curriculum map to ensure coverage of the topics identified in the national scheme of work, although the time allocation for Years 1 and 2 is low. Learning resources have been organised into appropriate packs for each of the chosen topics; artefacts loaned to the school supplement these. For example, pupils are given opportunities to wear costumes or handle artefacts of a particular period. Field trips are an important aspect of the subject and pupils have visited Southampton Art Gallery as part of their work on Ancient Greece and Eastleigh Museum, to complement work on World War 2. The new subject manager is full of enthusiasm. She has identified the need to develop the teaching of historical enquiry.

Strengths:

- *Clear policy and planning.*
- *Resources.*
- *The use of visits.*

Areas for development

- *Training for new subject manager.*
- *Develop staff awareness of the enquiry approach in history using key questions.*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

140 Standards at age eleven are very high. This is due to teaching of very high quality, a carefully planned curriculum, excellent training for staff, very good leadership by the co-ordinator and very good use of excellent facilities. Standards are satisfactory in most strands in the infant years, but a few higher attainers in Year 2 already show above average attainment in word processing and data handling. Pupils and teachers in infant classes make well-planned use of class computers and other aspects of ICT, such as cassettes and the school's digital camera, but are still getting to grips with the potential of class activities in the ICT suite. Teachers of junior pupils are already exploiting the suite and interactive screen

fully. They have committed considerable time to becoming conversant with the newly installed systems and have developed a high level of subject expertise, apparent in the challenging nature of lessons.

141 A well-planned programme of lessons for each year group ensures that all pupils experience the full range of ICT required by the National Curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well because the teachers make the learning interesting and relevant. In one class, the teacher prepared pupils to use key words in word processing by using recorded messages from the parallel class. Pupils listened to their peers defining logic blocks by colour, size and thickness. They then acted as detectives to note clues for their classmates to recognise the items displayed and to record a similar task for the parallel class. Displays and teachers' assessment records show that pupils have used an art package and programs to support the recognition of phonetic and mathematical patterns. A timetable shows planned equality of opportunity in use of the class computer to support learning in English and mathematics on a regular basis. All three infant classes have regular timetabled slots in the computer suite. This is in its early stages, with time, logistics and staff training necessary to ensure best use of the available time. Children in Year 1 have already begun to develop word-processing skills, writing sentences as labels alongside the pictures taken with the digital camera to record their local area walk, for example. A few higher attainers in Year 2 already know how to load an art package and start a new piece of work, choosing brush sizes, styles and different colours. They also load the word processor, using the shift and caps keys, space bar, enter and letter keys, before naming and saving their work.

142 Junior pupils, especially from Years 4 to 6, are learning and consolidating new skills rapidly because of regular access for full classes to the computer suite. Examples of the very high standards among ten and eleven-year-olds include pupils accessing the Internet through safe systems and using search engines to locate web sites that answer their query about currency conversion. The same pupils use the facts discovered to enter information on spread sheets, using formulae and highlighting cells to convert £s to French Francs. Pupils also sort and analyse spreadsheet data to produce and print graphs and associated information, arranging this in a format suitable for portrait or landscape presentation and checking their presentation on print preview. They use 'power point' to present animated presentations with sound effects, dropping text and graphics onto the screen and moving smoothly from frame to frame, presenting a commentary on the process of selecting 'Hear Say', for instance. Already in Year 4, pupils use art programs skilfully to imitate an art décor poster, showing deft manipulation of the mouse as they click on buttons to brush lines, extend shapes and floodfill spaces. Pupils throughout the juniors learn readily by working collaboratively in pairs, taking turns, making mistakes and correcting them, with the support and encouragement of teachers and assistants.

143 Pupils are highly enthusiastic and fully focused during their time working in the suite. The extensive range of equipment is proving excellent value for money. Staff planning for all subjects routinely includes consideration of the possibility of ICT support and teachers are increasingly recognising the opportunities afforded to develop knowledge and skills in other subjects through ICT. In particular, the school's development plan recognises the need to develop pupils' editing and drafting skills, particularly among younger pupils. The co-ordinator gives a very supportive lead through planning, discussion, informal training and the introduction of a comprehensive assessment system. Appropriate plans for development include extension of a work portfolio, with annotation to exemplify the learning covered and the level achieved.

