

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE EPIPHANY CE (A) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bournemouth

LEA area: Bournemouth

Unique reference number: 113849

Headteacher: Mr S A Willcocks

Reporting inspector: Dr Colin Lee  
21854

Dates of inspection: 19 – 22 May 2003

Inspection number: 247418

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary-aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shillingstone Drive Muscliff Bournemouth
Postcode:	BH9 3PE
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Snook
Date of previous inspection:	17 – 21 November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21854	Dr C Lee	Registered inspector	Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
8971	Mrs J Hesslewood	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
20230	Mrs J Clayphan	Team inspector	Science Geography	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language
22352	Mrs F Gaywood	Team inspector	Information and communication technology History	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
19302	Mrs C Perrett	Team inspector	Art and design Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	
10204	Mr D Vincent	Team inspector	English Design and technology	Educational inclusion
20846	Mr A Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Epiphany CE Primary School is a larger than the average primary school. Between the reception year and Year 6 there are 417 pupils who are taught in seven single-age year groups by teams of two teachers in each year. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. Pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds that are average overall. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is well below average. A very small proportion of pupils is of minority ethnic heritage and there are three pupils for whom English is an additional language, only one of whom is at an early stage of learning to speak English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, at 17 per cent, is below average. The special needs cover a range of learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, no pupil currently has a Statement of special educational needs. On entry to the reception year, children's attainment is average overall. Religious education has been inspected by a team from the diocese.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many significant strengths. By the end of Year 6, pupils' work in English and mathematics is especially good, being well above national averages. Similarly high standards are achieved in music, which is a strength throughout the school. Due to good teaching, the children in the reception classes and pupils in the juniors make consistently good progress, but progress is slower in the infants, where there have been problems with staffing arrangements in Year 2. The good leadership and management by the headteacher and many other staff with specific responsibilities also play a central role in the school's success, as does the strong sense of teamwork between teachers, learning assistants and non-teaching staff. Together, they ensure that the school provides good value for money, by enabling pupils to leave the school with good academic standards and very good personal development.

#### What the school does well

- By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are well above average in English, mathematics and music, and above average in science and physical education. This reflects the good progress made by pupils of all abilities in their time at the school.
- Pupils' personal development is very good, as a result of the school's very good provision for the development of pupils' social skills and moral values.
- Teaching and learning are good in reception classes and in Years 3 to 6, and this enables many pupils in these year-groups to achieve more than might be expected of them.
- The headteacher's good leadership and very good delegation of responsibilities enables many staff to make a very good contribution to the overall management of the school.
- Parents and the wider community make an excellent impact on the work of the school in general, and the quality of pupils' learning in particular.

#### What could be improved

- By the end of Year 2, pupils are not achieving high enough standards in English, mathematics and science. \*
- The organisation and content of the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 needs amendment in order to improve the overall quality of learning opportunities.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is too generalised and lacks a clear focus.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to the parents and carers of all pupils in the school.*

*Items marked \* have already been identified by the school for inclusion in its school improvement plan.*

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1997. There has been satisfactory improvement overall since that time. The main areas for development arising from that inspection have been addressed successfully. Standards in information and communication technology by the end of Year 6 have risen and now meet expectations. Levels of resourcing for science and for the reception classes have been appropriately increased. Previous non-compliance in the prospectus and governors annual report has been rectified. The school has additionally sought to improve other aspects of its work and this has been particularly successful in the raising of standards in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. The same improvement has not occurred at the end of Year 2. The emphasis on these subjects has, however, had the effect of standards in art and design, design and technology, geography and history now being

slightly lower. This has been compounded by a lessening in the effectiveness of long-term planning in these subjects. Where standards have risen, there has been a corresponding improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools <sup>1</sup>
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	B	A	C
Mathematics	D	B	A	C
Science	D	A	B	C

  

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

The overall trend in test results is one of annual improvement and standards are rising faster than is occurring nationally. The targets set for 2002 were met by the pupils concerned. The work of pupils currently in Year 6 shows that standards are being maintained, with English and mathematics being well above average and science above average. This puts pupils in line to achieve the challenging targets that have been set for them in the 2003 national tests. This good achievement by the end of Year 6 is in marked contrast to the standards being achieved by the end of Year 2, where performance in the national tests has fluctuated considerably in the last few years. In 2002, for example, test results were average in writing but below national averages in reading and mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, these results were well below average in all three subjects. Standards in science, as assessed by class teachers, were above the national average and in line with the average for similar schools. The work of the pupils currently in Year 2 shows slight improvement overall, being average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is confirmed by the 2003 national test results, although these cannot yet be compared with the results achieved nationally. Compared with 2002, there has been improvement in reading, writing and mathematics, with better performance by pupils of average ability overall and by higher-attaining pupils in writing and mathematics. However, by Year 2, pupils are capable of achieving even higher standards than this. One indicator of what they should be achieving is the progress made in reception and the standards by the end of the reception year. Children start the reception year with average attainment overall, but with better-than-expected personal, social and emotional development. Their good progress children make in all areas of learning results in their personal, social and emotional development being well above expectations by the end of the reception year. Standards are above expectations in communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Creative development remains in line with expectations.

Beyond the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, music is a notable strength of the school with standards being above expectations by the end of Year 2 and well above expectations by the end of Year 6. Standards in physical education also exceed expectations by Year 6. In all other subjects, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and information and communication technology, standards match expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school and they show high levels of interest in the work that they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall. Pupils behave very well in lessons, at playtimes and around the school. The behaviour of the older pupils sets a fine example for younger ones.

<sup>1</sup> 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

Personal development and relationships	Very good overall. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on other pupils and they are very respectful of the feelings and values of others.
Attendance	Very good. Levels of attendance are well above average and unauthorised absence is negligible. Punctuality is very good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

The good teaching in reception is achieved through thorough planning, high expectations, very good teaching of basic skills and a very good all-round knowledge and understanding of how children learn. There is good day-to-day assessment of children's progress that is used successfully to plan the next stage in their learning. This helps all children to achieve well in relation to what they knew and could do when they first started school. The variations between Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6 exist in many aspects of teaching. Most notable are the higher expectations of teachers of older pupils and the greater effectiveness of their planning. These differences show themselves in the teaching of English and mathematics in particular. English and mathematics are taught well overall in Years 3 to 6 and the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are consolidated well across the whole curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, however, there are too many unsatisfactory features, such as failure to plan tasks that will really challenge pupils, low expectations, and a slow pace to many lessons. As a result, the overall quality, over time, of the teaching of English and literacy skills, and of mathematics and numeracy skills, is unsatisfactory.

Throughout the school, teachers generally work well together in their year group teams and all work very well with support staff. These teaching assistants are making very positive contributions to the quality of learning of the pupils with whom they work. Pupils with special educational needs gain much from this support and the pupils' progress is good in reception and in Years 3 to 6, and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The few pupils with English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress overall. Learning activities are matched well to the needs of pupils of all abilities in Years 3 to 6 and this is a main reason for their better progress. The only pupils who really need to be challenged a bit more are those registered as gifted or talented. At all stages, pupils show good levels of interest in their work. They maintain good levels of concentration and work well both co-operatively and independently.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall due to aspects of the long-term planning of several subjects needing review in order to improve the progression in pupils' learning. Significant strengths are the excellent contribution of the community to pupils' learning and the very good provision for extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good overall. There is early identification, good teaching and support and regular reviews of pupils' progress towards the specific, short-term targets that have been set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes satisfactory provision for the few pupils concerned.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with strong emphasis and very good provision for pupils' moral and social development that permeates all aspects of school life.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good support for pupils' academic and personal development. There is very good attention to all aspects of pupils' welfare, including the procedures for child protection. Good procedures for promoting racial equality have a good impact on pupils' understanding and attitudes.



Parents rightly hold the school in high regard and the school itself works very hard at maintaining the sense of partnership. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is excellent.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. Particular strengths are the excellence of the headteacher's relationships with all members of the school community and the vital role played by the very good senior management team. Subject leaders carry out their management responsibilities enthusiastically and have clear action plans for the future development of their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its duties satisfactorily. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need developing. Several individual governors have very good involvement in the school's work, but there is scope for the governing body to become more involved in strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory monitoring and evaluation of teaching, and of pupils' standards, enable the school to identify appropriate priorities, set itself targets and pursue effective courses of action for future improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Physical and human resources are used well. Finance is managed and administered very efficiently.

The school has good levels of staffing and learning resources, and the accommodation, including external facilities, is also good. The school applies the principles of best value well, particularly in the way that it consults the views of parents and pupils and in the high level of challenge that it sets for older pupils.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Children are making good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• They are well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> <li>• Expectations are high.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The provision of homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all that pleases parents. The concerns expressed by a small minority about extra-curricular activities and homework are not substantiated. In comparison with other primary schools, the provision of after-school clubs and additional opportunities for pupils is very good. Homework provision is consistent with the school's policy and provides good reinforcement of what is learned in school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Children's attainment is average overall when they start their reception year, although their personal, social and emotional development is at a level that is above the expectations for their age. From the outset children achieve well, and the good provision in reception classes enables children of all abilities to make good progress. By the end of the reception year, children achieve beyond the Early Learning Goals<sup>2</sup> set for this age. Their attainment is well above expectations in their social development, above expectations in language and mathematical development, in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical and their creative development.
2. By the end of Year 2, pupils in recent years have not been maintaining the good rate of progress that they showed in reception. This is evident in the results in national tests at the end of Year 2. In 2002, for example, test results matched the national averages in writing, but were below the national averages in reading and mathematics. When compared with similar schools the results were well below average in all tests. There is no obvious trend in the test results and they have fluctuated from year to year. Overall, average results for the past three years have been close to the national average in reading, but below average in writing and mathematics. In science, comparisons with other schools are more favourable. Teachers' assessments of pupils' standards in science in 2002 were above the national average and matching the average of similar schools. The results of the more able pupils in the tests in 2002, that is the percentages who achieved the higher-than-expected Level 3, matched the national average, in writing, but were below average in reading and mathematics. In science, the percentage attaining Level 3 was well above the national average.
3. National comparisons are not yet possible for the 2003 tests, but early indications are of an improvement. This is, most noticeably, in the performance of pupils of average ability in reading and in average- and higher-attaining pupils in writing and mathematics. The pupils currently in Year 2 are also achieving higher standards in their work in lessons than that indicated by the results of their predecessors in the 2002 national tests. Standards are now average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, these pupils were above average when they started in Year 1, so current standards represent insufficient progress and unsatisfactory achievement overall. This is due to a combination of factors, including teachers' expectations being too low, and an insufficient planning of tasks that are specifically matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities. The quality of provision has been adversely affected by changes in teaching staff during the year. Indeed the last three years have seen completely different pairs of teachers working in Year 2 each year. This lack of continuity, in both teaching and co-ordination of these year-groups, is holding back the improvement in standards that the school is striving to achieve. As a result, although many pupils maintain good progress during Year 1, by the end of Year 2, standards in English, mathematics are only average overall, as they were at the time of the last inspection.
4. In contrast to the slow progress in raising standards by Year 2, the school is being much more successful when pupils are in Years 3 to 6. Rising standards are evident in both the work done in lessons and in the performance in the national tests for pupils taken by pupils at the end of Year 6. Results in these tests show a steady improvement overall, since 1998, and this improvement is greater than has been achieved nationally. In 2002, test results in English and mathematics were well above the national averages, while science was above average. The results in all tests matched the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher-than-expected Level 5 was well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Various targets had been set for pupils in these tests. The proportion achieving Level 4 or above matched the school's target in English and was very slightly below in mathematics. This suggests that the targets were just challenging enough. However, far more pupils gained Level 5 than had been predicted and this indicates that higher targets would have been appropriate. This is recognised in the targets set for pupils currently in Year 6 in this year's tests. Very challenging

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<sup>2</sup> The Early Learning Goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

targets have been set, particularly in science, but the quality of the pupils' work indicates that they are on track to achieve the full range of targets. Pupils' work is well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. This represents a significant improvement in standards in these subjects since the last inspection. It reflects consistently good teaching across Years 3 to 6, where there has been stability for several years, and the high expectations of the teachers in these year groups.

