

INSPECTION REPORT

MILL RYTHE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Hayling Island

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115914

Headteacher: Mrs J M Queripel

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sue Chesters
23196

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 6th June 2003

Inspection number: 247596

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Havant Road Hayling Island
Postcode:	PO11 0PA
Telephone number:	023 9246 3663
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Jones
Date of previous inspection:	08/12/97

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23196	Sue Chesters	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion Special educational needs English as an additional language Music Religious education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? Interpretation of results
9163	Geoff Humphrey	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well is the school led and managed?
23216	John Earish	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
15474	John Fairclough	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
32174	Paul Ford	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology	How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development and attendance

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Mill Rythe Junior School is on Hayling Island in Hampshire. It educates pupils aged from seven to 11. There are 341 pupils on roll. This is about the same number as at the time of the last inspection. The school serves a mixed area with most pupils living on the island. There have been subtle changes in the locality in recent years which have affected the levels of attainment with which pupils join the school. Pupils' attainment at entry is now below average. Fewer pupils, than previously, achieve at the higher level 3 in their Key Stage 1 national tests and tasks. Eighteen pupils claim free school meals. However, there are more pupils eligible for free school meals than claim their entitlement. A very small number of pupils come from ethnic-minority groups and have English as an additional language. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English. Sixty-one pupils are identified as having special educational needs. Their needs include communication difficulties, physical disabilities, emotional and behavioural problems and a range of moderate or more severe learning difficulties. Four pupils have formal statements of educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school because it is well led and managed and because the pupils are well taught. It is effective and gives good value for money. It reflects very well its aim to maintain a happy school ethos and consequently pupils thrive and learn successfully.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve above average standards in reading, science, information and communication technology, art, design and technology, history, music and religious education.
- The quality of teaching is good and results in pupils learning well.
- The school is well led and managed. It receives very good support from the governing body.
- It provides very well for pupils' moral and social development. As a consequence, pupils behave very well and have good attitudes to school. It has a very good programme for personal, social and health education, which very effectively enhances relationships in school.
- It provides very well for pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress.
- Parents are very closely involved with the work of the school and contribute most successfully to their children's learning.

What could be improved

- The curriculum, to encourage independent learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected in December 1997. All of the key issues raised then have been addressed. There is now a good, consistently implemented, behaviour policy which results in pupils behaving well. The provision made for pupils' moral development was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. It is now very good. The school has developed very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for themselves and for routine jobs around school. However, opportunities for pupils to learn independently are not so well developed. Standards in Year 3, which were criticized in the last report, have improved. Standards, throughout the school, in information and communication technology, art, design and technology, music and religious education have improved and are now above average. The quality of teaching is better than at the time of the last

inspection. At the last inspection, it was satisfactory. It is now good overall. Subject leaders have clearer understanding of their roles. All statutory requirements are now met.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	C	C	B
Mathematics	C	C	C	B
Science	B	B	B	B

Key

Well above average A
 Above average B
 Average C
 Below average D
 Well below average E

**Similar schools are those with between 8 per cent and 20 per cent of pupils receiving free school meals.*

The table above shows the results in the 2002 national tests for pupils of Year 6. Standards were in line with the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science. When compared with similar schools*, the results are above average in English, mathematics and science. There has been a steady rise in standards in English and science since the last inspection in 1997, which reflects the national trend. In mathematics, the rise has varied year on year, although there has been an upward trend overall. This is largely due to the improved quality of teaching which has resulted in pupils learning more successfully. It is likely that the upward trend will continue in this year's national tests. This would follow the pattern of the last six years and reflects the changing nature of the curriculum. Inspection findings show that standards in science in the current Year 6 are above average. They are average in English and mathematics. However, pupils read at above average levels. Standards are above average in art, design and technology, history, information and communication technology and music. In geography and the aspects of physical education seen during the inspection, standards are average. Pupils exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. The pupils in the current Year 6 are on line to reach the targets set for them by the time they leave the school. Across the school pupils with special educational needs achieve well. This is because of the good quality teaching and also, in part, to the good provision for pupils' spiritual development, which allows them to learn successfully in a reflective environment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to take part in all activities that the school offers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in and around school. They are very polite and courteous.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils enjoy helping each other and take responsibility for jobs around school. However, they do not have enough opportunity to take responsibility for their learning. Relationships are very good. Pupils relate very well to adults and to each other.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Levels of attendance are average and pupils are punctual.

Pupils are interested in their lessons. They work hard and are happy. They understand very well the effects of their actions on others. Older pupils are mature, show good initiative and take personal responsibility well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Teaching during the inspection ranged from unsatisfactory to excellent. Six out of every ten lessons seen were good or better. Overall, the quality of both teaching and learning were good. Teachers enjoy teaching and, consequently, the pupils learn happily. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. Very effective teaching assistants work alongside the teachers. This makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved, particularly by those pupils who have learning difficulties and those who have emotional and behavioural problems. Teachers ensure that the pace of learning in lessons is very good. Thus, the vast majority of pupils are interested in their work and eager to complete the tasks that they are given. Major strengths of the teaching are the ways in which staff implement the behaviour policy and manage pupils' behaviour in lessons. As a result, the pupils know exactly what is expected of them and they work very hard. In the best lessons, teachers explained very clearly what it was that they expected the pupils to achieve. They set them challenging tasks and then let them work independently. In these lessons, pupils learned rapidly and achieved very good results. In less successful lessons, teachers were too prescriptive and this inhibited all pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and receive very good quality support from the teaching assistants. Hence, these pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils from all types of backgrounds and of different abilities are fully included in all lessons and achieve well. The good teaching that the pupils receive is a major strength of the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. It does not always allow enough challenge for pupils nor adequate opportunity for pupils to learn independently. There is very good provision within the curriculum for personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils' individual educational programmes match their needs very well. They receive very good support in lessons and when they are working in small groups. This enables them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' personal and spiritual development. It makes satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care and welfare provided for pupils is good. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic progress and personal development are good but use of recorded data to help and guide them with their future learning is underdeveloped.

The school works very hard to develop a good working partnership with parents. Parents are very successfully involved in the work of the school and contribute very effectively to their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear vision for the school. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior leadership team. Management at all levels are developing their roles well and have the capacity to contribute to the further development of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors use their personal talents and experiences to provide very good support to the leadership and management of the school. They have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and fully support the corporate vision for its future direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The procedures for performance review and self-evaluation are well established within the management culture of the school. The school has good priorities for development and a strong shared commitment to succeed. The arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory but require further evaluation to improve the learning for all groups of pupils and encourage them to become more independent learners.
The strategic use of resources	The procedures underpinning the strategic financial planning are very good and ensure that the school utilises its resources effectively and meets its identified development priorities. Spending is closely monitored and the principles of best value are effectively applied.

There is a good match of teachers to the demands of the National Curriculum. The standard of accommodation is good. The high standard of the learning environment has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The learning resources are good for all areas of the curriculum. This is an effective school that provides good value for money and the principles of best value are effectively applied.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teaching. • The expectation that pupils will work hard and achieve good results. • Positive learning attitudes and good behaviour. • Good management and leadership. • Their children enjoy school. • The progress made by their children in both their academic and personal development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information provided about progress. • A wider range of additional activities outside of lessons. • A closer working partnership with parents.

