

INSPECTION REPORT

SHAMBLEHURST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hedge End, Southampton

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115972

Headteacher: Mrs M Williams

Reporting inspector: Mr C Kessell
20695

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 6th February 2003

Inspection number: 247604

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Infant and junior
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wildern Lane Hedge End Southampton Hampshire
Postcode:	S030 4EJ
Telephone number:	01489 782342
Fax number:	01489 787204
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Simon Martin
Date of previous inspection:	15 th June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20695	Mr C Kessell	Registered inspector	Physical education	The school's results and achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
19664	Mr J Bayliss	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents Educational inclusion
18709	Ms N Bee	Team inspector	Geography History Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	
22856	Mrs K Campbell	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	Special educational needs
20230	Mrs J Clayphan	Team inspector	Science Art and design	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language
22397	Mr S Fowler	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	The quality and range of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
20846	Mr A Wilson	Team inspector	English Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

*Criterion School Inspections
Juniper House
23 Abbots View
Abbotswood
Cinderford
Gloucestershire
GL14 3EG*

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Shamblehurst Primary School is situated in the village of Hedge End on the outskirts of Southampton and serves an area of private and rented housing. It is larger than most other primary schools with 469 pupils on roll; 260 boys and 209 girls. The school provides education for pupils between the ages of 4 and 11. The majority of pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds, although a small number of other ethnic groups are represented in the school. One per cent of pupils use English as an additional language but very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. At two per cent, the proportion of pupils who are formally identified as being entitled to free school meals is below average; however, the percentage eligible is much higher, and is between eight to 20 per cent of the school's population. Twenty per cent of pupils are assessed as having special educational needs; this is about average. The majority of these pupils are identified as having learning difficulties, or medical needs. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils enter school with attainment that is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a popular and effective school that provides a very caring environment for its pupils. By the time they leave, the pupils have achieved standards that are above average in English and mathematics. The pupils have good attitudes to learning and show interest and enthusiasm for their work. Behaviour is good and the quality of relationships, very good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, although the proportion of good and very good teaching is much higher in Years 4 to 6. The headteacher provides inspirational and charismatic leadership and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Together, they provide excellent leadership and management. The staff and governors are working hard to ensure that the school continues to build and develop on its many strengths. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards in these subjects are above average.
- About a fifth of lessons are very good. Pupils learn very effectively and acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding rapidly in these lessons.
- The school is exceptionally well led and managed by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The very good provision for pupils' personal development contributes effectively to the high standards of behaviour and the pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- Very good provision is provided for pupils who have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school's links with parents are very effective.

What could be improved

- Standards in history, geography and music in Years 3 to 6.
- The amount of time spent on some subjects in the school curriculum.
- The matching of work to pupils' needs, particularly for higher-attaining pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school received a successful inspection in June 1998, but did not build effectively on its reported strengths and became identified by the local education authority as under-performing and in need of considerable improvement. Since the arrival of the current headteacher in 2001, improvement has been very good and there have been significant developments in the quality of education provided for the pupils. The key issues for action identified at the previous inspection have now been successfully addressed. Assessment procedures are now in place for many subjects and the school's strategic plan will allow all subjects managers to eventually monitor teaching and learning across the school. The pupils' spiritual development is good and acts of collective worship are used well to provide pupils with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences. The accommodation has improved in recent years, although there are still some areas of the school that are unattractive and in poor decorative order. Standards are starting to improve, particularly in Year 6. The school has the capacity to improve further because of the very good overall commitment of the staff and governors.

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 ¹
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	C	A	A
Mathematics	B	C	B	B
Science	C	D	B	B

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

The results of the National Curriculum tests in 2002, taken by pupils at the end of Year 6, indicated that standards were well above average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, standards followed the same pattern, which is well above average for English, and above average in the two other subjects. In relation to their prior attainment when they were in Year 2, the pupils made good progress overall, although progress in English was significantly greater than that in mathematics and science. Between 1998 and 2002, the school's trend of improvement was broadly in line with the national trend. The results of the national tests in 2002, taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 showed standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, results in reading and mathematics were average and in writing they were below average. These pupils made satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment when they started school. Recent national test results have shown some differences in the performance of boys and girls.

The pupils currently in Year 2 are attaining standards that are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils have made satisfactory progress in these subjects. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving standards that are above average in English and mathematics. Standards in science are average. Pupils' achievements are good in English and mathematics, and satisfactory in science. The school is on target to achieve its statutory targets in English and mathematics for 2003. These show an improvement on the previous year in the number of pupils likely to achieve the expected Level 4. Pupils achieve the expected standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. Standards are as expected in geography, history and music at the end of Year 2, but by the end of Year 6 standards are below those normally expected. This is because curriculum coverage in these subjects has lacked depth. Children in the reception classes are likely to achieve the expected standards in all areas of learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils like school and are keen to learn. They are well motivated and their attitudes have a positive impact on learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of the school and, in particular, behave very well when not directly supervised, such as during breaks and lunchtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils undertake responsibilities seriously and with enthusiasm. Very strong relationships exist amongst the pupils themselves and with adults in the school.
Attendance	Attendance levels are very good.