5. In English, while pupils' reading skills are satisfactory in Year 2, there is significant progress in subsequent years that results in pupils in Year 6 being able to discuss a book's characters and plot with maturity and very good understanding. They also have a well-developed ability to locate information quickly and accurately in non-fiction books. Pupils in Year 6 have a real strength in writing, using a wide vocabulary and expressing ideas and feelings when they write creatively in both stories and poetry. Significant progress is also evident in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. From the average standards attained in number work, knowledge of shapes, and measuring in Year 2, pupils are very confident, accurate and quick in their number calculations by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 have satisfactory knowledge of science but their understanding is inhibited by lack of opportunities to think for themselves as a consequence of the narrowness of what they learn from over use of worksheets. In contrast, by the end of Year 6, pupils demonstrate good understanding of the very broad range of topics that they have studied. They also have a good understanding of the principles of scientific investigations. They plan such work thoroughly, predict what will happen by using their knowledge, and explain results logically, using scientific vocabulary correctly.
6. Beyond the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, standards show a general consistency in relation to national expectations. Music is a real strength throughout the school with standards being well above expectations by the end of Year 6 and above expectations by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, standards in physical education also exceed expectations. At both ages, standards meet expectations in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and information and communication technology. However, this range of standards shows some differences from those at the time of the last inspection. Standards in information and communication technology were then below expectations at the end of Year 6. Art and design, design and technology and geography were all above expectations at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Similarly, history exceeded expectations at the end of Year 6. The slight drop in standards in these subjects is a consequence of the major emphasis placed on raising standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology by the end of Year 6.
7. There is a significant variation between the year groups in the percentages of pupils with special educational needs. The range is from three per cent in the reception classes, to 34 per cent in Year 5. Ninety per cent of the pupils with special educational needs have learning difficulties in literacy, while 71 per cent have identified learning difficulties in numeracy. The progress made by these pupils is generally good and this is due, in particular, to the good quality of support provided by teaching assistants. This support is successful in helping the pupils to achieve the targets identified in their individual education plans. In Years 1 and 2, progress is good when pupils are withdrawn for additional support, but is sometimes slower than it should be in lessons where the work provided for them is not accurately matched to their ability. In Years 3 to 6, on the other hand, they achieve well, due both to the quality of support and of the day-to-day teaching, which more successfully provides for individual needs. The result of this support, which is well-planned by teachers, is that many pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 have caught up with their classmates and are achieving the average standards expected of their age. The school also identifies pupils who are either gifted or talented in specific aspects of their learning. Provision for these pupils is satisfactorily planned to meet their particular needs in most lessons. There were good arrangements earlier in the year, whereby a teacher had specific responsibility for working with some of these pupils on work geared to their needs. Necessary staffing re-arrangement has led to the removal of this provision and class teachers vary in the extent to which they plan appropriately challenging work for these pupils. There is generally good provision where pupils' ability is high in science or information and communication technology. However, in literacy and numeracy lessons, these pupils, more often, complete the same tasks as the groups of higher-attaining pupils when they, in fact, need still more challenging work. As a consequence, their progress is at best satisfactory.
8. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language make appropriate progress for their

abilities, although the school identifies all as having special educational needs, which is true in only one case. Pupils have individual education plans with specific and appropriate language targets. Pupils are carefully supported in class whenever possible, and two older pupils have regular additional support by an experienced visiting specialist teacher.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development, relationships and attendance are very good and have a significant direct effect on pupils' learning and achievement. These aspects have been maintained at this high level since the previous inspection.
10. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance levels are well above the national average. There have been no exclusions in the past year. Pupils' high levels of good attendance and very low levels of unauthorised absence have been maintained since the previous inspection five years ago and have a positive effect on their progress. Punctuality is very good. Registers are accurately maintained according to statutory requirements. A very efficient and orderly entry into the building, together with registration periods conducted in a polite, respectful and friendly manner, provide a good, enthusiastic start to the day's work.
11. Pupils settle quickly to their lessons because of teachers' consistent use of effective classroom routines. They listen well and are eager to answer questions. When the teaching is very good pupils are interested, eager to learn and fully involved in the stimulating activities provided. Examples of very good attitudes to learning were seen in English, science, physical education and music lessons, particularly from pupils in Years 1, 5 and 6. Children in the reception class also had very good attitudes towards their learning, because teachers know the children's abilities well and skilfully challenge them to improve. However, a small number of instances of inattentiveness and shuffling occurred in some Year 1 and 2 classes. This is because of lack of focus to the session, inappropriate expectations of pupils' capabilities and achievement and inconsistent management by the teacher.
12. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, moving around the school, and during breaks, is very good. They behave in a very mature and responsible manner, and, obeying the rules, respond positively to praise and the high expectations of all staff. Older pupils set excellent examples to younger ones, in particular the pupils in Year 6 who help supervise children in the reception classes, during lunch, and play with the younger pupils during breaks. Any hint of scuffling, disagreement or spitefulness is diffused quickly, often through very mature, friendly intervention by other pupils. Pupils are working and playing in an environment that is totally free from oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, racism and sexism.
13. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils demonstrate very high levels of self-discipline and are polite and courteous towards adults and each other. They co-operate and work together well in pairs and groups. During a Year 1 science activity, pupils' accomplished their learning task quickly and successfully because the boys and girls amicably shared glue sticks and scissors. In Year 4 the teacher expected pupils to work together during a mathematics lesson, and to give each other positive feedback on the accuracy of directions. As a result, their learning and understanding was successfully extended. Pupils show a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. An admirable example was seen during a Year 5 physical education lesson, when the objective was 'a partner-trust activity' which involved guiding a blindfolded partner round an obstacle course. Pupils rose to this challenge very well, acting sensibly, learning to trust their guide and appreciating how helplessness is relieved by the guidance of another person. Pupils show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. All pupils value and care for their school environment. In Year 6, for instance, pupils were able to empathise effectively with the local population during a class discussion about a threatened environment. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of others through their support for a wide variety of charitable organisations. Pupils with special educational needs respond well to the additional help that they receive, and form friendly and co-operative relationships with support staff.
14. Pupils use their own initiative and take their responsibilities as monitors, school councillors and green council members very seriously. They respond to questionnaires with good and practical ideas. They offer help to visitors, organise play for younger pupils and discuss their activities with

enthusiasm. The project booklets describing a residential visit undertaken by pupils in Year 6 are excellent examples of researching and organising their own work. By the time pupils leave the school they are mature, well organised, responsible, caring and self-reliant individuals.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The overall quality of teaching and learning is better than that at the time of the last inspection, with more teaching that is good or better and more that is very good or better. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has remained about the same. There are, however, variations within the school, with teaching and learning being good overall in the reception classes and Years 3 to 6, and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.
16. The two reception teachers are ably supported by teaching assistants who are well briefed, and are valued members of the 'reception team'. There is a very supportive ethos within the reception classes, and teachers and assistants work well together to ensure that all children achieve well. The two teachers plan activities together to ensure that all children have similar experiences. The good planning ensures that all the areas of learning are covered, with links to the National Curriculum made when appropriate, making sure that the more able pupils are sufficiently challenged. The teachers have high expectations regarding behaviour and develop basic skills very effectively. The teaching assistants are well briefed and know exactly what their role is in the classroom. Adults interact well within groups, and use every opportunity to develop all areas of the curriculum. The adults use questioning well to reinforce previous learning before moving on, and this ensures that children learn continuously. The adults know the children well and comprehensive records are kept of what children can do, and these are then used well to plan subsequent activities.
17. Throughout the school, the relationships between teachers and other adults in the classroom with pupils are good and all teachers make good use of support staff to provide additional instruction and guidance for pupils. Support staff are briefed thoroughly and the quality of their guidance to pupils is good. These staff and volunteers have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and to the progress that they make in lessons.
18. The teaching of basic literacy skills is good overall. There is, however, a variation across the school and, while very good in Year 3 to 6, the teaching of literacy skills in Years 1 and 2, has been unsatisfactory in the past, with the weaknesses only starting to be addressed very recently. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy Strategy effectively by providing a range of activities that are matched well to the needs of groups of pupils of different abilities. Teachers make satisfactory use of lessons in subjects other than English to develop pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented satisfactorily. Teachers are confident and promote number work strongly. However, there is less planning of different tasks for different ability levels than in literacy and this weakness is particularly evident in Years 1 and 2. As a result, the higher-attaining pupils sometimes complete tasks that are not challenging enough for them. A strength of the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is the breadth of teachers' subject knowledge which is good overall. This knowledge is used well to teach the basic skills in all subjects and this provides a firm foundation for their future learning.
19. The majority of teachers are consistent in their management of pupils' behaviour. They make their expectations clear and provide much positive comment whenever good behaviour occurs. These clear guidelines are a particular help to those pupils who have behavioural difficulties and who, at times, can present a challenge to teachers' authority.
20. The higher quality of teaching and learning in reception and Years 3 to 6 results, in part, from the higher expectations that these teachers have of the standards of which pupils are capable. This leads to the good progress that most pupils achieve in these classes. They thrive on the challenge and this was nowhere more evident than in a Year 6 mathematics lesson in which the more able pupils were very highly motivated by the task of solving problems on the perimeter and area of shapes that they had to calculate. There is a variation in the extent to which teachers carry out ongoing assessment of pupils' learning during lessons. This is satisfactory overall but, in Years 1 to 6, is generally not as thorough as in the reception classes where information about children's learning is used well to plan the next stage in learning for individuals. Most teachers plan and

discuss with the class what it is intended that they all should learn by the end of a lesson, but this is often vague in some lessons with younger pupils and is rarely refined to a level of communicating different learning targets for different groups or individuals. Where targets are individualised, such as in information and communication technology lessons in Years 3 and 4, teachers monitor pupils' work well and adapt tasks or set a new target in the light of how pupils are progressing. It is a common feature of the best teaching that the teachers' very specific learning targets are clearly displayed and constantly referred to. Additionally, the activities in these lessons are ambitious but, due to the teachers' very good awareness of what pupils could achieve with hard work, are achievable. Pupils rise to the challenge as was seen in a Year 3 music lesson with pupils with special educational needs, where the excellent teaching helped pupils to achieve high standards in their work and a great sense of accomplishment.

21. Teachers of classes in the same year group plan lessons together, but the thoroughness of this planning is variable. Where it is detailed, as in Year 6, thought is given to the needs of different groups of pupils and a range of activities is planned to provide just the right amount of challenge for groups of different abilities. More frequently in subjects other than English and mathematics, there are too many lessons in which pupils of all abilities complete the same task and all too often this task requires the completion of a worksheet that fails to stimulate pupils to think for themselves or bring an individual touch to their work. This limitation in planning has an adverse effect on the progress of particular groups of pupils, most especially those in Year 2, but also, on occasions, those pupils who are identified as gifted and talented. A very positive feature of teaching within each year group is the good use made of each teacher's particular areas of subject expertise. This leads to one teacher responsible for teaching, for example, the music to each class, while the partner teacher takes the physical education. Pupils benefit from good teacher expertise and there is a built-in consistency in provision, ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. Particular strengths in the teaching of subjects are in music and information and communication technology, in which teaching is good across the school. In Years 3 to 6 teaching of physical education is very good and teaching of English, mathematics and science is good. The long term view of teaching of English and mathematics across Years 1 and 2 is of unsatisfactory teaching overall because pupils fail to make as much progress as they should do.
22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers are skilled in identifying pupils who have special educational needs and are fully involved in drawing up individual educational plans for them. These plans are detailed and helpful and ensure that pupils achieve well. Teachers and support staff work closely and effectively together to this end. The pupils who use English as an additional language are taught as well as possible. Teachers and teaching assistants have not yet received any specific training, which is due to take place in the autumn term, but adults try hard to ensure that pupils have enough support to follow lessons, and, in general, pupils make satisfactory progress. One pupil has also been identified as having a special educational need and receives appropriate support for this. Pupils were observed to understand the broad outline of topics during lessons, but, although teachers constantly give their whole class the requisite vocabulary, they need to go into further detail in order that pupils who speak English as an additional language may take full part throughout the day.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

23. In the reception classes, activities are planned to ensure that an appropriate curriculum is delivered to meet the Early Learning Goals. There is a good balance of structured lessons and opportunities for children to learn through play. A good range of quality activities is provided and good use is made of visitors to the school, who share their experiences with the children.
24. The school provides a broad, relevant curriculum for Years 1 to 6, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, and is wide enough to support pupils' academic and personal development well. It is satisfactory in quality, but lacking balance since the time of the last inspection. This is partly because some subjects are set into the timetable termly, and not taught frequently enough. Whilst what is taught in history, geography and art and design, for instance, contributes reasonably well to pupils' development, the learning of skills is not a continuous process, because the gaps in time between the teaching of units of work are often too long. This was obvious when speaking to a group of pupils in Year 6, whose knowledge of some periods of history was quite good, but whose

understanding of chronology, for example, was underdeveloped. Perceptively, they felt that they only touched on bits of the periods they studied, often not in enough depth to understand why things happened. However, the addition of French to the curriculum for pupils in Years 5 and 6 adds interest for them and helps them to prepare for modern foreign languages in their secondary schools.