The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents. With regard to the information provided about progress the inspectors agree that the annual reports do not contain enough information on pupil progress, or information on the curriculum, for all subjects. The reporting on personal and social education, English, mathematics and science is satisfactory but more detailed information on other subjects would be helpful for parents. The inspectors do not agree with the other issues raised by parents. They judge the range of additional activities outside of lessons to be good and the partnership

with parents to be very good, with many parents making important contributions to the life and work of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2002, results in English and mathematics were in line with all schools nationally. In science, results were above average. When compared with similar schools, the results are above average in English, mathematics and science. This year's Year 6 pupils are likely to meet the targets set for the 2003 national tests. This year's targets are lower than those of previous years. However, previous years' targets have been unrealistically high and have not taken into account the varying numbers of pupils in each year group with special educational needs. Nor have they acknowledged the subtle social changes which have taken place in the area. These have resulted in an overall lowering of pupils' levels of attainment at entry to the school. These changes also account for the fluctuations in standards in some subjects, for instance mathematics, over the last six years. Since the last inspection, the school has undergone many changes and, overall, standards have steadily improved, reflecting the national trend.

2. Standards, since the last inspection, have been maintained at above average levels in science and history. They have improved in art and design, design and technology, geography, information and communication technology and music. In these subjects standards are now above average by Year 6.

3. It appears that standards have dipped in English and mathematics. They are average at both Year 2 and Year 6. However, this is more likely to be a reflection of the changes in the curriculum during the last six years, than an actual drop in standards. It is difficult to compare standards in any one subject over this period. This is because there have been many changes in the curriculum, which has moved forward rapidly and places greater challenge on teachers and pupils. No comparison is made between standards in physical education at the last inspection and now, because different aspects of the subject were observed at each time. Overall, standards have kept abreast of the changes and, in many instances, improved in excess of the national trend.

4. The raised standards are results of the:

- improved quality of teaching and of learning, which are now good
- successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy
- improvements made to the curriculum, particularly in the non-core subjects¹ and personal, social and health education
- improvements in assessment procedures, which now give useful information about pupils' attainment and progress
- improvements in the behaviour policy, which has strengthened the quality of pupils' learning because they concentrate better and thus learn more efficiently.

5. There are no significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls, nor between any groups of pupils. The more able pupils are suitably challenged and achieve well. Similarly, the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds learn well alongside their peers, and make good progress. However, there are times when pupils' learning is not sufficiently well-developed. This is because there is not sufficient flexibility within the curriculum for pupils to take charge of their own learning and work independently. Skills

¹ Non-core subjects are art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education.

learned in literacy and numeracy lessons are evident in other subjects. However, more links between subjects would be beneficial. Similarly, the school has identified the need to use information and communication technology more widely as a tool in all subjects.

6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They make good progress towards the targets set for them in individual education plans. This is due to the good teaching and the very good support that they receive. Targets are specific and suitably challenging for their academic and personal development. Careful monitoring of pupils' achievement leads to regular adjustment of the targets, so that good quality learning is sustained.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to school and to learning. They arrive in a quiet and orderly manner and are clearly happy to come to school. Pupils are polite and well-mannered when moving around school and this leads to a well-disciplined community. Pupils' attitudes are good and the majority listen attentively in lesson and work hard. They show interest in the activities available to them and there is a good level of participation in after school activities. The School Council is very successful. The pupils who are part of this group, recognise how they can influence certain areas of school life and are very proud of their achievements to date.

8. Pupils with special educational needs show positive attitudes to their work and good levels of concentration. They try hard, take pride in their achievements and receive good support from teaching assistants.

9. The behaviour of the majority of pupils in the school is very good. In almost all lessons it is at least good and is frequently very good. When incidents of behaviour, that are not consistent with school expectations, do occur, the very good classroom management skills of the teachers' successfully deal with them. Around the school, including break and lunch-times, behaviour is very good and there is no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour. There is adequate supervision at all times during the day. There were no exclusions from the school during the academic year 2001/02.

10. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good. There is clear mutual respect evident throughout school. There is a friendly, family atmosphere within the school. Pupils' personal development is a priority and most pupils mature to be sensible, polite and respectful. The pupils' personal development is nurtured through the provision for personal, social and health education. When this is linked to teaching in religious education and issues addressed through acts of worship, it helps the pupils to understand the feelings, values and beliefs of others, as well as the impact of their actions on them. The pupils have a number of opportunities to take responsibility. In all year groups, pupils take on responsible duties, both within the classroom and generally around school. Pupils in Year 6 see their extra duties around school as a privilege and they appreciate their contribution to the school community. However, in many of the lessons observed, the opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning are limited.

11. At the last inspection attendance was good. Both authorised and unauthorised absences being below average. The attendance rate is now broadly in line with the national average. Both authorised and unauthorised absences are slightly below the national figures. The main factors affecting attendance are:

- the low priority that some families place on pupils coming to school;
- sickness;
- economic circumstances, which encourage parents to take family holidays during term time.

The punctuality of the majority of pupils is very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. This results in pupils learning effectively. During the inspection, fifty-nine lessons or parts of lessons were observed. In over a third of these lessons, the quality of teaching was at least very good or better, and three lessons were excellent. Three lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when just over one in ten lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The headteacher and subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning carefully, and this contributes to the maintenance of the good standards of teaching. All staff work well as a team, and support each other.

13. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They teach basic skills well in literacy and numeracy lessons and across other subjects. They often make good links with learning in other subjects. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are not only provided in English but also in other curriculum subjects such as personal, health and social education. A range of extended writing opportunities is provided across the curriculum, for example in history and geography. Numeracy teaching also takes place across the curriculum, and pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as science and design technology.

14. Teachers manage their pupils very well and set high expectations of behaviour and learning. They create a positive climate for learning and very good relationships have been established. As a result, pupils of all abilities are very motivated, keen to learn and behave very well. For example, in a well-planned design and technology lesson, pupils were challenged to design a range of biscuits. The teacher told the pupils what she wanted them to learn and explained how this could be achieved. The teacher demonstrated the techniques of biscuit making and then moved from group to group clarifying, helping, reinforcing and moving pupils onto the next task. Pupils were then encouraged to evaluate the success of their plans, and were expected to work hard. Where management skills are secure, a very good working environment is created and pupils are able to concentrate on what they have to do, without any disturbance.

15. Teachers' planning is satisfactory overall. Teachers set out clear learning objectives, which they share with the pupils at the beginning of lessons, so that all understand what they have to do and achieve. Pupils with special educational needs have objectives clearly linked to their individual learning plans. In the best lessons, higher achieving pupils carry out tasks that provide additional challenge. Teachers skilfully match tasks to pupils who learn at different rates. Less satisfactory teaching is generally due to missed opportunities in the planning which could have capitalised on the learning of the higher attainers, for example, during the last part of some mathematics lessons. In these lessons, teachers often over-direct pupils and miss opportunities to give them the responsibility and challenge of organising their own learning. When teaching is unsatisfactory, tasks are not sufficiently challenging and pupils do not make sufficient progress. However, in the vast majority of lessons, learning is built securely on pupils' previous knowledge, and all groups make good progress in many lessons.

16. When teaching is very good or excellent, teachers ask challenging questions of the higher attaining pupils to make them think. They also carefully adapt their questions to pupils with special educational needs so that they can join in all parts of the lesson. Teachers encourage pupils to look beyond the obvious and ask searching questions. For example, when writing performance poems using alliteration and onomatopoeia, Year 4 pupils

remained totally focused and enjoyed the freedom of using words creatively. The teacher used this opportunity very well to promote discussion and to use a wide-ranging vocabulary.