144 The teaching and learning observed in the suite during specific ICT lessons, parts of lessons supporting numeracy and in the after-school club were very good in the main. Teachers' class management, their strong subject knowledge and ability to convey ICT skills

through questioning and instruction are consistently of high quality. In the best lessons, teachers make excellent use of the interactive whiteboard during their introductory sessions and during interventions that draw the whole class's attention to particular teaching points that arise during the course of lessons. A little teaching was satisfactory, rather than very good, largely due to unforeseen complications in the task. Higher attainers tackled the task successfully, but many other pupils became confused and too many needed support at once, slowing their progress. Nevertheless, in this lesson as in all others, both teacher and pupils showed a high level of understanding and confidence in their use of the toolbar, drop-down menus, buttons and icons to find their way through the challenges set. The co-ordinator has introduced assessment booklets throughout the school and these are beginning to present a picture that tracks each pupil's progress accurately.

Strengths:

- *Excellent facilities, especially the suite and interactive whiteboard.*
- *Subject leadership and staff expertise.*
- *Efficient use of excellent facilities by several teachers.*
- *Collaborative work in pairs in the suite.*

Areas for development:

- *Continue to promote increased use of the suite by infant classes.*
- *Use of word processing to support pupils' writing skills, especially spelling, drafting and editing.*
- *The agreed use of assessment booklets.*

MUSIC

145 Music was not timetabled in the older pupils' classes during the inspection. Judgements are based on three sessions with the younger pupils, a review of planning, analysis of work, discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils, and attendance at assembly, choir and instrumental lessons. It is evident, even from this fairly limited evidence, that teaching and learning is patchy through the school and that standards are not as high as they should be.

146 There are several reasons for this. One is the great variety in staff expertise and confidence. In one excellent lesson, for example, where the teacher was confident, pupils achieved very well. Pupils learnt to differentiate between high and low sounds and related those sounds to symbols. The teacher showed excellent subject knowledge, evident in her reminder about previous work on pitch. She used questioning very effectively to encourage pupils to respond with examples of high and low notes. Her meticulous planning and preparation of resources underpinned very well planned teaching of skills.

147 Instrumental work is also taught very effectively by visiting teachers. Pupils have the opportunity to learn the clarinet, flute, saxophone, violin, keyboard and guitar. These pupils make good progress in developing their musical skills. Pupils also learn to play the recorder and have the opportunity to join the choir, which meets weekly.

148 However it is evident that this strong picture is not consistent through the school. Pupils found it difficult to explain what they had studied, although they were able to identify percussion instruments that they had played. They sing hymns tunefully, but they do not have a repertoire of songs to draw on. There was no evidence of work on musical appreciation, apart from the music chosen for listening in assembly.

149 The strong co-ordinator has identified lack of staff confidence and expertise as one of the reasons for this inconsistent progress. She has organised a training session for staff to

raise confidence in teaching music and planned an awareness-raising week in May to raise the music profile in the curriculum. She has identified several strategies to improve the teaching of music. These include the identification of current staff skills and training needs,

150 Another significant factor that impinges on the music provision in the school is the current practice of 'blocking' music with drama in half-termly slots. This means that pupils do not develop their skills systematically. Overall, pupils at Knightwood do not spend as much time on class music as their peers in many other schools.

151 The school is in a good position to move forward. There are several talented musicians on the staff, who can offer support to colleagues. A good planning framework is now in place and the gaps in resources, such as percussion instruments, assembly music books and more CDs, have been identified.

Strengths

- *Wide range of provision for instrumental playing.*
- *Choir for the older pupils.*

Areas for development

- *Timetabling of class music sessions.*
- *Staff training needs.*
- *Resources.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152 Standards in physical education are above average overall. Eleven-year-olds perform with excellent skill and control in dance and gymnastics. Teaching is very good overall; lessons are well planned and structured. Pupils make good progress. They get out hall apparatus and put it away again afterwards with the minimum of fuss and huge concentration, focusing clearly on their health and safety. They have all been expertly taught by staff over time.

153 Seven-year-olds know the value of warming up thoroughly for exercise. They control their body movements with growing confidence, balancing in a variety of ways on and off the apparatus. They stretch, curl, roll and twist, increasingly refining their movements to make them more graceful. They are beginning to evaluate others' performances quite objectively, according to the demands of the task.

154 Eleven year olds again know the value both of warming up and cooling down. In one session they showed outstanding skill and control in using the apparatus in a very imaginative way to the music of 'Enya.' The teacher had linked their work to history and pupils imagined themselves to be sailors on a Tudor ship. Pupils showed a wide range of movement performed at three different levels, linked their movements to the mood and pace of the music, and used gymnastically based dance movement to simulate sailors' actions. Their performance was quite breathtaking and highly imaginative, and was to be filmed the following week.