25. Generally, the school has effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. The status of information and communication technology has improved from the time of the last report, when standards were judged to be insufficiently high especially in Years 3 to 6, and some aspects of the National Curriculum were not being covered well enough. The school has worked hard to ensure that more opportunities are available for pupils to learn skills progressively in the subject, and this has raised standards appropriately.
26. Another cause for the imbalance in the curriculum is the way the school sets its daily timetable. This issue has not been considered for some time, and the school realises it has not taken into consideration the need for new timetables to reflect new curriculum strategies. Long, single periods before and after break in the morning, for instance, result in many literacy and numeracy lessons being far too long, especially for younger pupils. A similar pattern has been followed in the afternoon by many classes, and the flow of time is disjointed by a playtime, especially for older pupils. More effective subdivisions of time would allow for better pace in existing sessions, and for extra lessons to be fitted in, to allow history and geography, for example, to be taught on a more regular, continuous basis. Recent changes in planning and assessment emphasis have not yet had a positive impact upon the curriculum, but the school feels they are beginning to be more accurate in meeting the needs of more pupils. However, insufficiently high expectations, when planning work, sometimes results in under-achievement by more able pupils. Whilst subject leaders are involved in a system of monitoring, the focus of their work is insufficiently clear, and book sampling should have far more specific purposes in order to recognise any form of under-achievement more readily.
27. The curriculum is not modified at present to take account of the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. They receive specific language support in small groups under the tutoring of a visiting specialist and the school has bought extra time which is having a positive benefit on the pupils' progress. The quality of learning opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. The effectiveness of teaching strategies for their literacy and numeracy development is also good. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum and after-school activities.
28. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is good overall. The subject is enthusiastically led. Lessons are regularly timetabled and based on a scheme of work covering the broad themes of sex and relationships, healthy living, safety and the environment, relationships and citizenship and drugs education. During a Year 6 lesson, the implications and responsibilities of parenthood were effectively taught by simulation. Care for an egg was sensitively used to represent the baby. However, other personal, health and social education lessons seen lacked a sharp personal or social focus being more geographical in content. There is limited monitoring of the content of lessons planned or delivered, or mapping of cross-curricular links. Whole school involvement in sessions such as the safety day, which involved the emergency services and a wide range of 'hands on' and simulation activities, is a very good feature. This, together with ongoing participation in the 'Healthy Schools' Award, healthy eating and drug awareness teaching, and the session run by the Youth Advisory Drugs Service at a recent parents' evening are very valuable initiatives. The school has good procedures for promoting racial equality and these have a good impact on pupils' understanding and attitudes.
29. Provision for extra-curricular activities, particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6, is very good. The range and variety has been effectively maintained since the previous inspection. Activities include sporting, musical, artistic and environmental clubs, competitions and events. Currently there are limited extracurricular opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2, although the school is already planning to develop clubs for these younger pupils. The extensive range of activities is enhanced by the involvement of parental helpers and professional coaches and advisers. Good examples include a club coach running a volleyball session, while parents supervise rounders games. In addition the gardening club is an outstanding example of an inclusive extra-curricular activity. It is very well attended and regularly involves parents, grandparents, teaching assistants, pupils and



members of the community in a healthy, co-operative manner. Everyone enjoys their work, which effectively enhances the school grounds while teaching pupils valuable lessons on how vegetables and flowers grow and how working together improves relationships and the school environment. The continuing expanding involvement of 'the community' is an outstanding feature of the school. Strong links with The Epiphany Church help foster its family-focused, friendly ethos. Through sponsorship, local and national competitions, links with sports clubs, together with visits from performers, and the public services, the school ensures pupils are progressively exposed to and effectively learn about the world outside school. Charity collections, elderly people visiting to talk about their wartime experiences, musical performances at residential homes, together with collaboration on a dance project with Linwood School, all help pupils understand the differing circumstances of other people's lives. The outstanding support and voluntary work provided by the employees of a local company ensures an enduring enhancement of the playground for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

30. There is continuing good liaison between The Epiphany and the large number of secondary schools to which pupils move when they finish Year 6. Links with pre-school groups are also good. Students from Bournemouth and Poole College work effectively with pupils, both as part of their sports leadership course and on healthy eating projects.
31. The provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The strategies for promoting moral and social awareness are very good and make a significant contribution to the very good relationships, which flourish throughout the school; those for promoting cultural development are good. There has been a slight decline in the provision for pupils' spiritual development since the last inspection and it is now satisfactory overall with some strengths.
32. The school has a clear set of values, based firmly on Christian principles, which underlie the work and whole being of the school. Good opportunities for pupils to recognise and appreciate the individual are planned in some physical education and music lessons and these make a valuable contribution to raising pupils' self-esteem. A lesson for pupils with special educational needs was outstanding in promoting their self-confidence. However, in other subjects such as English, although lessons are often of good quality, the atmosphere is business-like and opportunities are missed for pupils to produce and appreciate sensitive pieces of work. In the majority of assemblies during the week of the inspection, topics were presented in a matter-of-fact manner and opportunities were missed for pupils to reflect seriously or to feel uplifted, although during a hymn practice for older pupils, everyone was deeply moved by a dance performed by a small group of girls.
33. Very good opportunities are provided across the whole curriculum for pupils to develop their moral understanding and sense of right and wrong. Teachers expect pupils to take responsibility for their own actions and to treat each other thoughtfully. The results are clearly seen in the very good standards of behaviour observed in lessons and around the school, and in the high level of politeness pupils show to adults and to each other. The introduction of a school council is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' awareness of issues of citizenship and the whole school is regularly involved in raising money for charities. At present, pupils are growing sunflowers in aid of a society for the blind.
34. The school's promotion of pupils' social development is very good. Adults set very positive examples that make a significant contribution to the very good relationships that permeate the school. Staff show that they value all their pupils equally and this creates a harmonious atmosphere. There are regular opportunities for pupils to work in groups and they do so well, willing to listen to their friends and to share in activities. Teachers give generously of their time outside the classroom in a very good range of extracurricular activities and these provide more opportunities for pupils to build good relationships and to work as members of a team. Pupils in Year 6 volunteer to eat lunch with younger pupils and to help them around the school. An annual residential visit for pupils in Year 6 helps them to become independent and to use their initiative through activities, such as orienteering.
35. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school is successful in making pupils aware of their own community and the rich diversity of the wider world. It encourages pupils

to enjoy aspects of different cultures through teaching in subjects across the curriculum. For example, there are regular opportunities to listen to and appreciate a wide range of music. An ex-pupil has given lessons in percussion. Indian and Greek days are organised when pupils learn about the customs of the countries and taste the food. There are many opportunities for pupils to dance and see dances from around the world such as from the Caribbean. The school acknowledges and celebrates festivals such as Diwali as well as Christmas. Teachers ensure that pupils are aware of their local heritage by visits in the community and neighbourhood, and there are close links with the church.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

36. The school continues to provide very good care for its pupils. All staff, working together, effectively promote the welfare, academic progress and self-esteem of all pupils. As a consequence, pupils feel safe, happy and valued and this makes a very positive contribution to their attitudes to learning and behaviour.
37. Overall, the procedures for child protection, health and safety and pupil welfare are very good. The issues raised at the previous inspection, with regard to safe storage of physical education equipment, and the first-aid provision during cross-country runs, have been rectified appropriately. Very close attention is paid to risk assessment procedures both within school and when taking pupils on day trips and residential visits. Induction procedures for children joining the reception class are very good. Parents value the home visits made by staff. Teachers in Year 1 and 2 are vigilant at the end of the day, only releasing pupils to known carers.
38. The school complies with local child protection procedures. The designated teacher undertakes regular training. Staff understand the requirements and know their pupils very well. The recent 'Internet access' policy has been shared with parents. Policies on the 'use of restraint' and criminal record checks, are also in place.
39. Substantial improvements to the environment since the previous inspection have resulted in healthier and safer conditions for staff and pupils. The newly refurbished toilets are a good feature. The school's ongoing participation in the 'healthy schools' project, emphasis on teaching personal safety, the green committee, and gardening club, are very good features, which make a very effective contribution to the health and personal wellbeing of pupils.
40. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Attendance is well promoted in the prospectus. There are clear instructions to teachers on the marking of registers and monitoring of attendance. Manual registers are transferred to computer daily and monitored by the administration assistant. Known reasons for absence are recorded. Holiday requests are closely monitored by the headteacher. Parents are expected to contact the school before 9.00am if a child cannot attend and send a written explanation on their return. The school routinely checks unexplained absences after three days, which is unsatisfactory. A policy of 'first-day phoning' to explore reasons for absence and to ensure pupils' safety should be considered.
41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond well to praise and the rewards system. Procedures for managing behaviour in the playground are under review. All stakeholders are involved. Lunchtime supervisors are undergoing additional training in behaviour management. However, the good quality supervision and organisation of pupils' lunchtime break, high quality outdoor environment, together with the play activities provided for the reception classes and Years 1 and 2, already ensure that the lunch break is a happy, sociable occasion, particularly for younger pupils.
42. The mainly informal procedures that staff use to monitor and support pupils' personal development are good. Class teachers know their pupils well. Individual effort is effectively encouraged through praise and awarding of stars, stickers or team points. Personal development is well supported through the use of monitors and helpers. Membership of the school council and 'green committee' is well promoted. Most personal, social, health and citizenship lessons are effective.

## Assessment

43. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator has a good understanding of the data, which must be collected in order to track progress more closely than before. New tracking sheets indicate a mid-year review to check whether predictions are accurate enough. As yet, this process has had no impact, but is providing very useful talking points especially about the progress of particular individuals and groups. Generally, insufficiently high expectations in Years 1 and 2, and weak target setting and level prediction in the recent past, has led to under-achievement and inadequate test results.
44. Adults in the reception classes know the children well and take great care to address their particular needs. Good use is made of the very good continuous assessment records that are kept in all areas of learning to give a clear picture of the progress children make and highlight any weaknesses. Regular meetings with parents ensure that they have a clear picture of their children's attainment in all areas of the curriculum.
45. Assessment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is adequate. In English, work is moderated effectively, however staff do not moderate work in mathematics, and awareness of levels is, therefore, much less effective. This leads to insufficiently high expectations of pupils, especially in Years 1 and 2. In science, assessment is basic, and would also benefit from the awareness and inclusion of National Curriculum attainment levels in the process. Most non-core subjects now have manageable systems in place, which is an improvement since the time of the last inspection, when assessment in music, information and communication technology and physical education was found to be unsatisfactory. Music and physical education systems are now good, and information and communication technology is adequate. However, art and design now has no assessment at all, which is a retrograde step.
46. Generally, teachers complete assessments assiduously, and regularly write short evaluations about some lessons. Subject leaders check the paperwork and make comments, designed to ensure teachers continue to refine their planning process. Class teachers sign the monitoring forms to indicate they have had feedback and discussion with the subject leaders. The school feels these sorts of assessments are an improvement, but understands there is a need for further work in order to make assessment of attainment and progress, more fully, a part of teaching and learning. The quality and amount of marking, in order to help pupils improve their work, is variable and often insufficient. Assessment files for each pupils move with them, from class to class, and the new tracking system now runs alongside this.
47. The monitoring of special educational needs is good. At all stages pupils are closely monitored and their individual education plans are regularly updated. The school has a good system of communication between class teachers, support staff and the special needs co-ordinator, so that concerns about any aspect of a child's development can quickly be communicated and handled effectively.
48. The use the school derives from its assessment procedures is satisfactory in most cases. Teaching assistants keep clear, manageable records. However, insufficient use is made of pupils' self-assessment. Most teachers share lesson intentions with the pupils at an appropriate time in a lesson. Unfortunately, some of these intentions are not specific enough for that particular lesson, or not shared in pupil friendly language. A few teachers offer pupils the opportunity to say how they feel about their learning, but, occasionally, do not appear to accept a pupil's view when it is given. A well thought-out process would contribute positively to the pupils' knowledge of their own learning, which is unsatisfactory at present in Years 1 and 2, and adequate in Years 3 to 6, where pupils clearly have the ability to participate more fully.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. Parents are very supportive of the school. They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems and find the staff, pupils and school building very welcoming. Parents feel that teachers have high expectations, that their children like school and are making good progress. The teaching is good and the school is well led and managed. Those who attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting liked the clear guidelines provided about homework. However,

responses to the parents' questionnaire indicated that a minority disagreed with the view that their children got the right amount of homework. A significant minority did not agree that the school provided a range of activities outside lessons. The evidence points to these concerns being unfounded and inspectors cannot support parents in their views. However, there is complete agreement with parents about the areas they see as strengths.