17. Relationships are very good between the staff and the pupils. Everyone is valued for his or her opinions and talents, in a calm and productive working atmosphere. The programme for personal and social development is of very good quality, and pupils have very good opportunities to express their feelings and concerns in a supportive environment.

18. Teachers and pupils use time well. Tasks generally have a time limit, and teachers make this clear to pupils throughout the session. Consequently, pupils stay on task and are eager to complete their work on time. Teachers and pupils use resources well, providing additional interest and opportunities for asking and answering questions.

19. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. They learn well in all subjects. Teaching assistants provide support to pupils within the classroom. In all sessions, they work from a lesson plan worked out in conjunction with the class teacher. All work is structured so that pupils with special educational needs are well challenged.

20. The quality of teachers' assessments is good. During lessons, they carefully monitor pupils' reactions to questions and adapt lessons to meet pupils' needs. Marking is usually good. However, the marking policy is not consistently implemented throughout all year groups nor in all subjects. Teachers use homework well to supplement and support work done in class. They allocate regular homework in a variety of subjects; value the work that pupils do, mark it regularly and refer to it during lessons.

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

21. The school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for its pupils. All subjects of the national curriculum and religious education are taught. The role of the subject manager has been developed and quality of learning has improved in all subjects, since the last inspection. The balance of the curriculum is secure because, over the academic year, the school has 'focus weeks' for subjects such as design technology. An alternating cycle of topics is used in other subjects. This ensures that all subjects are adequately covered. However, this provision does not always focus on the way in which pupils learn. As a result, lesson objectives focus on skills and knowledge for a whole year group, not on individuals or groups. Teachers guide and support pupils to help them meet challenging objectives but there are few opportunities for higher attaining pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Different tasks, that require them to independently use the ideas and relationships that they have learnt, are not regularly planned.

22. The provision of the statutory curriculum is good and ensured through effective activities in all subjects. Field trips are a key part of the geography curriculum. A particularly valuable topic about 'Old Portsmouth' develops both geography and history skills. Feature days on topics such as 'The Victorians', involve pupils in realistic role-play. These days are enhanced by the support of a visiting drama group.

23. Although parents expressed concern about extra-curricular activities, inspection evidence finds good provision. There are residential visits that offer pupils challenge, excitement and valuable opportunities for independence, teamwork and personal development. The range of activities taking place outside lesson time includes French, art and netball. There is also peripatetic music provision and an annual technology fair.

24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure that pupils receive tasks which suit their particular needs. They, and the support staff, work alongside these pupils, in lessons such as mathematics, to give extra support. This input enables pupils to tackle their work with confidence, and gain an increasing sense of independence.

25. Pupils are all equally involved in the daily life of the school. This means that they are included fairly in all roles and activities. However, a new programme of withdrawal of some pupils for focused support in specific skills, does impact on the learning of all pupils. The school has not yet had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the full impact of this programme.

26. Pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills well. Teachers plan lessons with clear learning objectives. This provides a structured framework in which pupils can develop and practice their skills. Pupils are challenged to a high level in numeracy lessons because they are organised in groups according to their ability. Teachers encourage pupils to use their writing skills naturally in other subjects. In this way, a variety of writing forms, such as explanation, reporting, persuasive and recording skills is developed meaningfully. The school has identified the need to develop writing skills further. To this end, it has designed a programme of extended writing which is adapted for different ability groups

27. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. It uses a clearly structured programme to develop pupils understanding of all aspects of the subject. Activities, that involve pupils in considering personal issues, encourage them to develop clear opinions that are based on their own positive self-image. There is a sensitive programme of sex education for older pupils. This very good personal, social and health education makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual development of pupils.

28. The community contributes effectively to pupils' learning. The school is involved in a number of local festivals and local celebrations. There is a regular system of homework that involves parents. Good use is made of the local area for geography and history topics. There are satisfactory links with other providers of education. Older pupils use the local secondary school facilities for art and design and information and communication technology. However, links with the nearby infant school are only in early stages of development. The school has identified the need to share more information about pupils, as they transfer from infant to junior school, and to build stronger curricular links between the two schools.

29. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. It is promoted well through the curriculum, the syllabus for religious education, collective acts of worship and through the school's programme for personal, social and health education. Pupils are given opportunities to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they impact on peoples' lives. In religious education lessons, an emphasis is placed on learning about beliefs and traditions of other faiths. The pupils are introduced to this through studies of Hinduism and Islam. In lessons and in acts of worship very effective use is made of time for reflection. As a result, pupils develop an understanding of human feelings and emotions and the ways in which they impact on people.

30. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and is an important part of the school ethos. All pupils are polite and welcoming. They respond in an

appropriate manner, to both other children and adults. There is a positive behaviour strategy and this helps pupils be clear about what is, and what is not, acceptable.

31. Each class has a system of rewards for good work and behaviour, and good social development opportunities are provided. Pupils' are encouraged to work together by talking to their partners and by working in group situations. This is evident in English, mathematics and science lessons. There are very good relationships throughout school. staff act as positive role models for pupils. They promote high standards of behaviour very successfully. In an excellent personal, social and health education lesson, the teacher skilfully developed the pupils' ability to make responsible and reasoned judgements on a moral dilemma.

32. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school organises an 'inter-cultural' week, when the pupils focus on other cultures. Visiting speakers come into school to speak to pupils and conduct workshops. For example, Year 3 enjoyed working with a visiting Indian lady who worked on story telling through dance. The whole school enjoyed a visit from some African dancers. The school has identified this as an area for further development. In geography, pupils' have studied contrasting localities, including St. Lucia and Egypt, to extend their understanding of how people in other cultures live and work.

33. The school has started to develop satisfactory opportunities to promote the pupils' awareness of life in a diverse cultural Britain. However, it is aware that this is an under-developed area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school cares well for its pupils. This view is shared by those parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and returned questionnaires. Teachers and support staff know and understand their pupils well and provide sensitive pastoral care and welfare support. The procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. Equality of opportunity is positively promoted and all pupils, irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, physical or learning difficulty, are well provided for and fully included in all aspects of school life.

35. There is good attention to all matters relating to health and safety. Regular risk assessments are undertaken in relation to the use of school premises and for school trips. Fire and electrical equipment is routinely tested and there are regular evacuation drills. There are good arrangements for the provision of first aid. Good health and safety records are maintained. The senior staff and governors have a good overview of health and safety procedures. However, there is no formal health and safety committee to enable those with individual health and safety responsibilities to discuss and record issues of mutual interest. The health and safety implications of operating a swimming pool for school and wider community use have been rigorously evaluated and monitored.

36. The headteacher is the designated child protection officer. All staff have received recent training on child protection and are alert to the needs of vulnerable pupils. They are aware of the guidelines for dealing with sensitive issues. The school maintains close links with the education welfare service and all other relevant outside agencies. Personal and social education is provided within the curriculum and through designated lessons. Personal hygiene, healthy living, drug and alcohol abuse, sex education, the enhancement of social skills and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship are incorporated into a very good and well balanced programme that meets the needs of all pupils as they progress through the school.

37. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. The management of behaviour is consistent throughout the school. Good behaviour and learning

attitudes are celebrated and this provides an ethos in which pupils strive to do their best. Any incidents of unacceptable behaviour, such as bullying or showing a lack of consideration towards others, are dealt with promptly and effectively. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. They help to keep attendance in line with the national average. Analysis of the school attendance records show that a very high proportion of authorised absence in the current year is for medical reasons and most of these absences involve only a small number of pupils.