155 In another session, Year 4 pupils used appropriate vocabulary such as '*respiration*' and '*oxygenated blood*' when describing the effects of warming up. They showed a wide range of movement in putting together sequences of balances at different levels. Their cooling down session was imaginatively linked to their geography work, when their teacher asked them to imagine they are '*on a beach in St Lucia, lying in the warm sun.*' The teacher used the digital camera for assessment and display purposes in this lesson. In their lesson, Year 5 pupils used percussion instruments to construct a rain dance, altering the rhythm, speed, level and

direction of their movements. They practised and refined their performance. Year 3 pupils thoroughly enjoyed a country dance session, using correct vocabulary and making progress during the lesson.

156 Outside activities were curtailed during the inspection because of rain. Year 2 pupils showed developing skills of throwing and catching, although they were hampered by wet and muddy balls. Year 6 pupils began to kick accurately and head a ball correctly before getting soaked in a sudden hailstorm!

157 Teaching was good for infants and very good for juniors. One Year 6 lesson was excellent. Teachers plan well, demand high standards of behaviour and work, demonstrate well and cover the curriculum thoroughly. Pupils respond equally effectively, rewarding teachers with imaginative and focused work.

158 There are currently clubs for performing arts and sports, although the field is currently out of action. This limits the development of pupils' games and athletics skills. Year 5 pupils go swimming; there are plans to widen availability in the future. The subject manager's action plan contains plans for outdoor education when the field can be used. It has appropriate priorities for the continuing development and improvement of physical education, including training for staff in dance and performing arts.

Strengths:

- *Very good teaching, leading to above average attainment; excellent standards in dance in Year 6.*
- *Very good organisation of pupils in getting out and putting away apparatus.*
- *Pupils concentrate hard, listen attentively and always work hard.*

Areas to develop:

- *Ensure the field is useable as soon as possible.*
- *Develop assessment through use of video and photographs – already in evidence in Years 4 and 6.*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

159 The new programme for religious education has only been in force for a short time, and consequently pupils have not learnt as much as they would otherwise have done. The school rightly prioritised other areas from its opening and since its move to new premises. The programme of work is correctly based on the syllabus set out by the local education authority. Most teachers regularly teach religious education, and lesson planning is more precise. Pupils complete an appropriate amount of work, although there seem to be gaps in Years 4 and 5.

160 By the ages of seven and 11, pupils' achievements in most aspects of the subject are now similar to those expected in the syllabus for pupils of this age. Pupils with special educational needs receive the help they need to play their part in lessons.

161 Most seven-year-olds have learned about special occasions in the religious calendar, for example harvest, Chinese New Year and Diwali. They have discussed what God could look like, and drawn pictures of their ideas. They have a growing awareness of the significance of such occasions as Remembrance Day; they wrote moving prayers about what they wanted to remember about the war-dead. In a Year 1 discussion about Easter, pupils showed remarkable insight into the significance of the story. When asked by the teacher how the story made them feel, one pupil replied *"It makes me feel guilty when people say rude things*

about Jesus.” Pupils prepared questions they wanted to ask the visiting vicar. Examples included the link between Jesus’ death and the custom of giving eggs at Easter.

162 By the time they are 11, pupils have a wide knowledge of the customs and beliefs of their own and other religions. In an assembly about *New Life*, pupils compared the Moslem custom of shaving a newly-born baby’s hair off, weighing it and giving the equivalent value in gold to the poor with the Christian custom of baptism. They are developing a sound base of knowledge and understanding about Christian belief and practice. In a piece of work on the Christian God, one pupil wrote *'If I had an encounter with God, I think I would feel warm, safe and secure.'*

163 Teaching is good for infants and very good for juniors. Infants were taught very well in a lesson on the Easter story. The teacher used simple story cards to help pupils sequence the story. They were then encouraged to enact a different stage of the story, freezing a particular part into a 'photo-frame' and using it for discussion. Pupils concentrated fully on this task, asked very perceptive questions and showed from their discussion that they were very much involved with the lesson. A very good Year 6 lesson encouraged pupils to ask well-constructed questions to the visiting vicar, for example *'if you had to draw an abstract picture of God, what would be in it and why?'* The teacher’s skills and knowledge ensured that pupils were given very good opportunities to broaden their understanding of Christianity.

164 Pupils show very positive attitudes to their work. They are attentive, hard working, sensitive to others’ feelings and beliefs and are confident to put forward their own ideas. Their very good attitudes, combined with very good teaching overall, are bringing about rapidly rising standards.

165 The subject manager is very keen, has an appropriate action plan that addresses key priorities and is eager to develop her subject further. She recognises the need to increase resources, particularly religious objects.

Strengths:

- *Sound development in recent times that is leading to rapidly rising progress.*
- *Enthusiastic leadership of the subject manager.*
- *Pupils’ attitudes to lessons.*
- *Very good overall teaching.*

Areas to develop:

- *Increase resources, particularly religious objects.*