50. The school has very effective links with parents and actively encourages them as partners in their children's education. The pattern of effective partnership is successfully forged through a programme of home visits before children start the reception year. Part-time attendance in the first term, and daily feedback between teachers and parents on academic and emotional progress, continue to strengthen parental commitment. Parents are expected to help with work at home, in particular with early reading skills. Parents of children in the reception classes are actively encouraged to listen to their children read their books or words, which has a positive impact on children's progress. Easy access to teachers and open and welcoming support and encouragement from the headteacher and deputy headteacher, together with a workable home-school agreement, help maintain the partnership as pupils grow up.
51. The information provided to parents is good. The regular newsletter actively reports events and successes. Curriculum information, topics to be covered and planned trips for each year group are shared termly with parents. Opportunities to discuss pupils' progress are held termly. The quality of pupil reports has improved since the previous inspection. They now report on what pupils know and can do in the core subjects, including targets for improvement, together with topics covered in the other subjects. Pupils have the opportunity to comment on their progress and parents can make written replies. However, there is no written indication of achievement in relation to national levels, which could illustrate to parents progress from year to year, or opportunity for parents to help formulate an agreed action plan for improvement. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are actively invited, each term, to help in the review of their children's progress and sign the agreed individual education plan. Those who do not attend the meeting are subsequently contacted by the co-ordinator and encouraged to become more actively involved. The parents of pupils who use English as an additional language are consulted regularly about their children's progress.
52. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at home and at school. They regularly hear their younger children read and support older children with homework and projects. Parents regularly help with extra-curricular clubs, and willingly help with transport to sporting events and concerts. Parents are encouraged to help in school and training is given. A small number regularly help with reading and practical subjects and on trips. Parents' views are regularly canvassed through an Ofsted-type questionnaire. A good number of parents responded with their willingness to become part of a parent liaison group, which will feed ideas into the school improvement plan. The Epiphany School Friends' Association continues to be very active in supporting and raising funds for the school. The Association runs many social and fundraising events for pupils, parents and friends and is very well supported. Their regular newsletter advertises forthcoming events, and articles also often reinforce issues highlighted by the school, such as, clothing being named, and responsible car parking. Overall, parental involvement has an excellent impact on the work of the school, helping to raise standards of achievement and actively supporting its co-operative, inclusive ethos.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

53. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff is good overall, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher's good leadership is founded on excellent relationships with all members of the school community. His style of leadership is exemplified by the rigour with which he ensures that the school puts into practice a wide range of procedures that ensure equal opportunities for all pupils. A further significant strength is the very good delegation of management responsibility that enables the specific areas of expertise of individuals to be used for the benefit of all.
54. The overall management of the school by senior managers and subject leaders is good. The senior management team is a particular strength in the management structure and is a very effective decision-making body. At the same time, all staff are valued as part of the process of school development and one reason for the senior management team being so successful is the extent to

which they initiate consultation with staff, pupils and parents. This enables all members of the school community to have good impact on ensuring that the school's aims and values are strongly evident in all its work. The deputy headteacher plays a very important role in establishing good lines of communication and effective liaison within the school community. He is also having very good impact on the whole process of school improvement planning. The role of co-ordinator for Years 3 to 6 is carried out with considerable expertise and success by the post-holder. She has created a strong team of teachers and teaching assistants and her very good leadership has produced a good balance of priorities between pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils' rising standards and very good personal development are due to the collective efforts of the staff involved with Years 3 to 6. Years 1 and 2 currently lack full-time co-ordination, but the senior management team is starting to benefit from the expertise of one of the teachers in the reception year, who has been asked to maintain an overview of reception, and Years 1 and 2 in a voluntary capacity. This teacher has a very clear picture of all aspects of this stage of learning. There is an excellent team approach where all adults' views are valued, and all make good contributions to the children's learning. The non-teaching adults in the reception classes are very well deployed and have a positive impact on the children's learning.

55. The special needs co-ordinator provides good leadership and has successfully maintained the good strategies for supporting pupils with special educational needs reported in the last inspection. As a result, the school has been successful both in reducing the need for additional support and raising attainment for many pupils. All statutory requirements are met and the co-ordinator provides good support for teachers in their writing of individual targets for pupils and in the liaison with outside agencies. The management of provision for pupils who use English as an additional language is not wholly satisfactory, at present, because there has not been any specific training either for the subject leader or for staff. There has been a misunderstanding that these pupils have special educational needs. A lack of external support for the children in the reception classes who use English as an additional language has left the school to do their best for children of this age. Limited external support for older pupils has led the school to buy in extra time for them.
56. The leadership and management of subjects is good overall and all subject leaders demonstrate at least good levels of expertise and knowledge in their subjects. There are good systems to guide their management, such as co-ordinator diaries in which all their activities are logged. Their action plans are an integral part of the school improvement plan and these plans have clear targets for subject development.
57. In working towards improvements in the areas for development that were identified at the last inspection, sound progress has been made which, together with other improvement in important areas, such as the quality of teaching, and the standards now being achieved by pupils in Year 6, has resulted in satisfactory improvement overall since the last inspection. Staff have a strong, shared commitment to raising standards that is very evident and successful in Years 3 to 6, and is now starting to be more apparent in Years 1 and 2. This is evidence of the strengthening capacity to succeed still further that the school now demonstrates. The dedication and hard work of everyone associated with the school creates a purposeful, secure environment. Staff are sensitive to the personal circumstances and characteristics of each pupil, and there is a quiet determination to do the best for every one. This is a good school in which everyone is valued and included. The very good outcomes in terms of pupils' academic standards and personal development by the time they leave the school are a confirmation that the school provides good value for money.

### **Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance**

58. The school's systems for monitoring and evaluating its own performance are satisfactory. There is a developing rigour and consistency in its procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work. Teaching of literacy, numeracy and science is monitored through periodic lesson observation by pairs of senior managers and this has been effective in refining teachers' skills. The time is right for senior management to review the purpose of lesson observation and to identify more specific priorities for this monitoring. It is also necessary to ensure that the type of monitoring and evaluation carried out by subject leaders, best suits their own and the school's priorities. This will require the creation of opportunities for some subject leaders to get first-hand knowledge of pupils' standards, and the quality of teaching and learning, by observing or working collaboratively in colleagues' classes. Standards of pupils' work

are monitored through analysis of National Curriculum test results and occasional work sampling. As with the lesson observations for monitoring teaching, the work sampling too often lacks a specific focus, such as the quality of marking, or seeking evidence of use of literacy skills across the curriculum. Test results are analysed in detail and the data is starting to be used constructively to predict pupils' future performance. In the past, data analysis has focused on performance by the older pupils. However, recent work by the new assessment co-ordinator provides important guidance for the school in addressing the under-achievement of pupils by the end of Year 2. This evaluation highlights the fact that expectations have been too low and provides a much-needed impetus for the school as a whole, and teachers in Years 1 and 2 in particular, to re-assess the procedures for setting targets for pupils.

59. The school has well-defined procedures for self-evaluation, monitoring and performance management and these are starting to have a good impact on school improvement planning. Under the deputy headteacher's very good guidance, the school improvement plan is moving away from an annual statement of priorities. A logical, but nevertheless innovative approach is developing whereby the planning for school improvement is a continuous process in which subject and other leaders are constantly reviewing their action plans and establishing new targets as soon as earlier ones are achieved. A further development, where the deputy headteacher is again the driving force, is the planned involvement of the governors together with parents' working parties, through the formulation of specific action plans that will form part of the school improvement planning process. A significant number of parents have already indicated their interest in this development.

### **The Governing Body**

60. The governing body satisfactorily fulfils its responsibilities and statutory duties. The key issue in the previous report relating to the prospectus and annual report to parents has been addressed and they now fulfil statutory requirements. However, there are still some shortcomings in recording, maintaining and tracking through the minutes of the business of the governing body and all its committees. There is no clear cycle of business, no routine planning of meetings, and no designation of responsibilities, or regular feedback on actions taken.
61. Governors are very supportive of the school. They are proud of its commitment to educating the 'whole child' and the school's strengths in sport and music. They have worked hard towards ensuring the building of a new hall and improving the building and grounds. More recently, under the direction of the deputy headteacher, the curriculum committee has taken a leading role in developing and reviewing policies. Governors are insufficiently involved in contributing or monitoring and evaluating the school improvement plan and associated action plans. However, there are suitable plans for increasing the governing body's role in strategic planning. The linking of a governor to an aspect of the school's work and its lead teacher, for example, to assessment, behaviour, science, English or special educational needs, is a good feature. The planned expansion of this initiative to include recording and evaluation of visits, observations or discussions, together with reporting to the full governing body, or appropriate committee, should effectively improve governors' knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the school's work. This, in turn, should enable the governing body to work more effectively in its strategic role.

### **Strategic use of resources; principles of best value**

62. Long term strategic financial planning is good. The school has a very capable budget officer who is also a key member of the governing body. In this capacity she ensures that the school's budget is properly managed and governors are fully involved in establishing spending priorities, which are clearly detailed in the school development plan. All decisions on spending, whether on equipment or on capital programmes, are taken after appropriate consultation, comparison and deliberation. The budget officer is ably supported by the school's administrative officer and clerical assistant, and the day-to-day administration and management of the school is good. The collection of money and ordering and checking of school equipment are efficient and ensure minimum disruption to teaching and learning. The very few minor recommendations in the latest auditor's report have been implemented. Good use is made of information and communication technology to manage the school budget and to analyse assessment results.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

63. The school is fortunate to have a stable core of staff that is long serving, hard-working, loyal and dedicated. There is a strong sense of teamwork throughout the school, where all staff are valued and work well together, supporting each other with the best interests of the pupils uppermost in their minds. All members of staff are committed to the well-being and support of the pupils. In their various ways, they make a good contribution to the effective running of the school, which enhances the quality of education provided. There is a generous number of teaching staff, including a non-teaching deputy headteacher, who are all appropriately qualified, and some have a high degree of subject expertise. Music, in particular, benefits from peripatetic and permanent teaching staff with very good musical knowledge, resulting in very good standards in the subject. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from a specialist language teacher from the local secondary school who teaches them French. This facility helps to broaden the curriculum for these pupils. In some classes, however, the continuity of teaching has been interrupted by the need to use supply and other temporary teachers, and this is having a negative impact on standards, particularly in Year 2. The job share arrangement in Year 4, despite the use of temporary teachers, appears to be working satisfactorily. All areas of the curriculum are led by enthusiastic teachers who have a good overview of their subjects.
64. Teachers are well supported by a strong team of teaching assistants who are well deployed, and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. For example, the good information and communication technology expertise of a teaching assistant is well used to enhance pupils' skills when using the information and communication technology suite. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, receive regular relevant training to upgrade their expertise, linked to their particular needs and the priorities set by the school. For example, at present, the mid-day supervisors are undergoing training, which they are finding very valuable when supervising the pupils in the playground. Training is often requested as a result of the staff performance management procedures that are firmly in place. There are good induction arrangements for staff new to the school, and a very informative staff handbook lays out all the day-to-day routines clearly. Although there are no newly-qualified teachers in the school, at present, arrangements are in place to ensure that any new teacher is well supported.
65. The accommodation is good. It is clean and well cared for by a dedicated team of cleaning staff. Teaching bases are of a good size, and there are many additional specialist rooms, such as one for special educational needs, a music studio and an assessment room. The hall is too small, at present, to enable the whole school to gather together comfortably, but there are plans to build a new one in the near future. Pupils' work is displayed throughout the school in a celebratory way thus enhancing the learning environment. The outside environment is very good. There has been some extensive development of the grounds over recent times, which has produced an attractive, safe and stimulating site of which the school is justly proud. There are sufficient grassed and hard surfaces to accommodate playtime and physical education activities. A very hard-working enthusiastic gardening club ensures that the numerous flowerbeds are well looked after and a joy to see. This greatly adds to the personal development of the pupils. The 'Woodland walk' also provides an additional attractive learning environment for the pupils.
66. The quality and range of resources are good. These have improved since the time of the previous inspection in some subjects, such as science, and there are now no significant deficiencies. Resources for mathematics, history, information and communication technology, physical education, special educational needs, are good, whereas, resources for music are very good. The number and range of non-fiction books in the library need boosting, as there are too few books in the library for the size of the school. Good use is made of local museums and study centres to supplement the resources in subjects such as history. Good learning resources for children in the reception classes promote all areas of learning, both inside and outside the classroom. There is an attractive, secure courtyard that is ideally situated for the reception classes. The children use this for structured outdoor play, using balls and climbing equipment, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The children in the reception classes have regular opportunities to use the hall to develop their physical skills.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

67. In order to improve the standards of work and the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- ☐ Raise pupils' standards by the end of Year 2, with an initial focus on English, mathematics and science by:\*

  - improving the use of data and information from assessment, to establish suitably challenging targets for pupils;
  - raising the level of teachers' expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve;
  - ensuring that teachers plan tasks that are matched to pupils' abilities. (*Paragraphs 3, 18, 20, 43, 45, 76, 85, 89, 92, 94 and 102*)

  
- ☐ Review and amend the long-term planning and organisation of the curriculum for Years 1 to 6 to establish:
  - a step-by-step progression in the development of pupils' skills in art and design, geography and history;
  - more continuity in teaching and learning in geography and history, with removal of long gaps between topics in each of these subjects;
  - a more efficient use of time in daily organisation, with the objective of reducing lesson length, particularly in literacy and numeracy where this currently exceeds one hour. (*Paragraphs 24, 26, 90, 96, 103, 113 and 117*)
  
- ☐ Establish clearer priorities in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by:
  - setting more specific targets for monitoring activities;
  - ensuring that all activities have the objective of raising standards;
  - creating opportunities for subject leaders to carry out monitoring, in accordance with priorities in their subject action plans. (*Paragraphs 58, 106, 112 and 138*)

*The governing body may also wish to include following issues in their action plan:*

- Further develop the governor body's procedures for evaluating the school's work and for making a greater contribution to school improvement planning.\* (*Paragraphs 60, 61*)
- Improve the management of provision for pupils with English as an additional language by meeting the need for training of both the aspect leader and teaching staff.\* (*Paragraph 55*)

*Items marked \* have already been identified by the school for inclusion in its school improvement plan.*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

68

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

37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	19	33	12	2	1	0
Percentage	1.5	28	49	18	2	1.5	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### 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)	417
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y[6]
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	73

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	24	28	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	20
	Girls	25	28	27
	Total	43	47	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (90)	90 (87)	90 (91)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	24
	Girls	25	26	27
	Total	45	46	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (81)	88 (86)	98 (94)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	31	30	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	24	26
	Girls	28	26	29
	Total	53	50	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (89)	82 (74)	90 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	26	29
	Girls	25	26	28
	Total	47	52	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (65)	85 (81)	93 (82)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	343	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

### ***Financial information***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	29.8

Financial year	2002/03
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#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	316

	£
Total income	795,267
Total expenditure	758,373
Expenditure per pupil	1,818
Balance brought forward from previous year	43,395
Balance carried forward to next year	36,894

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	417
Number of questionnaires returned	125
Percentage of questionnaires returned	30

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	36	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	47	5	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	58	5	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	52	11	2	1
The teaching is good.	49	46	4	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	58	6	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	34	6	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	48	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	46	8	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	46	50	2	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	47	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	47	14	4	8

## **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**

68. The provision for children in the reception classes remains very good, as it was at the time of the last inspection, and children are well prepared for Year 1. The range of resources for children's physical activity has improved since the last inspection. Children enter reception in the September before their fifth birthday. They attend on a morning-only basis until January when they attend full-time. All children have had pre-school experience and induction arrangements are good, enabling children to make a smooth transfer to school. Parents are particularly appreciative of the home visits that take place prior to children attending school. Children enter school with a range of abilities, which are broadly average. However, their personal, social and emotional skills are well developed. The two teachers in the reception classes plan an appropriate range of interesting activities to enhance all the recommended areas of learning, and, during their reception year children make good progress as a result of the consistently good and very good teaching. By the time they transfer to Year 1 standards are above those expected for the age in all areas except personal, social and emotional development where standards are well above average, and creative development where they are average.