38. The procedures for assessing attainment and progress are good. On transfer from infant school all available data on prior attainment is entered onto the school computerised assessment system. There is a well-established programme of tests in English and mathematics to track progress against projected targets for these subjects. Clear evidence is available on the attainment and progress of all pupils, as they move through the school. Progress in science is monitored at the end of each work module and records of teacher assessment are maintained for all other subjects.

39. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. The use of assessment and recorded data to amend curriculum and lesson planning is not fully developed. There is a wealth of assessment information available but this is not always effectively used when planning lessons to ensure that they match the learning needs of all pupils. Teachers do not consistently apply the school marking policy and pupils are not always aware of what they need to do to improve their levels of attainment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and returned questionnaires expressed very positive views about the school. They are pleased with the standard of teaching and the expectation that their children will work hard and achieve good results. They like the way in which the school promotes positive learning attitudes and good behaviour in an environment that enables their children to enjoy school. They consider the school to be well led and managed and are pleased that their children make good progress in both their academic and personal developments. The inspection evidence supports these positive views.

41. A significant minority of parents want some improvement in the information provided about their children's progress, the range of additional activities provided outside of lessons and a closer working partnership between parents and the school. With regard to the information provided on progress, the inspectors agree that the annual reports do not contain enough information on pupil progress, or information on the curriculum, for all subjects. The inspectors did not find any evidence to support the other issues raised by parents. They judge the range of additional activities outside of lessons to be good and the partnership with parents to be very good. Many parents making a very important contribution to the life and work of the school.

42. The school endeavours to be very welcoming towards parents and to involve them as much as possible in the education of their children. The home school agreement defines the expectations and responsibilities of the school, parents and their children. The majority of parents respond very positively to these expectations. A weekly newsletter keeps parents well informed about all activities and events, and a curriculum and topic update is issued every term, for each year group.

43. On consultation evenings, parents have the opportunity to discuss and review the work that their children have done. School concerts and other events are very well attended. Parents are kept well informed about homework through a weekly homework summary sheet

and they are encouraged to use the pupils reading diaries to monitor and record progress. The annual reports provide a commentary on pupils' knowledge, understanding and progress in English, mathematics, science and personal and social education with targets for future development. The curriculum and progress being made for other subjects are not covered in sufficient depth. Pupils have the opportunity to write their own comments about their year's work and these provide a revealing insight into their learning attitudes and thinking skills.

44. An enthusiastic and well-led parent-teacher association supports the work of the school. The association organises an extensive programme of events, including a summer fete that attracts much interest from the wider community. The association runs regular disco evenings for pupils and often involves them in preparing for other events, such as craft evenings. Many parents volunteer to help in school, particularly with after school activities, special events and school trips. Overall, the impact parents have on the work of the school and the contribution that they make to their children's learning are very good. The partnership between the school, its parents and the wider community, is very sound and has been steadily growing stronger since the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and key staff are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear vision for the school. She has worked hard to involve all staff and the governing body in moving the school forward. She has gained their confidence, as well as that of the parents. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher, the leadership team and the management team. They all use their individual strengths very effectively. Management at all levels are developing their roles well and have the capacity and commitment to contribute to the further improvement of the school. Subject coordinators effectively promote and develop their subjects.

46. The governors use their personal talents and experiences to provide very good support to the leadership and management of the school. The governors who lead the three sub committees of the governing body make very effective contributions in shaping its future direction. The governing body fulfil their statutory duties very well and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They fully support the corporate vision for its future direction and have established very effective performance monitoring procedures.

47. The procedures for performance review and self-evaluation within the management culture of the school are well established. The arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory but require further evaluation of the development of teaching and learning for all groups of pupils and to encourage them to become more independent learners. The school is making good use of a computerised monitoring and tracking system that produces good quality information on the gains that pupils are making but although the data is available it is not used to best effect.

48. The school has effective financial management systems. The procedures underpinning the strategic financial planning are very good and ensure that the school utilises its resources effectively and meets its identified development priorities. Spending is closely monitored and the principles of best value are effectively applied. Although the projected carry-forward balance for the end of the current year is higher than recommended, the funds have been allocated for a school improvement project that is due to start in a matter of weeks and will continue into the next financial period. The unallocated carry-forward balance is within the permitted percentage range.

49. Governors committees meet regularly to monitor, evaluate and support all operational aspects including health and safety, buildings, staffing curriculum and strategic financial planning. Good use is made of new technology to support school administration, the maintenance of pupil records and the delivery of the curriculum. Specific grants are effectively and appropriately deployed. This is an effective school that provides good value for money.

50. There is a good match of teachers to the demands of the National Curriculum. The school has a good mix of experienced teachers and those who are relatively new to the profession. There is an effective team of support staff who are well deployed. Those who have joined the school over the past few years, as newly qualified teachers, confirm that they received very good support from their mentors and colleagues. The school provides good facilities for new teacher training placements. There are very good opportunities for the continuous professional development of all members of staff, including those in administration and other supporting roles. The school is shortly to apply for accreditation as an 'Investor in People' employer, and has all the systems and procedures in place to support this application.

51. The standard of accommodation is good and supports the full delivery of the National Curriculum. The school has worked hard to ensure that the classrooms in the original Victorian school building provide as good a learning environment as those in the newer buildings. The high standard of the learning environment has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The school buildings are maintained and cleaned to a very high standard. They are a credit to the caretaker and his staff. Displays are effectively used to celebrate pupils' work and to promote interest in subjects, topics and extra-curricular activities.

52. There is a dedicated classroom for information and communications technology, an attractive and well-planned central library, and a number of areas, suitable for group work and for teaching pupils with special educational needs. The school has an indoor swimming pool and a stand-alone hall that serves as a drama studio and as a centre for after-school clubs and activities. The main hall provides for indoor physical education and as an assembly and dining area. The school provides good accessibility for any pupils who have physical disabilities. The school grounds are extensive and provide a good range of grassed and hard surfaced areas for a wide range of sports and leisure activities. The grounds are attractively landscaped and well maintained and include a very well designed and managed nature conservation and natural science learning area.

53. The learning resources are good and support the full delivery of the National curriculum. The library contains a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts to support independent research and promote an interest in literacy. There are sufficient computers with appropriate software, to support all areas of the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to raise standards even further and improve the quality of education for its pupils the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) evaluate and focus the existing curriculum in order to ensure that it
 - improves the learning of pupils
 - guides pupils to become independent learners.

(paragraphs: 5, 10, 15, 21, 57, 75, 92, 105)

55. In addition the governing body may wish to include the following in its action plan:

- reviewing the use made of the data generated from the assessments made of pupils' attainment and progress
(paragraphs: 39, 47, 63, 76, 97)
- fully and consistently implementing the current marking policy
(paragraphs: 20, 39, 75)
- reviewing the written reports for parents to ensure that they give information about pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects.
(paragraphs: 41, 43)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	54

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	18	16	19	3	0	0
Percentage	5%	31%	27%	32%	5%	0%	0%

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	341
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	61

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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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 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	45	30	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	40	35	45
	Girls	26	20	30
	Total	66	55	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (80)	73 (66)	100 (92)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	36	35	39
	Girls	25	26	22
	Total	61	61	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (61)	81 (71)	81 (84)
	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**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	332	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	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	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	28

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	196

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	739,371
Total expenditure	700,270
Expenditure per pupil	2,053
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,101
Balance carried forward to next year	34,299

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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	341
Number of questionnaires returned	125

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	43	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	43	6	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	52	2	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	54	11	3	2
The teaching is good.	50	46	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	47	15	9	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48	37	8	5	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	27	51	14	6	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	45	2	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	40	6	2	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	44	19	1	6

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

ENGLISH

56. The overall performance of Year 6 pupils in the national tests for English in 2002 was in line with national averages and above the average for similar schools. There has been steady and consistent improvement in the performance of pupils over the past two years, and this has been at a greater rate than national average. However, performance at the higher levels (level 5) was below the national average.