#### *Personal, social and emotional development*

69. This area of learning is promoted well throughout all activities and in the daily routines. All adults set very good role models, and they have high expectations of children's behaviour. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. They are polite and considerate to each other and generally listen well. They are successfully learning to develop a respect for other people's views and beliefs. The children soon get used to the routines of the base, and move between activities, sensibly, showing mature attitudes. They obey the Golden Rules and the weekly targets that are set to aid their personal development. Personal independence is well developed. For example, children change by themselves for physical sessions in the hall, and work sensibly for extended periods, even when in groups that are not directly supervised. There are many opportunities for the children to work in pairs and small groups, enhancing their social and moral development. The majority of children select activities confidently, although a few were observed wandering and having difficulty choosing what to do. When this happens adults usually address this quickly ensuring that all children are gainfully occupied. All children are encouraged to tidy away at the ends of sessions. Adults in both classes are good listeners and treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect, and this leads to trusting relationships, and helps the children succeed. Children make good progress in this area of learning, and by the time they leave reception their personal and social skills are very good.

#### *Communication, language and literacy*

70. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good. Speaking skills are well promoted in all areas of learning, in particular, during sessions in which children are asked to talk about what they have done. Most children are confident speakers. Many are inquisitive and readily ask visitors questions such as 'What is your name?' or 'What are you doing here, and what are you writing?' They contribute well to class discussions, articulating their ideas clearly. Children develop a love of books and were seen handling books correctly, and looking at them confidently, alone or with a friend. Great emphasis is placed on the learning of phonics to enable children to read. This has resulted in all the children know the sounds of the letters, and most are familiar with simple blends such as 'pl', and 'cr'. Reading has a high profile in the reception base, and the majority of children learn skills to enable them to read simple texts by the time they enter Year 1. The most able children are working within the early stages of the National Curriculum. The lower-attaining children and those with special educational needs confidently look at the pictures to tell the story. Children are listened to read regularly, and this has a positive impact on standards. Children are given many opportunities to develop their pencil control, by colouring in sheets, but opportunities are missed to further develop independent writing skills, particularly for the most able during free-choice activities. However, writing is promoted well during literacy sessions, when children are encouraged to write independently. The most able children correctly sequence a series of pictures telling the story of

Noah, and write their own captions to the pictures, sounding out the words to help them write and using a word bank. They pay due attention to the use of capital letters and full stops. The slower learners write single words connected with the picture. Most children are likely to exceed the expected standards in this area of learning, with some working within the early stages of the National Curriculum.

### *Mathematical development*

71. Teaching is good and the children enjoy the many experiences they are given to develop basic number skills. For example, they all learn how to count as they sequence, name, and write numbers up to five, and then up to ten. Higher-attaining children recognise numbers beyond ten, and develop a secure idea of 'the number before' and 'the number after'. All children begin to use correct mathematical symbols as they add and subtract numbers. They recognise that two identical items constitute a pair, and the higher-attaining children begin to count in twos and predict numbers that are 'two more than'. All children are shown how to write numbers correctly, and displays in each classroom area reinforce this. All children develop a sound awareness of basic shapes, as they begin to identify rectangles, squares, circles and triangles. The majority of children recognise simple repeating patterns, although one or two children find colouring in a repeated pattern difficult. Children make good progress in this area and the majority will attain beyond the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year, with many more able children working within the early stages of the National Curriculum.

### *Knowledge and understanding of the world*

72. Teaching is good overall and children make good progress. Children enter reception with reasonably developed general knowledge of the world about them. They know about their senses and how they are used, and use words such as 'nostrils' confidently. They know that seeds grow into plants and that water is required to enable them to grow. During the inspection, both classes enjoyed using the information and communication technology suite and used a paint program well to draw and colour in pictures of fish. They demonstrated good control of the mouse, and used different icons effectively to draw outlines of fish and then used a palette of colours to colour in the fish. The children use construction toys confidently to build houses for animals, and they work conscientiously, whether choosing to work together in small groups, or to work alone. They use a range of appropriate materials to make an Easter garden linked with their knowledge and understanding of the Bible stories. Additionally they are acquiring a good foundation of knowledge about other faiths and cultures. The majority of children are likely to exceed the expected levels for their ages by the end of their time in the reception classes. The wide range of stories and topics that they experience is developing a good sense of time and place in the majority of children.

### *Physical development*

73. Teaching in this area is very good. Regular opportunities take place in the hall for children to develop physically. In these lessons the same teacher teaches both classes. She has good subject expertise, and provides good opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. In the very good lesson seen, the pace was brisk, all instructions were clear, especially regarding listening carefully at all times. The teacher exhibited very good organisational skills, ensuring that children were active for the maximum amount of time. Learning was very good in this lesson, because instructions were clearly understood and all children followed them accurately. There was very good verbal support and feedback guiding children to make further improvement. All children, including those with special educational needs, moved with confidence and participated fully. In the structured outdoor play sessions children enjoy riding tricycles and using balls, but these sessions often lack focus. Good opportunities are given for children to develop their hand-eye co-ordination when they practise throwing a ball into a basketball net. Most children handle scissors, paintbrushes and pencils with good control. They practise using scissors to accurately cut out along a line and then leaving a border. Most children can do this with a good degree of accuracy. All children join a range of construction blocks together to make imaginative models. Progress in this area is good and most children are in line to exceed the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning by the time they start Year 1.

## *Creative development*

74. Most of the children are likely to exceed the expected levels by the end of their time in reception. This is due to the good teaching overall, although the children's musical abilities are particularly very well developed as a result of some very good teaching. Singing songs and rhymes form an important part of everyday life, and children learn to sing tunefully with good awareness of high and low notes. They have a wide repertoire of songs and rhymes which they enjoy singing. In the one very good lesson observed children used a range of tuned and untuned percussion to compose an accompaniment to a song about Noah. Most children can name a few of the instruments that they play. The role-play area is linked to the present topic, and this gives the children good opportunities to express their own ideas about how Noah and his family prepared for the flood. Paints are used confidently as children learn to mix a range of colours which they use to paint rainbows. Past work shows that children are given many opportunities to develop their creativity through the use of a range of different media to make collages, which are often put together to make large collaborative pictures enhancing the learning environment. Progress in this area is good and children's creativity is developed well.

## **ENGLISH**

75. By the end of Year 2 standards are in line with the national average whilst in Year 6 they are well above the national average. These findings are broadly similar to the results attained in the 2002 National Curriculum tests. Standards in Year 6 are now higher than at the time of the last inspection although there is some comparative under-achievement in Year 2. Overall, improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.
76. Children enter the reception classes with language skills which are judged to be similar to those which might be expected. Consequently, the achievement in Year 6 constitutes considerable overall 'added value' in respect of English. Progress is, however, uneven and there is under-achievement in Years 1 and 2. The majority of pupils enter Year 1 with literacy skills that are above those expected for pupils of that age, but attain only average levels by the end of Year 2. This is unsatisfactory progress, although good support enables pupils with special educational needs or those who use English as an additional language to make satisfactory progress. In Years 3 to 6, progress by most groups of pupils is good, although those who are identified as gifted generally make only satisfactory progress in relation to their abilities, due to insufficient challenge in some of their work.
77. Speaking and listening skills at the end of Year 2 are above average. The number of pupils who are able to express themselves orally, with appropriate clarity and confidence, is higher than that expected for their age. Most pupils listen attentively to their teacher and to the contributions made by others and their ability to analyse comments and to respond constructively is better than is usually found. A good range of suitable opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills is provided, with activities such as role playing and questioning being used effectively as a means of promoting speaking and listening skills and of developing confidence.
78. Pupils' speaking and listening proficiencies are well above those expected at the end of the Year 6. Almost all pupils listen attentively to their teacher and respond thoughtfully to the contributions made by other pupils. The ability to generate cohesive and complex sentences is more advanced than the average, with many pupils able to develop abstract and speculative ideas. The wide range of experiences and activities together with skilful questioning promotes good learning in Years 3 to 6. When they enter Year 1, most pupils speak in relatively simple terms about something that is within their immediate experience. Confidence and language grow securely, as pupils move through the school, and, by Year 6, most pupils are able to develop a theme using a sequence of complex sentences. A lesson in which the impact of tourist development on the local environment was discussed, for example, provoked lively but thoughtful debate with pupils able to make mature contributions and to consider the counter arguments put by others.
79. Standards in reading are in line with the national average in Year 2. Most pupils enjoy reading and are eager to discuss what they have read. The proportion that can read fluently and confidently is broadly in line with the average, but many pupils are capable of higher achievement. Pupils develop an adequate range of strategies to help them to tackle unfamiliar words, for example, by sounding



out letters. Most are able to use simple dictionaries and sound standards are achieved in relation to library skills. By Year 6 pupils' achievement in reading is well above the national average. Most pupils are able to discuss what they have read with mature analysis of the characters and the plot. This was well demonstrated during a comparison, by a group of pupils in Year 6, of their likes and dislikes in respect of some well-known authors. Most pupils display very competent skills when using phonic and other strategies, such as context, in order to tackle unfamiliar words. Many pupils can use more advanced skills, such as scanning, and they have an appreciation of inference and figurative language.

80. In reading, most pupils in Years 1 and 2 move from an ability to recognise a limited range of words to the ability to read a simple story with understanding and enjoyment but, given the standards already achieved when they enter Year 1, this does not constitute satisfactory progress. Good progress in Years 3 to 6 means that the majority of pupils in Year 6 can read books containing difficult text with fluency and expression and can discuss the contents perceptively. One higher achiever commented, 'The book contained an interesting emotional conflict'.
81. At the end of Year 2, pupils' achievement in writing is similar to that found nationally. Pupils' awareness of grammatical structure and punctuation is in line with that expected for their age. The number who possess a broad vocabulary and are able to express themselves clearly and confidently when writing is equivalent to that typically found, although higher achievers employ more inventive phrases such as 'an eerie wind' and 'poshly erect'. Spelling is methodically developed with the number of pupils who achieve the expected levels of accuracy in line with that expected. There is systematic teaching and refinement of handwriting skills and the proportion of pupils able to achieve the expected levels of control and consistency is above average.
82. Standards of writing in Year 6 are well above the average. A high proportion of the year-group have the appropriate skills in relation to grammatical structure and punctuation and are able to express themselves with accuracy. Pupils organise their writing logically and develop a theme in a sustained manner. They write with a growing awareness of audience and of purpose. Instructions, recipes, poetry, rap, description, review, reports, letters and plays are just a sample of the very wide range of writing encountered. Letters to the Prime Minister about the war in Iraq contained points that were made logically, eloquently and dispassionately. Some writing contains interesting qualities of tone and ambience, such as a description by a pupil in Year 6 of 'eyes as brown as roasted chestnuts', or of 'an obese,....jewellery-clad woman'. Spelling continues to be approached systematically with levels of accuracy well above average. Standards of handwriting are also well above average with most pupils able to employ consistent letter formation and to write in an attractive and legible 'hand'.
83. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make unsatisfactory progress in writing skills. Letter formation and the ability to express simple ideas in writing are above average at the beginning of Year 1, but this foundation is not built on sufficiently. Progress is good in Years 3 to 6, where pupils write with increasing accuracy in grammatical structure and use of punctuation. The ability to develop an idea and write extended text is particularly strong. Some pupils write with imaginative and sensitive use of words using words such as 'aspen', 'lonesome' and 'fluttering'. Older pupils write about 'hair like a tangled rain forest' and 'a crystalline sea'. Another describes the moon as 'calm, soft and peaceful'.
84. Good attitudes to English are found in Years 1 and 2. Pupils respond well to the subject when motivated by good teaching but, at other times, these positive attitudes are not fully harnessed. Pupils' attitudes in Years 3 to 6 are very good. This results from the positive relationships, which teachers develop with their pupils and the imaginative programme that is delivered. Teachers use the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy well and enhance the programme productively through additional activities such as extended writing in the 'First Day' books. As a consequence, the overwhelming majority of pupils have a positive attitude towards the subject. Most work diligently, persevere with their tasks and show obvious enthusiasm for their work. They collaborate productively in pairs and small groups. Pupils are usually attentive and are able to sustain concentration over a period. Most pupils respond sensibly when required to work independently.
85. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection was satisfactory but the impact of teaching over time has been unsatisfactory. There is some good teaching characterised by a

range of stimulating approaches which develop both creative ideas and literacy skills. Such lessons are well organised and promote a desire to learn. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence is sensitively developed through subtle questioning and this enables good learning to take place. A Year 1 lesson relating to factual and fictional writing about the moon exemplified these qualities. The less successful teaching fails to make real demands upon the pupils who are, consequently, not sufficiently interested or stimulated to learn. In these cases the teachers' management of the class is insecure and many pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

86. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good, with lessons proceeding at a brisk pace within a positive working atmosphere. No pupils view their teachers in the way a pupil in Year 6 described a fictional character as a 'cold, hard teacher with a Victorian attitude'. Class management is consistently good and work is generally well matched to the different achievement levels within each class. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the well-structured lessons help to sustain interest and to promote learning, although, where lessons are more than an hour in length pupils' concentration levels are severely tested. The good teaching ensures that pupils' understanding is consolidated, that skills are built upon sound foundations, and that brisk progress is sustained. Teachers provide their pupils with challenging and thought-provoking activities which indicate their high expectations.
87. The use of information and communication technology within the subject is satisfactory. Word-processing skills are satisfactorily developed and technology is used satisfactorily to support reading and writing in all year-groups.
88. There is satisfactory use of English to support work in other subjects. Teachers generally plan useful opportunities within other subjects to extend pupils' literacy skills, although, too much use of worksheets in subjects such as science and history prevents pupils from writing ideas for themselves. In contrast the history topics for pupils in Year 6 are used well to practice different forms of writing.
89. In all year-groups lessons are planned carefully. It is a feature of teaching throughout the school that skills such as spelling, grammar, handwriting, and punctuation, are developed systematically although greater emphasis could be placed upon the quality of language and a 'feeling' for words. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not always presented with work that is advanced enough for their capabilities and this has a negative impact upon standards and progress. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively and effectively supported and such pupils make progress similar to that found generally.
90. The subject is led well. The subject leader has been in post for a relatively short time but has considerable expertise, together with the enthusiasm, drive, and commitment to improve standards. The school places considerable emphasis upon English and the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy are followed with care, although length of lessons frequently exceeds that recommended. However, the national strategy, together with the quality of teaching and the positive attitudes of the pupils, are significant factors in determining the good level of progress in Years 3 to 6.
91. The assessment procedures used to measure pupils' progress are sound, and satisfactory use is made of the information they yield to guide the content of subsequent work. A greater emphasis upon phonics and comprehension are examples of such analysis. Teachers routinely identify the lesson objectives in their planning and these are shared with the pupils. Where these objectives are defined with precision, they enable the lesson to be evaluated objectively and help to create a sense of purpose and achievement. The use of teaching assistants to provide support within the classroom and to help individuals and small groups, has a positive impact on standards and progress. Such support is characterised by sensitive relationships and the degree to which the teacher and the teaching assistants work cohesively. The school library is an attractive and welcoming area, although, the number of books is small for a school of this size. The library is used satisfactorily to enable objectives of the National Literacy Strategy to be realised.

## MATHEMATICS

92. Standards by the end of Year 2 have fluctuated in recent years, ranging from above to well below average and results were below average in the national tests in 2002. The school's performance in the 2003 tests, although this cannot yet be measured against the results achieved nationally, suggests that there has been some improvement since last year and pupils are achieving standards similar to those found in other schools. The inspection findings reflect this slightly upward trend, but also indicate that pupils in Year 2 do not achieve as well as they should, given that their mathematical ability is above average by the end of the reception year. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because of the additional support they receive and the progress of all pupils is often satisfactory in individual lessons. However, taken over longer periods of time, the achievement of pupils is unsatisfactory overall. This is because teachers, particularly in Year 2, do not have a clear understanding of the standards they should expect pupils to achieve and are not yet sufficiently skilled in using assessment information to set work at a suitable level of difficulty for pupils of different abilities within their class. This is especially true of higher attaining pupils, for whom the work is often too easy and lacking in any real challenge. Standards by the end of Year 6, on the other hand, are well above average and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well. This is confirmed by the steady improvement in the school's performance in recent years, particularly in 2001 and 2002, and the inspection findings are that the pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to achieve similar success. This is a clear reflection of the good overall quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6.
93. By Year 2, the vast majority of pupils order numbers accurately to 100 and identify the simple properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. Their mental calculation is satisfactory in terms of speed and accuracy. Higher-attaining pupils accurately measure the length of classroom objects, such as paper clips and glue sticks, and correctly read the calibrations on measuring implements, such as rulers and litre jugs. They quickly add on or deduct 9, 10 or 11 from numbers up to 100, or beyond, on a number square. Lower-attaining pupils at this stage sometimes need adult support for processes such as drawing a mirror image or making £1.00 from a variety of coins. By Year 6, the majority of pupils use calculators efficiently to solve some problems, use the grid method as a strategy for multiplication, and are increasingly able to explain the methods they have used to arrive at their answers. Higher-attaining pupils express common numbers equally competently as decimals, fractions or percentages. They calculate areas of compound shapes, using appropriate formulae, whilst the lower-attaining pupils achieve this by counting the squares, reflecting standards typical for their age.
94. The quality of teaching is good overall and there were many examples of good and very good teaching seen in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is satisfactory in many individual lessons in Years 1 and 2 and was good in one lesson seen. However, taking full account of the lessons observed and a close scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' previous work, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in Year 2. This judgement must be seen in relation to the prolonged absence of a key teacher, which has had a negative impact on the continuity of teaching and learning in this year group. However, the principal reason for this judgement is that teachers' expectations of the standards that Year 2 pupils can attain, particularly the more able, are too low. Whilst taking recent difficulties into consideration, the school has been slower than it should have been to monitor and address this underachievement. A significant strength of teaching throughout the school is the teachers' consistent use of the behaviour code and, subsequently, the very positive management of behaviour and the very good relationships which prevail between adults and pupils. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 5 lesson, where lively and imaginative teaching was supported by excellent relationships between teacher and class. As a direct result, all pupils were intent only on doing their best and their attitudes were exemplary. Another feature of the best practice is the teachers' knowledge of their pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses and their ability to provide challenging and interesting work at the right level of difficulty for them. This was clearly illustrated in a very good Year 6 lesson on area, where the teacher intervened at suitable intervals to assess how well his class were doing before moving them on to a more challenging task. Conversely, teaching is less successful in the instances where teachers rely too heavily on worksheets, which result in pupils spending too much time on repetitive and often unchallenging work. Even when the teaching is good, such activities sometimes result in pupils spending long periods of time on work, which they can manage quite comfortably, instead of moving on to the next level of difficulty, and this slows down the rate of progress over longer periods of time. Directly related to this is the other

main area for development throughout the school which is the use of day-to-day marking, and ongoing assessment during lessons to guide the planning for the next day's work. The scrutiny of previous work gives a clear indication that teachers miss opportunities, either during the lesson or when they mark pupils' work, to assess their progress against targets for improvement, or the learning objectives for the lesson, and to guide them towards the next level of difficulty.

95. Teachers are making appropriate use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are given opportunities to use computer software to consolidate their understanding of place value in numbers up to 100. Mathematics lessons also make a positive contribution to the development of literacy skills, particularly through the teaching of specific mathematical vocabulary during the introductory sessions. Similarly, pupils' work in many subjects across the curriculum helps them to develop and practise the skills they learn in mathematics lessons. Pupils in Year 5, for instance, use their knowledge of angles and measuring to record the pattern of the Earth's rotation around the Sun in science.
96. The subject leader is providing good, clear educational direction for the school as a whole, which has resulted in a significant improvement in standards by the end of Year 6 since the last inspection. She has been able to monitor the development of teaching and learning in the subject, to some extent, by collecting work samples and occasionally working alongside colleagues in the classroom, but is aware that there is a need to establish a system of more regular and sharply focused support, particularly in Years 1 and 2. The other main area for future development is to ensure that teachers throughout the school are skilled in measuring pupils' progress against nationally agreed standards and using this information, supported by improved day-to-day marking and assessment, to plan work at the right level of difficulty for individuals and groups of different abilities. Despite variations between year groups, the overall quality of implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is good. However, as in English, there is a need to review the time allocation to individual lessons and bring lesson length more in line with national recommendations.

## SCIENCE

97. Standards of attainment in science are satisfactory at the end of Year 2 and good at the end of Year 6. This represents an improvement in pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 since the last inspection.
98. A study of the work completed by pupils during the year and observations of lessons indicate that, by the end of Year 2, pupils' standards of attainment are at the national average. Many pupils enter Year 1 with levels of knowledge that are above those found nationally. This means that while some pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 2, the more able pupils do not because they do not consistently work at higher levels. Pupils are starting to build a sound base of scientific skills and know interesting facts about living things and materials. They understand clearly the idea of forces, and by investigating the distance a car travels across different surfaces, they begin to understand that friction slows progress. Pupils use scientific vocabulary well. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language receive good support so they achieve as well as their classmates, although at slightly lower levels.
99. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 extend their knowledge well so that, by the end of Year 6, many pupils attain beyond the national average. They have a clear understanding of 'fair testing' in an investigation, and many understand the need to repeat observations in order to eliminate variations and obtain a consistent result. Pupils predict possible outcomes sensibly and use their mathematical knowledge appropriately. For example, in a lesson to discover the best sound insulator, pupils chose to record their findings in line graphs and charts. Achievement is good by the end of Year 6 and pupils have covered many topics in depth. Pupils with special needs and those who use English as an additional language also achieve well because they receive good support. However, an analysis of work done by pupils during the year indicates that the recording of many tasks is not adapted for less able pupils and they struggle to complete written tasks.
100. Insufficient use is made of the skills pupils learn in literacy when they present results. Too often pupils copy results or complete worksheets. While this undoubtedly saves time, it can mask pupils' true understanding and limits opportunities for self-expression. On occasion, during the inspection,

worksheets were used well. There was limited evidence that pupils regularly use information and communication technology to develop their scientific knowledge.

101. An analysis of pupils' work indicates that teaching is usually thorough and that increasingly teachers use investigations as part of lessons. In some classes it was less evident how much individual research occurred during the investigations. The quality of teaching was good overall during the inspection and there was one satisfactory lesson. Teachers have secure knowledge and teach basic skills well so that pupils maintain good levels of interest. Good use of questions encourages pupils to think along clear, logical lines and their answers reveal where there has been good teaching over time. For example, in a lesson in Year 3, about the effect that certain foods have on tooth enamel, more able pupils were able to deduce that milk contains no sugar or acid. Constant emphasis on the correct use of scientific vocabulary ensures that pupils use language precisely from a young age. Teachers have good relations with their pupils and usually manage them well, so that pupils are receptive to information and ready to learn. In the satisfactory lesson, the teacher's good subject knowledge was not supported by an imaginative use of resources and this, in turn, limited the degree of new learning. Pupils used appropriate scientific vocabulary well, but a minority of pupils dominated a question and answer session and the teacher failed to keep the attention of a few pupils.
102. The subject leader views her subject clearly and provides satisfactory leadership. There is a good scheme of work which ensures that topics are covered in detail. Planning is satisfactory, but there is no mention of the level of challenge at which pupils are to work. Assessment is brief and at present does not consistently mention the level of pupils' attainment. There has been some monitoring of teaching and plans are monitored regularly for content. Such actions are ultimately having positive impact on pupils' standards. Resources are satisfactory and are usually used well.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

103. Standards of attainment throughout the school were described as good at the time of the last inspection. Current inspection evidence of pupils' work and lesson observations indicate that standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with expectations. However, there are examples of good work that exceed expectations, for example, in Year 6, where pupils take great care to produce abstract designs in the style of Stepanova, and in Year 3, when pupils paint compositions to show the relationships between people. The apparent fall in standards is as a result of limited curriculum time as the subject is blocked with design and technology. This results in long periods of time when no art and design is taught in some classes. These long gaps mean that opportunities for pupils to develop skills progressively are limited, and this has a negative impact on standards. All pupils including those with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.
104. Although only two lessons were seen during the inspection, an examination of pupils' work in their sketchbooks, and on display, shows that, while some skills are progressively developed, there is superficial coverage of the development of others. Pupils develop observational skills well, in particular in the way they draw portraits. In Year 1, pupils use mirrors and photographs to look carefully at faces and the position of features. In Year 3, pupils explore pairs of people and the relationships between them. Care is taken to get body proportions correct, and different-sized brushes are used for different purposes. By the time pupils get to Year 6 they draw faces confidently, but they do not always know the best way to achieve a close match of colour, and how to apply paint to best effect, as these skills are not continuously promoted. Good use is made of the work of other artists and pupils produce pleasing images, using the differing styles of artists. For example, in Year 1, pupils use pastel effectively to draw 'people' in the style of Arcimboldo choosing a range of different fruits and vegetables. Pupils in Year 6 explore the work of Andy Warhol and use their information and communication technology skills well to produce computerised Warhol-type images. However, most of the work on display was very prescribed, with few opportunities for pupils to express their moods and feeling through the use of paint.
105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with teachers demonstrating a wide range of expertise from good to poor. In the better lesson pupils were given freedom to interpret their own ideas onto crests and coats of arms to create an environment for a castle. There was good use of colour and the teacher demonstrated good subject expertise. The very good relationships ensured that all

pupils concentrated well, and showed an interest in the topic. The teacher set high expectations of behaviour and ability, and this was reflected in the pupils' positive attitudes and finished results. In this lesson the pupils were very aware of how to create a particular environment, making good links with their history work and the forthcoming visit to an opera. In the poorer lesson the teacher was unclear about the skills that the pupils were to learn, demonstrating poor subject expertise, and there were low expectations of ability with no real challenge for any pupils. The scheme of work was not used well, as general aims for a series of lessons were used instead of specific aims for the particular lesson. As a result, the teacher was not able to assess the learning that had occurred within the lesson. The activity offered no challenge, so no new learning occurred. The pace was very slow with pupils spending too long sitting on the carpet resulting in them becoming bored and losing concentration. There was an undercurrent of restlessness, which the teacher never overcame. Time was inefficiently used, as the activity was insufficient to fill this very long lesson.