57. Inspection evidence confirms this position. A high proportion of pupils work at the expected levels and, in this respect, achievement is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are effectively included in all lessons, and because they are supported well by classroom assistants. This enables them to achieve the objectives of the lessons. However, higher attaining pupils are not always challenged enough to work independently. Their learning is structured and guided by teachers and there are insufficient tasks that demand originality of thought and the application of skills learnt to complete activities.

58. Pupils in Year 6 work confidently and meet the expectations of the current curriculum well. Reading is above national expectations. All pupils like reading and speak with enthusiasm about books that they have read. They understand the structure of information in books. They use index and quick searching skills well to locate facts in reference books. Higher attaining pupils read with expressive fluency. They understand implied humour and project the main features of characters well to predict the plots of stories. Average attaining pupils use punctuation well to give meaning and expression to their reading. They understand implied points in stories and understand the meaning of words such as 'twaddle' and 'lyrical'. Lower attaining pupils are a little hesitant due to the need to 'sound out' words such as 'boastful' but are reasonably fluent in their reading otherwise. They also use punctuation accurately to give more meaning to their reading.

59. Speaking and listening skills are in line with the expectations of the current curriculum. Pupils readily offer answers to questions and support their answers with reasons. They speak with clear voices and are confident in the presence of others. When reading their work to the class, pupils speak at an appropriate speed but do not project their voices in order to give greater emphasis to their work. This is often because pupils are not given enough opportunities for shared discussions in lessons. Too often, debate is promoted by question and answer sessions led by the teacher.

60. Writing is in line with national expectations. Handwriting is legible and joined up but, although most pupils use ink pens, few have developed a personal style. Pupils are aware of the need for accurate spelling of words and take appropriate care in their work, through the use of dictionaries and other strategies. As a result, higher attaining pupils are successful with words such as 'hierarchy', average-attaining pupils with words such as 'quipped' and lower attaining pupils with words such as 'centigrade'. Most of the writing seen is focused on developing skills to enable pupils to write in a variety of ways, such as persuasive writing, accounts of visits and presentation of arguments. There is imaginative work on story introductions and endings but there are few examples of pupils using their own writing structures imaginatively. This means that the pupils' use of conversation, complex sentence structures and paragraphs is not well developed as a natural part of written expression. As a result, the writing of higher attaining pupils has insufficient style and uses relatively simple

sentence structures. There is some variety in persuasive writing that is well organised, clear and effective. Phrases such as '...stone angels stationed around the ceiling...' and '...a few hours to enjoy and experience the atmosphere...' were used to good effect in one lesson. The writing of average and lower attaining pupils is mainly factual, with simple linear sentences using basic connectives and inconsistent punctuation.

61. Teaching and learning was good overall. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. Six out of ten lessons were good or better, with two out of ten being excellent. This good teaching was based on a good subject knowledge and good teaching of the basic skills of literacy. Clear expectations, effectively structured learning and very good management of pupils meant that pupils made gains in their knowledge of language. They worked hard and produced a good quantity of work. They showed interest and demonstrated good learning through the quality of their work. Where teaching was excellent or very good, a lively lesson held the interest of pupils well and very good relationships meant that pupils were secure and confident. For example, a Year 3 lesson on letter writing gave clear instructions about the requirements of a letter of apology. Guidance and support was skilfully given and the whole room was 'buzzing' with interest about the task. As a result, all pupils identified the main features of the task. Higher attaining pupils then edited their own versions of the letter independently to include advanced features such as paragraphs.

62. Where teaching and learning were less successful, lessons focused too strongly on achieving the declared learning objectives. Structured writing tasks led the pupils to a successful outcome within a clear framework of information, purpose and content. But there was little discussion of how the text worked and of how particular words could change the effect of the writing. Complex sentence structures were not examined in persuasive writing nor, as pupils developed their work, were words evaluated for effect and style. A lesson to develop listening skills focused mainly on understanding what was heard. This did not give sufficient opportunity for pupils to exchange opinions and develop personal points of view about rules. A lesson for Year 4 pupils, based on 'effect' words and words with similar sounding syllables, produced random collections of ideas. However, when one pupil linked the 'boom' of the waves to the 'roar' of a lion, he soon produced a 'raging' 'roaring' and 'rushing' verse about the sea on a stormy day.

63. Since the previous inspection, there has been good improvement in the school's provision for English. Standards have risen steadily, matching the rising national average and a more challenging curriculum; whilst teaching has improved to a good level, with some examples of excellence. Good leadership and subject management has effectively enhanced the subjects development. Clear and structured learning objectives mean that pupils progress well in their learning. The skills of literacy are naturally used well in other subject areas such as geography, history, and religious education. Good use is made of information and communication technology skills. Pupils write directly into computers and use publishing skills to combine images with text in the production of leaflets. Monitoring of subject performance has identified writing skills of the higher attaining pupils as an area for development and the need for teaching to provide different learning opportunities for this particular group of pupils.

MATHEMATICS

64. The inspection found that standards are average at the end of Year 6. The attainment of pupils in the 2002 National Curriculum tests was in line with standards attained by pupils of a similar age nationally, and above the standards attained by pupils in similar schools. Results have been in line with the national average since 2000. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be above average. However, the context of the school has changed significantly since then, and attainment on entry is now judged to be below average. Pupils are now achieving well, as a result of good teaching.

65. The school uses the National Numeracy Strategy to support the teaching of mathematics. Pupils are taught in three ability sets. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are taught in separate booster groups for one day a week. These arrangements provide good support for the more able pupils, and are already having an effect on attainment. Predictions, based on the most recent teacher assessments for pupils aged 11 years, show an increase in the percentage of pupils likely to achieve level 4, and the higher level 5, this year.

66. By the age of 11, most pupils have a good knowledge of mathematics and are confident in their understanding of mathematical concepts. The curriculum is satisfactory, but there are missed opportunities for a wider use of practical activities in extending pupils' knowledge of the application of mathematical problem solving. However, the curriculum for the higher attaining booster groups is good, with good opportunities for problem solving. This was apparent when Year 6 pupils were challenged to draw graphs of simple functions. The scrutiny of work showed evidence of good links to other subjects such as geography, science, and design technology. Pupils also learn to handle mathematical data using their information and communication technology skills.

67. The quality of teaching is good. During the course of the inspection, eleven mathematics lessons were observed. Of these, three were good, four were very good and four were satisfactory. Teachers make good use of the opportunities at the start of numeracy lessons, for mental arithmetic. They use questions well to consolidate and clarify pupils understanding of mental computation. For example, a good feature of a Year 3 lesson was the way in which the teacher used both written and oral methods to focus pupils on the task. This ensured a brisk pace to the activities. Pupils were able to support each other, and found this both challenging and helpful.