106. The subject leadership is good, and is shared by two enthusiastic teachers. They have a clear overview of the subject and raising standards is their top priority. They monitor teachers' planning to ensure coverage, but there is a need for them to focus more on specific aspects of teaching. There have been no recent opportunities for them to observe teaching or work alongside teachers, so weaknesses in teaching have gone unchecked. The leaders look at pupils' work and have started collating examples in portfolios. These portfolios, however, need annotating so that they are of use to staff as exemplars. There are no formal assessment arrangements at present for teachers to decide if pupils have met the required standards. The subject action plan indicates that this deficiency is to be addressed in the near future.
107. There are good links with other subjects. For example, when pupils are studying the Tudors in history, they study portraits of the time to help them appreciate the life styles of the very rich. The study of Arcimboldo enriches pupils' science work on healthy eating. An art club is offered to the older pupils, where skills are developed, such as detailed observation and drawings with a range of different pencils to suit different needs. This opportunity enhances the artistic skills of those pupils who attend. The subject is greatly enhanced by the use of artists in residence who help pupils develop their skills. For example, in the near future there are plans for pupils to learn how to make willow sculptures for the new 'Peace garden'. Opportunities will then be given for pupils to use a different medium from those usually offered in school, so broadening their experiences.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. Only a relatively small number of lessons were observed during the inspection, but the overall evidence shows that pupils, in both Years 2 and 6, achieve levels of knowledge and skills in design and technology which are broadly appropriate for their ages. This represents a slight fall in standards by Year 6 since the last inspection, where standards were judged to be good.
109. Pupils are able to select from a satisfactory range of materials, when designing and making products, and proper consideration is given to the purpose of each item and to the subsequent design and construction. Thus pupils in Year 5 investigated the features present in commercial packaging, before using such analysis to influence their own designs for a biscuit wrapper. Pupils in all parts of the school are competent in their ability to relate what they are making to their associated design. Pupils make thoughtful evaluations about their work, as demonstrated by the comments made by pupils in Year 5 relating to the musical instruments they had made. One pupil observed that the material used to cover the drum needed to be changed. Skills associated with design and technology are satisfactorily developed as pupils move through the school.
110. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. Teachers are aware of the essential elements of design and technology such as providing opportunities for original and creative generation of ideas. They encourage pupils to consider how products can be refined and improved. Open-ended questioning during a Year 3 lesson, for example, encouraged pupils to think actively and to produce ideas about their earlier designs for a photograph frame. Teachers include material to develop knowledge associated with mechanisms, structures and applications. In Year 2, pupils used construction sets to focus on the purpose of wheels and axles whilst Year 5 employed a cam ('a wheel with a bump', according to one pupil) as they incorporated a moving part in the toys they were making.

111. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good in all parts of the school. They are interested and motivated in their work which they discuss with animation. They concentrate well and persevere to overcome problems. The times when pupils work together is particularly productive and is indicative of the good contribution that the subject makes to pupils' personal development.
112. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has good, relevant expertise. Opportunities for the subject leader to monitor and evaluate the subject have been limited. The school has adopted national guidance to support teachers' planning. This is being supplemented by additional detail, drawn up by the school, in order to help teachers decide what should be taught and when. This results in a reasonably balanced programme, although the time devoted to the subject is somewhat limited. Productive links with other subjects are established through the topic approach which the school has adopted. In Year 4, work relating to the construction of model lighthouses, for example, drew upon pupils' knowledge of electrical circuits, whilst the design of an Ancient Greek temple augmented pupils' work in history. Food technology is an integral part of the programme and meaningful links are forged with health education and science. In Year 3, for example, pupils designed, made and evaluated a sandwich, as part of their 'Healthy Eating' project, whilst pupils in Year 1 developed a recipe for a fruit salad.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

113. Pupils' standards of attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 are in line with expectations. This represents a decline since the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be good at the end of both years. A low percentage of time is given to geography across the school, at present, and topics are taught in blocks in Years 3 and 4, and 5 and 6, with gaps of up to two terms between them. This means that pupils are unable to build their skills steadily over the years, so that their achievement is uneven across the school.
114. By the end of Year 2, pupils have started to build a satisfactory breadth of skills. They are familiar with maps and understand simple keys. Pupils contrast their local area with an imaginary island and are clear about similarities and differences. Achievement is satisfactory across Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 3 show satisfactory levels of knowledge about India and have extended their understanding of maps. Pupils in Year 5 followed a visit to Hengistbury Head with an interesting study of the water cycle and the effect of erosion by the sea. There were few samples of work to indicate pupils' attainment in Year 4, because geography was not taught in the autumn and spring terms. Pupils in Year 6 made a highly enjoyable residential visit to Swanage in the autumn term and compared its features with those of Bournemouth, but did not learn any geography in the spring term. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 revealed that they have covered a satisfactory range of topics and have good understanding of them. Pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates. Pupils use their mathematical skills in Year 6 to pinpoint places on Ordnance Survey maps, through using six-figure co-ordinates. There are planned opportunities through the year throughout the school for pupils to further their geographical knowledge, by doing research using information and communication technology. Pupils enhance their knowledge of history through the study of old maps, for example, and being aware of Bronze Age settlements during a field trip. Opportunities are missed for them to develop their literacy skills, because much recording below Year 4 is achieved through completing worksheets.
115. An analysis of work done by pupils through the year indicates that teaching is generally satisfactory but, in some classes, recorded work has been skimpy due to restricted time allocation. Two lessons were observed during the inspection and they were both of good quality. Teachers had prepared thoroughly. Skilled questioning, together with the good use of resources, brought the lessons to life so that pupils sharpened their observation skills and extended their thinking and understanding well. Teachers kept a good pace to the lessons, which helped pupils to maintain high levels of interest. As the result of a recent visit to the seashore by one class, those pupils showed mature levels of knowledge for their age. For example, they remembered that acid grass was a feature of the shore and understood why groynes had been built in certain places. The pupils then used their literacy skills well to write formal letters to the local council about their concerns for the future of the coast.

116. The subject leader is newly in post and is keen and knowledgeable. Her leadership is starting to have an impact on the subject and she has a good quality action plan which she is putting into operation. She is aware that the subject has had limited time on timetables recently. She has not monitored any teaching, but does see teachers' planning and meets pairs of teachers in each year-group. Resources are satisfactory and are used well. They are greatly enhanced by the interesting visits that are organised to extend pupils' learning.

## HISTORY

117. Standards are typical for the age groups by the end of Years 2 and 6. At the time of the last inspection, few lessons were available to be observed, and this was the case during this inspection. Samples of work, teachers' planning, and interviews with pupils, indicate a drop in performance, in the subject. The school has been developing national literacy and numeracy strategies, and this may account for the fall in standards in Years 3 to 6. However, the amount of time devoted to the learning is quite short, and the timing of the topics leaves gaps. Consequently, the learning of skills is not a continuous process. There is also a lack of depth of study, particularly in written work, and pupils' sense of chronology is disjointed. This became obvious when interviewing a group of pupils in Year 6. They noted that, although they make timelines of a particular period, the overall sense of time is lost because they study topics in isolation. Perceptively, they noticed that they only studied small parts of the particular periods they have met and often not in enough depth to understand why things happened. They do what they do reasonably well, but the standards could be improved with an adjustment to the structure and timing, to ensure more continuous learning.
118. By Year 2, pupils' progress is satisfactory. Pupils have made appropriate studies of important times and people, such as Dr Barnardo, and have learned about Mary Seole, alongside Florence Nightingale. However, only a sparse amount of work is recorded, and pupils are given far too many worksheets. Because the work is so prescriptive, they have too few opportunities to use their own ideas, to work on learning new skills, or to pose their own questions. All the worksheets are separate, and do not afford pupils the opportunity to look backwards for information, or to see improvement in their work. This is the situation throughout Years 1 and 2. Teachers sometimes have insufficiently high expectations for the work that pupils could produce, and marking is minimal, therefore, pupils do not always know how to improve. During the only lesson available to be seen, little attempt was made to challenge more able pupils, and all completed the same worksheet. Pupils' historical understanding was not improved by the quality or content of that sheet, which contrasted two eras, one of which was the 1960s, chosen to represent the present day, even though considerable changes have taken place in those years since the 1960s. However, pupils demonstrated a sound general understanding of the differences between the present day and the past, and the attitudes to their work were good.
119. By the end of Year 6, pupils' knowledge is good and their understanding is generally sound. Throughout Years 3 to 6, pupils are asked to fill in too many worksheets, as in Years 1 and 2. This practice stifles pupils' imagination and offers too few opportunities for them to pose their own questions about history. Little evidence was offered to show extended writing. However, pupils use their general knowledge and research skills well, via the Internet, to find information and pictures for their topic folders. As with younger pupils, separate sheets, given to all ability groups, gives insufficient importance and value to the work produced, because pupils cannot look backwards and forwards to help with chronology or to know if they have improved. The sheets also become dog-eared and begin to look uninviting or insignificant.
120. Generally, teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, in a very good lesson for pupils in Year 5, the teacher planned very well for the pupils to use their own ideas and findings. She offered them several different documents to analyse, about schools and school life in Victorian times. Because the work was open ended, and because the pupils could follow their own interest, the activity was challenging for all ability groups. They compared and contrasted evidence from the documentation, with their knowledge of their own school life. A simple recording technique obviated the need for a worksheet, and the pupils were able to use their own discretion on what and how to make notes. A good proportion of them made quite perceptive observations, for example, about differences in behaviour, and one pupil demonstrated irony and humour, as she likened their inspection to those of the past. The teacher ensured a very good sharing of information, by encouraging pupils to agree



or disagree, and they did this very well, politely, demonstrating good judgement. The teacher also used their answers in order to give more information, correct factual inaccuracies and to share her thoughts with them. Her excellent rapport with them enabled all pupils to have an opinion and to learn in an atmosphere of inquiry and fun. A feature lacking in most work, throughout the school, was the failure to ask sufficient 'why?' questions. Doing this would lead pupils more deeply into thinking about history and its effect on life today.

121. The subject leader is quite new to the post, however she has very good ideas and a great sense of purpose about what she wants to accomplish. She provides good leadership and management, and understands the need for more integration of the subject into the curriculum. She has encouraged the use of information and communication technology, especially with the stand-alone machines in classrooms, and has delivered in-service training for the staff to show how they can enhance their teaching. She has a realistic action plan and has begun to modify the national scheme to make it more relevant for The Epiphany. Her obvious enthusiasm and understanding of issues will help the school to improve and succeed in the teaching and learning of history, if the subject is given more time and emphasis within the curriculum.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

122. Standards are typical for the age group at the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents good improvement since the time of the last inspection, when the school's provision did not fulfil statutory requirements and pupils generally made insufficient progress. Now, pupils make good progress, overall, and this rate of progress is also achieved by pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, due to good support from teaching assistants. However, there is room for improvement in the opportunities offered to develop the skills of all pupils and in the use of computers in the wider curriculum.
123. The school's computer suite has helped to improve the expertise of the staff and the standards achieved by the pupils, especially in recent times, with the appointment of a full-time teaching assistant, available to help with planning and delivery of lessons throughout the school. Both she and the staff feel that the subject is now better understood by adults and is taught in a more purposeful way to the pupils. This improvement has also been complemented by the introduction of a new scheme of work related to the nationally devised system. Additional new hardware, networked and integrated into classrooms, is also having a positive impact on standards. A very good example was seen with the youngest children, who had been practising in their classrooms and brought that experience to their learning in the suite. All classes have a weekly lesson, planned to challenge pupils at whatever level, and teachers generally feel that pupils are more proficient, due to the regular teaching sessions.
124. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are working at the level typical for their age group, but few have gone beyond this. They are learning to rearrange text and add punctuation, using a saved document, for example. However, few write at length using a computer. During the inspection, only one lesson was seen in Years 1 and 2. This lesson was unsatisfactory because the pupils learned no new skills, and the lesson was poorly planned and wasted almost half the time, which could have been spent more productively. Most of the pupils were able to use the computer independently, and many needed little adult support. However, they were still using the Caps Lock when typing a single capital letter, as this was what they had been taught in previous lessons. Although one of the learning intentions of the lesson was to change their use to the Shift Key, the teacher failed to mention it to the pupils. Most pupils have learnt essential skills, such as how to log on to the network, how to find the program they need and retrieve previous work, re-saving after the alterations. Most are confident and enthusiastic. More focused teaching is required to enable pupils to quickly realise how useful computers can be when reviewing and modifying work, for example. In general, pupils are keen and interested but not enough is demanded of them at present.
125. By the end of Year 6, pupils are working at the expected levels in all aspects of the subject, and some are developing advanced skills for their age. Many of them are fortunate enough to have access to computers at home, and the school works hard to plan lessons for a wide range of ability. Recently pupils in Year 6 have had the opportunity to work on and produce their own multimedia presentations. Many of these were quite sophisticated, using many good features of design and layout, and elaborate text movements to gain the reader's attention, thus showing good

awareness of audience. However, teachers missed opportunities to reinforce literacy skills, sufficiently, in order to support English, and many spelling and punctuation errors were apparent.

126. In a good lesson, seen in Year 6, the teacher had set-up a good enquiry session to aid pupils with their searches of the Internet. Work here had been carefully planned to complement other subjects, as well as to extend all four strands of the information and communication technology curriculum, and was successful because the teacher had organised his lesson well. Similarly, a successful lesson for pupils in Year 5 enabled them all to work well at their own levels. Attitudes and behaviour in the lesson were very good because the teacher had organised the pairs very well. Pupils co-operated and shared information, sustaining concentration because the tasks were well chosen and the work was challenging. This teacher used pupils' self-assessment very well, using the end session of the lesson to give pupils the opportunity to say what they had learned and to share what problems they had found and how they had solved them. One offering by a pupil was, 'I should listen to my partner!' In a very good lesson for pupils in Year 3, the teacher began the session, very successfully, on the interactive whiteboard in the classroom. The demonstration was very clear and the teacher was very confident, even when the technology did not work quite as planned. She imparted a great deal of new information about a program they would use and they concentrated and were fully engaged with the task, because the teacher's input was suitably challenging. She was also very supportive of less able pupils, and asked suitably challenging questions of those capable of answering. This exemplary start to the lesson ensured pupils' success when working in the suite. They remembered all the new keying skills and used them to very good effect when creating their science related poster. Sensitive, firm support by the teacher and the teaching assistant ensured pupils were successful, and enabled them to learn very well, and make good progress, throughout the lesson.
127. As these examples indicate, teaching and learning are generally good, overall. Expertise has improved as a result of training and teachers are becoming more confident in their use of computers. An excellent feature of the provision is the involvement of the teaching assistant, with all classes. She helps teachers as well as pupils, for instance, in her organisation of the room, to ensure that the seating arrangements do not distract the pupils working in pairs, when only one person can have active control of the computer. This is managed in a variety of ways, according to the class, the teacher and the task. For example, in Year 4, with the largest class sizes, the teacher prefers the pupils to work alone and the adults devise work for the rest of the class, away from the computers. In a different class, the active pupil is seated on a swivel chair, whilst the 'helper' is seated on a stool just behind. During the inspection, all the different options worked well and the pace of lessons was appropriate to pupils and tasks. However, only a few teachers are making sufficient use of information and communication technology to help pupils learn in other subjects. This issue is fully understood by the school, and appears in its action plan.
128. The subject leader is quite new to the post and is enthusiastically supported by a colleague in Years 1 and 2. They work well together as a team and share the same objectives for the subject. The subject leader provides good leadership and management. She understands how the subject needs to be developed, and how to move it forward at an appropriate pace. The team has devised good plans for the next stage of purchasing for hardware and personnel, including vital technical support. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are adequate at present, and the team is thinking about ways to improve. A good start has been made to the gathering of evidence in a portfolio of work, and consideration is now being given to extending this to include assessment of pupils' work in terms of National Curriculum levels and ways to improve, in order to make it more useful to all members of staff. The subject leader, together with a colleague, and the teaching assistant, are ideally suited to develop the subject further, and the staff has already demonstrated its good capacity for changing strategies to improve standards.

## MUSIC

129. Music is a strength of the school. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above expectations, reflecting good improvement since the last inspection and are well above expectations by the end of Year 6, where the quality of teaching and learning has successfully been maintained.
130. The standards in Years 1 and 2 have improved for two principal reasons. The first is that pupils are given a very good start in the reception classes by a specialist teacher, who also ably supports the teaching of singing in particular in Years 1 and 2. The second is that the curriculum for these pupils has been strengthened and improved since the last inspection and so, correspondingly, has the quality of teaching. By the end of Year 2 the vast majority of pupils enjoy singing a wide range of songs clearly and in tune. They follow instructions well when being led by a conductor and so, for instance, adjust their voices to sing softly or heartily according to the mood of the song. Pupils are given the opportunity to play on tuned and untuned instruments, from an early age, and make good progress, so that, by the end of Year 2, the majority can copy and hold a rhythm set for them by their teacher, and successfully 'read' music in the form of symbols and pictures, which is above expectations for their age. A significant minority of higher attaining pupils at this stage compose short sequences of their own, reflecting standards well above those seen in most schools.
131. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, continue to make good progress from Year 3 onwards. This is because the good teaching that they receive in lessons provides them with maximum opportunity to develop the skills of composing and playing music, step by step as they grow older. In addition, there are increased opportunities for them to learn to play a wide range of tuned instruments, through the specialised extra tuition which the school makes available to them. Thus, by the end of Year 6, a significant number of pupils play percussion, woodwind or string instruments to well above average standards, reading confidently from formal written music. The vast majority of pupils achieve at least average standards in the composition of ensemble pieces for untuned instruments using graphic symbols. Similarly, there is continued good progress in the development of singing from Year 3 to 6 as pupils, particularly those in the school choir, improve their posture, diction and voice control. This is particularly evident on occasions, such as the preparation for communion, where singing is rich and spiritual in quality.
132. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. It was consistently good or better during the week of the inspection and was excellent in one lesson seen. The most significant strength of teaching is teachers' willingness to devote as much time as possible during lessons to allow pupils 'hands on' experience of musical instruments. This relies on very good management of behaviour and good relationships between teacher and class and has a significant impact on pupils' rate of achievement from year to year. Consequently, pupils throughout the school develop very positive attitudes to the subject and thoroughly enjoy singing and playing. There is occasional reluctance on the part of some boys in Year 6 to join whole-heartedly in singing, particularly in assemblies, and the school should consider ways of capturing the interest and enthusiasm of this small minority of pupils. Teaching in the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. For example, pupils quickly learn that in order to perform well, they need to co-operate closely with others, show self-discipline, follow instructions carefully and appreciate the efforts of others. This was particularly evident in an excellent lesson given by the subject leader with a group of pupils in Year 3 who had been identified as needing support to improve their levels of concentration. Relationships between teacher and class were excellent and the teacher had high expectations of their behaviour and effort. The group was asked to improvise a story using xylophones to represent sounds and characters. Throughout a much enjoyed session they displayed high levels of concentration and team work. By the end, they were acutely aware of their own and others' achievement and very appreciative of their teachers' hard work. An area for future development in teaching and learning throughout the school is to encourage teachers to place greater emphasis on pupils' use of specific vocabulary, for example by correctly naming musical instruments, in order to contribute more strongly to the development of literacy skills.
133. Since the last inspection, the subject leader has worked hard and successfully to merge her own scheme of work with a published scheme which requires teachers' regular use of information and communication technology skills. She has made herself available to provide advice to colleagues, and although some still lack confidence, the vast majority are planning successful and well

balanced lessons. The scheme enables pupils to listen to and perform songs and music from all over the world and, to this extent, teaching makes a very positive contribution to pupils' cultural awareness. The subject leader has also introduced an efficient and practical system of assessment which enables teachers to track the development of skills through the school. She devotes a great deal of additional time to organising or providing opportunities for pupils to practise and perform beyond lesson time. Consequently, her very good management of the subject makes a significant contribution to the ethos of the school and has rightly earned The Epiphany's reputation locally as a school which successfully promotes music. The video recordings of pupils' orchestral and choral performances in productions such as 'Joseph's Coat' and 'Jerusalem Joy' provide clear evidence, not only of the high quality of music played and sung by pupils, but of the sense of pride and achievement shared by parents, pupils and staff on these occasions.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' standards are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and they exceed expectations at the end of Year 6. Pupils throughout the school experience a broad curriculum that exceeds statutory requirements. Very good subject leadership, good teaching, good parental and community involvement, an extensive programme of extra-curricular clubs, and many opportunities for involvement in inter-school competitions contribute to the high status of physical education and sport within the school.
135. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in games match expectations. They have sound technique at catching, but are not yet consistently accurate when throwing. They appreciate the need for rules in the simple games that they play and contribute good ideas about how rules can be adapted to ensure fairness between teams. They also have an appropriate awareness of the basic tactics that improve performance in game playing. Swimming takes place for one term in Year 1 and having this experience at this age increases the success with which skills are learned. An additional opportunity is provided in Year 6 and, by this age, records show that the majority of pupils are successfully achieving the nationally expected standards. In athletics, pupils' standards by the end of Year 6 are above those expected. Pupils perform a wide variety of athletic activities, very successfully, showing good co-ordination and agility in triple jumping and hurdling, a good capacity for endurance and a very good appreciation of the importance of acquiring efficient technique from the outset. Throughout the school, pupils show good knowledge and understanding of the function and effects of warming up and cooling down. By Year 6, pupils explain the effects of exercise well, using correct terms for body organs and systems in their explanations.
136. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, overall, while in Years 3 to 6 it is very good. This very good teaching is characterised by teachers' good subject knowledge, and very thorough lesson planning, with learning activities building successfully on each previous stage and excellent organisation. Behaviour management is very good and, indeed, is frequently not needed because of pupils' very positive attitudes to the subject. Such attitudes were very evident in the excellent response of pupils in Year 5 in a very well taught outdoor and adventurous activities lesson. Pupils worked on what are known as 'outdoor challenge activities' that are designed to develop co-operation, respect for others and, in this lesson, trust in a partner. The task of leading a blindfolded partner round an obstacle course successfully was performed with high levels in all the required qualities. The teacher allowed pupils ample opportunities to evaluate their activity so that they could learn from one another about how best to guide a partner.
137. In all lessons, teachers ensure the full inclusion of all pupils and ensure that any specific support or additional guidance required by individual pupils is provided. This enables pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, to make the same progress as their classmates. The few pupils registered as gifted or talented in the area of physical education have ample opportunities to perform at the right level and teachers' expectations are high. Where a pupil has a specialist interest beyond the school's curriculum, appropriate links with local clubs have been established.
138. There are subject leaders for both physical education and dance and the overall quality of leadership and management is very good. However, there have been no opportunities for the co-ordinators to formally monitor and evaluate pupils' standards or the quality of teaching. The subject leaders can only acquire this knowledge informally at present through, for example, their

involvement in extra-curricular activities. These activities are extensive, involve a good number of pupils, and make a good contribution to pupils' physical and personal development. Pupils have taken part in a dance choreography and performance, as part of an inclusion project with a local special school, which provided a valuable opportunity for the pupils involved in many respects. The breadth of opportunities in dance has also been extended by recent workshops, in African dance for children in the reception classes, and in Jazz dance for pupils in Years 4 and 5. Dance contributes well to pupils' cultural development through such experiences, as well as through the breadth of sources of musical stimuli that are evident in teachers' planning. Collaboration and co-operation feature strongly in the objectives of many physical lessons and, in this way, the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

139. In school clubs for soccer, rounders, netball, athletics and volleyball, pupils benefit from the input of parents, governors, club coaches and teachers. Funding for the employment of specialist coaches has been acquired through a successful application for a Lottery grant. There is additional community involvement in athletics lessons, through the support programme provided by local sports development officers, and the good quality of their contribution was observed in lessons with pupils in Years 4 and 6. Extra-curricular activities are predominantly for pupils in Years 3 to 6, but the next target in the subject's action plan for improvement is to seek to provide opportunities for younger pupils. Additionally, there is a need to review long-term planning of the physical education curriculum. While it is very broad at present, there is some imbalance in Years 3 to 6. Across these years, pupils currently experience more than twice as much games as any other area of activity and this reduces the opportunities for pupils to develop fully their skills in other areas.