68. Good teaching takes place during the main activity of the lesson. All teachers have a good grasp of the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy, and units of work are usually well matched to pupils' individual levels of attainment. For example, in a very good Year 4 lesson for lower attaining pupils, the teacher had set up an activity investigating nets of cuboids. She very clearly explained the activity, using appropriate mathematical vocabulary, and set time targets so that all know how long they had for each part. The learning was done in small steps with the teacher intervening and reinforcing at each stage of the learning process. Consequently the pace of the lesson was very good and pupils learned very well.

69. Pupils are very well motivated and concentrate very well in lessons. They settle very quickly to tasks and generally present their work well. The very good relationship between staff and pupils encourages pupils, of all abilities, to share their ideas. Teachers are careful to include all children in lessons. They ask questions that are well matched to the pupils' different abilities. Teachers assess their pupils continuously, through their questioning and through observations during lessons. Therefore, they are able to quickly adapt lessons if pupils are struggling to understand a concept or to complete a task. Consequently, they use time well and pupils learn well. Pupils know what they have to achieve because teachers share the learning objectives at the beginning of lessons. Less satisfactory teaching is generally due to the missed opportunities to capitalise on the learning of the higher attainers during the last part of some lessons, and learning slows for these groups. When teaching is

good or better, there are good opportunities to use new ideas and practise skills through a range of additional activities. Homework supports the work done in classes effectively, and teachers mark the work regularly. Satisfactory use is made of computers to practise arithmetic skills and to handle data,

70. The school uses a range of test results and work in class to identify the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and of curriculum provision. It includes optional national tests and end-of-unit assessment set by teachers. The school is now starting to use this information to group pupils by ability, and to identify areas within the curriculum that need changing.

71. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support. As pupils are set by ability, this allows them to play a full and active part in lessons. They achieve well, in relation to their identified targets.

72. Leadership is good. The co-ordinator has a clear commitment to raise standards, and this has had a significant impact on the improvements in the quality of learning across the school. He continues to monitor closely the quality of teaching and pupils' performance and has, quite rightly, identified the need to adjust the curriculum to include more practical work, where pupils can apply their knowledge to solving problems.

SCIENCE

73. Standards in science are above average, when compared with national expectations for pupils in Year 6. This reflects similar findings at the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress in their learning. Standards in science have been maintained due to the well-planned opportunities for pupils to undertake and record their own scientific investigations, predictions and conclusions. Teacher's knowledge and expertise are good and the management of the subject has ensured good development of pupils' enquiry skills.

74. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, they understand and correctly explain why a test is fair. They recognise the importance of repeated tests. The concept, introduced in Year 3, requires pupils to construct a 'fair test' in order to test whether plants need leaves to grow. The practical 'hands on' approach, probing questioning and the uses of prediction and confirming with practical application have impacted on maintaining standards and improving understanding. In Year 4, pupils further develop their knowledge and understanding of the construction of a 'fair test', by considering which factor should be kept constant in an experiment involving a Newton metre. In Year 5, pupils design an investigation which considers the rate at which various liquids evaporate. They make predictions, construct a hypothesis and present their findings in the form of a line graph. This results in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy being effectively developed.

75. Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Teachers take time to build on pupils' understanding. They use key vocabulary and probing questioning to encourage pupils to predict. Teachers use scientific vocabulary and expect pupils to use it also; as a result pupils have a good grasp of scientific concepts and talk about them. Pupils' ideas are valued and this contributes to their personal development. The marking of pupils work is regular and linked to the learning objective. However, in some year groups marking does not provide sufficient points for development which would ensure that pupils improve their learning. Pupils have a good attitude to science and are eager to participate in lessons. This is because the teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is very good and resources are used effectively to gain pupils' interest in the subject. They work well together, in groups or with partners. Most pupils listen well. They take turns and all treat resources with respect, effectively promoting social and moral development. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teaching assistants and this ensures good progress in their

learning. In order to improve the quality of teaching and learning in science, teachers' planning needs to be improved, so that it gives better challenge to more able pupils. Teachers should ensure that pupils improve their knowledge of what it is that they are learning. Pupils should be given more opportunities to take the initiative and to develop their own learning.

76. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is supportive of the teachers and has promoted the need for scientific enquiry. The scheme of work is appropriate and the co-ordinator has developed the scheme, in order to place further emphasis on the development of the skills required for scientific enquiry. The co-ordinator has had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and has scrutinised pupils' work. The subject is well resourced and the co-ordinator audits requirements for the subject on an annual basis. The monitoring of pupils' performance in science is satisfactory, whilst procedures for assessment are good. Teachers should consider how the data, which is collected through assessment, could be used to inform the experiences which are planned for the pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

77. Standards in art and design are above average, by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous report, when standards were judged to be satisfactory. Although only one lesson was observed during the week of the inspection, evidence of previous work, discussion with teachers and pupils and an analysis of pupils' work on display, indicate that standards are good for all groups of pupils. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching overall. The subject has made good improvement since the previous inspection, and standards have risen.

78. Pupils achieve well in most aspects of the subject, such as drawing and painting, using textiles, three-dimensional work and the use of the Internet for research. All pupils, including those with special educational need, make good progress. Discussions with pupils showed that they have positive attitudes to the subject and look forward to their lessons. They talk enthusiastically about their projects and reflect on the successes of their work. Pupils make good use of sketchbooks in all classes. These are used to record observations, gather ideas, experiment with patterns and materials, and as a source of ideas for developing future work.

79. Pupils' skills develop well, and their work becomes more detailed and refined as they gain in confidence and understanding. Teachers plan activities well. They help pupils to develop socially, through collaborative work and through, portraying emotions. They represent moods and feeling, for instance, when designing and making three-dimensional 'character' masks, paying particular attention to facial expressions. However, work based on non-western art and artists is generally under-represented. There are a few pupils from ethnic minority groups in the school. However, opportunities to use their cultures to enrich the curriculum are missed. Teachers use resources well, and their expertise is developed effectively by working alongside artists in residence.

80. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good. Pupils use a good variety of media and techniques. For example, the youngest pupils develop their understanding of texture and tone, and experiment with observational drawings of their own environment. A study of chairs designed by Frank Gehry, obtained from the Internet, provided older pupils with inspirations for developing their own designs and creations. By the age of 11, pupils

combine drawing, painting, collage and printmaking techniques well to communicate their own thoughts and ideas.

81. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The school is currently developing pupils' skills of evaluating their own work. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory, and are being formalised with a greater emphasis on the assessment of skills, relevant to each National Curriculum level.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

82. Standards in design and technology are above national expectations by the end of Year 6. This represents good progress since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be satisfactory. Although only two lessons were observed during the week of the inspection, evidence of previous work, discussion with teachers and pupils, and an analysis of pupils' work on display, indicate that standards are good for all groups of pupils. The policy and scheme of work provide good support for teachers. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching overall.

83. Pupils generate their own ideas. They analyse and amend their designs, bearing in mind the intended purpose of the article planned. For example, pupils in Year 5 were set the task to design and make biscuits. With the help of the class teacher, pupils discussed a basic biscuit recipe, examined the ingredients and, through very good questioning from the teacher, explored the properties of the materials and different ways of mixing. Pupils then considered whether the consistency of the mixture would affect the texture and appearance of the final product. They also discussed the effects of heat on the mixture, and made good links with their scientific knowledge, when they concluded that these would be permanent. When they are making things, pupils throughout the school amend their designs as difficulties of construction become apparent. Detailed evaluations take account of these amendments and their implications for future work. There is a strong emphasis, throughout the school, on design, making and evaluation.

84. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour, in the two lessons seen, were very good. Pupils enjoyed the lessons and sustained their concentration. They responded very well to questioning and readily recalled previous learning, thus developing their skills and understanding.

85. Of the two lessons observed, one was of good quality and the other was very good. Although it is not possible to make a secure judgement about teaching overall, there were significant common features that made these lessons successful. For example, at the beginning of the lessons, the teachers explained clearly what pupils had to achieve. They made very good use of what pupils had previously learned. This provided good opportunities for the consolidation of previous knowledge, and ensured that everyone knew what they had to achieve by the end of the session. Also, the teachers moved from group to group helping pupils, challenging ideas and clarifying the task, so that all pupils, whatever their ability, made good progress. On both occasions there was an opportunity at the end of the session, for pupils to review what they had achieved.

86. Leadership is of very good quality. The co-ordinator is using her expertise very well to implement changes to some aspects of the subject. This is a result of a careful review of the curriculum and a thorough analysis of information of pupils' attainment. For example, there are now better links with subjects such as information and communication technology and science. Pupils in Year 6 are using computer technology to control fairground rides which they have designed and made, and tasks requiring knowledge of simple lighting circuits are

now timed to coincide with the science unit of work on electricity. Teachers have high expectations of the quality of 'making' throughout the school, and pupils achieve high standards of precision and finish in their products.

GEOGRAPHY

87. Standards attained by Year 6 pupils are in line with those expected of pupils of this age. This view is supported mainly by evidence from pupils' work since there was insufficient evidence to judge attainment from the one lessons observed. A portfolio of pupils' work provides good evidence of skills, with written work about pollution, and comparisons between different locations. Mapping skills, such as key symbols, locational strategies and bearings, are developed. Factual information and observational sketches are used. However, much of the current work in geography was in note form.

88. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Significant evidence for the judgement comes from the analysis of pupils' work. Lesson observations found good teaching but also some that was unsatisfactory. The good teaching made good curriculum links with science, in an investigation into water flow and the links between the power of a river and erosion. Good learning resulted. Year 5 pupils investigated the effects of gradient and quantity of water on the speed of flow and the power to remove material from the riverbed. They identified greater erosion near the source of a river, because the gradient was steeper, and there were greater deposits near the mouth. They also recognised that a riverbed would be cleaner after heavy rain. Where teaching was less successful, there was confusion of focus and some weakness of subject knowledge. A lesson about features to be found on maps did not satisfactorily develop the pupils' skills in the use of maps. The wonder of satellite photography, confirming the accuracy of man-made maps, was overlooked and the grid system of locating places on maps was not developed well. Learning was unsatisfactory, because pupils merely named features on a prepared map. Skills could have been developed through the placing features on a blank outline. In another lesson, the preparation of a display of photographs from a valuable field trip experience took far too much time and left little opportunity for the development of pupils' skills in using compass bearings.

89. Pupils enjoy their geography lessons. They show interest and enthusiasm and use their experiences from field visits well. They work well together during investigative work, sharing responsibilities, making constructive suggestions, co-operating and concentrating in a responsible manner.

90. The subject leader has developed a series of topics that make good use of field visits and support activities that provide for the use of skills of geographical enquiry. Links with other subject areas such as science and history are developed well, and the current Year 6 topic on 'Old Portsmouth' links the subject well with history. Very good opportunities for the use of literacy skills are created in writing accounts and explanations. Information and communication technology skills and techniques are used well for research (Internet), illustration (digital photography) and presentation of information (word processing). Improvement since the previous inspection is good. However, the subject focus is sometimes lost from tasks, when teachers concentrate on the development of writing skills rather than the expression of pupils' geographical ideas.

HISTORY

91. Standards attained by Year 6 pupils in history are above those expected from pupils of this age. They were evaluated from lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work over the school year. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the periods studied and also good skills of historical study. For example in a topic about the Victorians, they researched

information on Charles Dickens, contrasted accounts of living conditions in the towns and the country, compared Victorian schooling with modern education and looked at the impact of the railways on the lives of different people. They also organised their knowledge into a time sequence and looked at the human price of coal. Current work on 'Old Portsmouth' is linked with geography and pupils observe change over time on the waterfront and identify the consequences of principal events such as recruitment to ships' crews by the 'Press Gang'.

92. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. History is actively and enthusiastically taught on an alternating cycle with geography topics. Year groups plan activities together and learning experiences are extended by a good range of visits and visitors. For example, recent work on the Victorians brought the period to life, with theme days that involved costume and role-play, such as a Victorian Schoolroom. There is a good balance between factual knowledge and the development of study skills, such as interpretation and explanation. Topics draw upon real experiences of visits. Current work was making good use of a recent visit to Portsmouth. Research skills of information and communication technology are being developed well. Explanatory and persuasive writing skills are being used well in accounts and in informative leaflets about the location. However, much of the work is structured to meet the requirements of the topic, rather than to further extend the learning of the pupils. This results in pupils writing what the teacher expects rather than what the pupil has identified as important. Confusion of learning objectives occurs. For example, in a lesson using role-play on the issue of 'Press Gangs', there was a greater emphasis on dramatic development than on factual and accurate historical knowledge. As a result, opportunities were missed to increase pupils' understanding about the issues for the people of those times.

93. Pupils respond well to the high interest value of their lessons and enjoy the subject. They work hard with good levels of commitment and co-operation individually or in pairs.

94. The good subject leader is keen and enthusiastic and has sought support from the local authority advisor for history. The subject is developing well and improvement since the previous inspection is good. She is well informed about the delivery of the curriculum. When planning topics, links with other subject areas, such as geography, are established and the use of literacy skills and information and communication technology skills are included.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

95. Standards in information and communication technology are above average by the end of Year 6 and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has made significant improvements to the level of resourcing, since the last inspection and pupils now benefit from a well equipped computer suite, which is fitted with an interactive white board. This allows the pupils to work as partners on similar themes. The staffs' level of competence has improved and they receive very good support from the computer suite manager. The school has introduced some key programs, which are mainly related to word-processing, graphics and data-handling. Information technology is well used to support learning, across a range of subjects.

96. In Year 3, pupils used information and communication technology to support their work in numeracy. They transfer data to create a bar chart and then interpret the data from the chart. They develop their skills in dropping and dragging pictures and expanding text, through work which supports their learning of the history of Ancient Greeks. In Year 5, pupils control a screen turtle to draw a range of two-dimensional shapes and amend and edit their commands to produce a change which has been predicted. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils edited, copied, pasted text and saved their work to personal folders. Most pupils

understand how to use word-processing skills to improve the grammar, spelling and punctuation of a piece of written work.

97. The teaching is good overall. Since the previous inspection, the teachers and support staff have developed their understanding of how computers can be used across a range of activities, to enhance the work that pupils do. The computer suite and the computers situated outside the classroom areas are now well used. The computer suite is in use for a large percentage of time. This results in uneven timetabling sessions. Some year groups take part in short, half-hourly, sessions, mainly during the afternoon. Other groups are timetabled in the suite for sessions of longer than an hour, often during the morning. The school recognises the need to provide further time to develop skills in this subject. In recent years most staff have been keen to increase their own knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology and its capability. The monitoring of pupils' performance is satisfactory and procedures for assessment are good. The school does have a system of assessment and record keeping in place but it recognises that this could be improved to provide more detailed information on pupils' achievements. It should also indicate how teachers' planning could more effectively meet the needs of all ability groups in school.

98. The quality of leadership is good overall and the school has made good progress in enhancing the resources and in improving staff expertise. The co-ordinator has had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and, although planning is not formally reviewed, teachers seek advice from the co-ordinator, regarding planning for the subject. The school has a policy of replacing a number of computers each year. The ratio of pupils to computers matches that expected nationally. The co-ordinator has audited, reviewed and purchased new software, to develop the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. The school is aware that the time for teaching for the subject's skills through other areas of the curriculum needs to be extended and is soon to purchase further hardware to enable this to happen. The computer suite manager is extremely effective. She is able to quickly remedy specific problems with the computers and software and provides very good support for both pupils and teachers.

MUSIC

99. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average. This is good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average. This is due to good teaching by school staff and peripatetic specialists, who successfully promote pupils' interest and enthusiasm for music. The school's strong stance on educational inclusion means that all pupils have equal access to all activities related to this subject. For example, pupils who learn to play instruments with peripatetic staff, or who have lessons outside of school, are encouraged to perform in school at assemblies and concerts.

100. Teachers carefully chose music for assemblies and lessons, which links with subject topics or to the assembly themes. They encourage pupils to listen to this music and discuss the feelings that it evokes. As a result, pupils listen with interest and form their own opinions about what they hear. They share their ideas and feelings about what they hear sensibly and clearly state what they like and don't like - and why. This was demonstrated very well in a Year 5 lesson, when the pupils discussed their soundscape compositions depicting the moods of a river. This was linked to their geography study on rivers. They evaluated their compositions very successfully, using phrases such as 'smoothly and gracefully' and 'slowly

and sleepily'. The teacher encouraged them to take their evaluations beyond the descriptive. As a result, pupils analysed their compositions accurately, using terminology such as accumulative and reductive sounds, and pointing out con-chords and dis-chords as they occurred. This was a very successful lesson, in which pupils learned very well, at above average levels.

101. Pupils sing with evident pleasure in assemblies and in their music lessons. They sing with good control of rhythm, pitch and dynamics. In one Year 6 lesson, pupils followed melody lines and rhythms accurately as a result of the class teacher's good coaching. They listened closely to their teacher and to each other and by the end of the lesson could sing scat. The teacher encouraged them to make up their own verses, which they did successfully and enthusiastically.

102. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are often very good and, consequently, pupils in these lessons learn very well. Teachers use correct technical terms such as 'dynamics' and 'tempo'. They encourage pupils to discuss why a conductor is important and why certain instruments will represent certain sounds well. The subject leader is keen to raise even further the profile of music throughout the school, so that it plays an important role in all aspects of school life. He guides and advises his colleagues effectively. Thus, all teachers teach their own classes with confidence and the pupils achieve well. Provision is enhanced greatly by having a discreet music room. This is a good size and houses a good level of resources. Good quality displays, such as an interesting, interactive display of instruments, enhance learning further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

103. Standards in physical education are satisfactory overall in the areas seen during the inspection. This is similar to the standards found at the previous inspection.

104. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop their skills well in dance, games and swimming. They use space effectively and are aware of other pupils around them. They have good control of movements, listen carefully and respond well to instructions. In a very good dance lesson observed in Year 4, pupils created a dance sequence using umbrellas. They changed pace and direction smoothly and with expression. They displayed good enthusiasm for their creative dance and effectively built on previous learning. Pupils understand the need for warming up before they exercise and the need to cool down after physical exertion. In all lessons observed, pupils displayed an ability to work in pairs or groups collaboratively. They discuss their ideas and evaluate their work. This effectively promotes social and moral development. The school has its own swimming pool and each year group has dedicated time to learning to swim. Almost every pupil is able to swim 25 metres by the age of eleven. Pupils in Year 6 took part in a synchronised swimming lesson where they presented imaginative sequences which linked together various shapes and patterns achieved through expanding and contracting their groups.

105. The quality of teaching is good overall in the areas seen and ranges from satisfactory to very good. Teachers mostly have high expectations of pupils both in their skill development and behaviour. They encourage pupils to evaluate and improve their performances. However, in some of the lessons further opportunities need to be provided for pupils to practice their skills. Further opportunities are also needed to enable them to take on responsibility for their own learning by encouraging them to evaluate their success. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and this supports and enhances skills development well. Pupils in Year 5 enjoy a residential visit, which focuses on physical activities. This year, Year 6 had an activities week. This included two nights camping in the

school grounds. These activities serve to promote social and moral development as well as independence and inter-dependence. All pupils, including those with special educational needs accept responsibility for collecting and returning equipment and respond readily to instructions. Staff and pupils dress appropriately for their physical activities.

106. The leadership and management of physical education are good. The school has a good scheme of work which is appropriate and has been supplemented by the co-ordinator. Resources are good and this has a positive affect on the standards achieved. Assessment procedures and the monitoring of teaching, learning and standards are in place and are proving effective.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

107. Standards achieved by the end of Year 6 are good. They are above the expectations of the agreed syllabus. This is good improvement since the last inspection. The school places great importance on religious education. It is promoted very well through the very good quality daily acts of worship. It is linked very well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the school, and helps pupils' personal development very effectively. For example, pupils have many opportunities to reflect in lessons. Teachers encourage the pupils to pause and think before putting up their hands to answer questions. In this way, when the pupils speak, they put their points of view clearly because they have had the opportunity to work out what they think and how they will express their thoughts.

108. The very good links with personal, social and health education (PSHE) mean that pupils think carefully about how others feel. For example, at Easter, as well as considering the meaning of the festival, pupils consider how the people at the time must have felt about the Crucifixion of Jesus. Teachers build time into lessons for pupils to explore their innermost feelings. For example, in two Year 5 lessons, pupils were invited to close their eyes and relax, while the teachers took them on a journey to meet a 'wise person'. They were invited to ask that imaginary person any question that they wanted, and to see if they received an answer. At the 'end of the journey', if they wished, they could share that question and answer with the class. These were powerful lessons, which visibly moved several pupils, when they realised that sometimes they can find the answers to problems within themselves.

109. Pupils study the Bible and recount stories, such as those of Adam and Eve and of Zaccheus. They compare Christian principles with those of other religions, such as Hinduism and Islam. Thus, pupils see similarities and differences in the symbols used in religions and begin to understand the meaning and relevance of prayer. Such work enhances pupils' cultural development and helps prepare them for life in a culturally diverse society.

110. The quality of teaching is very good. This results in pupils learning very well and achieving good standards. Teachers understand the subject very well. This enables them to explain unambiguously what it is that they want the pupils to learn. This improves the quality of learning and enables pupils to achieve successfully. They have very high expectations that the pupils will behave and succeed in lessons - so pupils do. This was demonstrated very clearly in a very good Year 4 lesson about the signs and symbols which Christians use to express their concept of God. The teacher used artifacts, such as bright and visually stimulating church banners, to demonstrate God's message. This brought the message alive to the pupils, and they all joined in and discussed the meanings of the banners. They followed this by enthusiastically designing their own banners. The quality of learning and the achievement of the pupils in this lesson were very good.

111. The subject leader has a clear view of the development of religious education. She recognises the important part that this subject plays in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. She guides and advises her colleagues enthusiastically and inspires them to 'have a go' and explore spiritual issues with pupils. This enhances successfully the very good quality teaching and learning. The resources for religious education are satisfactory and used well.