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

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

A significant proportion of lessons observed during the inspection were good, or better, with pupils learning effectively, but the percentage of good and very good teaching was much higher in Years 4 to 6 than other parts of the school. The quality of education found in these year groups contributes well to the standards attained in English and mathematics, which are above average. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy were generally used well to develop pupils' skills in these areas of learning. The majority of literacy and numeracy lessons were good or better; however on some occasions, insufficient attention was paid to the wide range of ability found in most classes, resulting in some pupils being given work that was inappropriate to their needs. This had more impact on the higher-attaining pupils, who could have been challenged more effectively in some lessons. Some teachers could also have higher expectations of pupils in other areas of the curriculum. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise is normally secure and often good, but there are weaknesses in music. Classroom support staff provide good support for pupils especially those with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Although there is appropriate breadth and relevance to the curriculum there are weaknesses in the balance and this is reflected in the amount of time allocated to some subjects. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is good. The school is effective in providing equal access for all pupils to the statutory curriculum and all other activities provided.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs receive very good provision. Records are very well organised and detailed. All pupils on the special needs register have good individual education plans with clear, realistic targets for improvement that are reviewed and updated regularly.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils who use English as an additional language, achieve as well as their classmates. The few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are given appropriate support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The pupils' moral and social development is a strength of the school and has a significant impact on the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Shamblehurst Primary School is a very caring school that looks after the welfare of the whole school community very well. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory.

Parents are supportive of the school. With good reason they think it is a good one finding many things to like about it. The school has very effective links with parents. The quality of information provided for parents is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very effective leadership and management with many excellent qualities. They are responsible for much of the rapid improvement and development of the school over the last two years. They are very well supported by senior staff, particularly by the third member of the senior management team, who is an outstanding role model in the classroom. The majority of subjects are well managed and there is a very clear commitment to continued improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are effective, and properly involved in the work of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. All statutory duties are fulfilled.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors its performance through very careful and thorough evaluation of teaching and learning, and the standards achieved by the pupils. The headteacher and deputy are very good at rigorous objective self-evaluation.
The strategic use of resources	The school's use of the financial resources available to it is good. Financial planning is clear and monitored well. Specific funding that the school receives is used very well. Resources and staffing levels are satisfactory overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is good and staff are friendly. • The school works closely with parents and parents feel comfortable approaching the school with a question or problem. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. • Good leadership and management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The mixed age classes in Year 1 and 2. • The provision of homework. • The use of temporary classrooms in Years 3 and 5.

The views above are taken from the pre-inspection meeting that was attended by 12 parents, and from the 180 responses to the parents' questionnaires. Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views. The school is currently reviewing its homework policy to ensure that parents have a better understanding of what is required of them, and their children, and the range of activities provided outside lessons is satisfactory. Two of the temporary classrooms are in a poor decorative state and do not provide pleasant teaching environments, despite the best efforts of the teachers. Mixed age classes are not uncommon in primary schools and the headteacher, staff and governors have done their best to address this issue by providing single-age literacy and numeracy lessons and adapting the school curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. By the end of their time in reception the majority of children are likely to reach levels expected nationally in all areas of learning. Although children's achievements in the Foundation Stage² are satisfactory, their progress is sometimes hindered when adults do not use the assessment information that they gather about individual children in their weekly planning consistently, and match work accurately to each child's needs. In addition, adults do not always promote children's listening skills effectively. The children's relationships with each other and the adults who work with them are good. They show positive attitudes to learning, enjoy coming to school and behave well. The children enjoy selecting and looking at books, which they handle correctly. Although the children are provided with many opportunities to speak and listen, many of them chatter amongst themselves and do not listen appropriately. They are beginning to develop the skills of counting and using mathematical vocabulary such as 'one more than' or 'tallest'. The children have learnt to name parts of the body and simple facts about the past. They have drawn simple plans of their 'journey' to school and use computers to develop their keyboard and mouse skills. Most of the children are able to change independently for physical education and show an appropriate awareness of space and each other as they move around the school hall or the music and drama room. They show satisfactory control and dexterity as they use scissors and pencils. The children enjoy singing songs tunefully and learn the names of percussion instruments. They produce different types of art using techniques such as collage and painting.
2. The results of the National Curriculum tests in 2002, taken by the pupils at the end of Year 2, showed that standards in reading, writing and mathematics were average. These judgements are based on average National Curriculum points, which are calculated by attaching point scores to the levels achieved by all pupils. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. In relation to their prior attainment on entry to school, this group of pupils made satisfactory progress overall. The actual percentage of pupils who achieved the expected Level 2 in reading, was lower than the previous year, although higher in writing and mathematics. Taking the three years 2000 to 2002 together, the pupils exceeded the national average for their age group in all three subjects.
3. The National Curriculum tests in 2002, taken by pupils at the end of Year 6, showed standards to be well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. National data indicates that these pupils made very good progress in English and satisfactory progress in mathematics and science in relation to the level of attainment they reached when they were in Year 2. The progress in English is likely to be a reflection of the school's recent focus on improving standards in writing. When compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. There was an improvement in all three subjects in the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected Level 4 and the school's statutory targets for 2003, which are realistic and achievable, indicate further improvement. However, the percentage of pupils who are likely to achieve the higher Level 5 will be lower in both English and mathematics. The percentages last year were well above average in English and above average in mathematics. When taking the years 2000 to 2002 together, the pupils exceeded the national average in English, mathematics and science. Since 1998, the school's trend of improvement has been broadly in line with that found nationally, although much of this is likely to be due to the improvement in standards in 2002.
4. Last year's national test results showed some differences in the performance of boys and girls that exceeded the national trends. At the end of Key Stage 1³, the difference in attainment between boys and girls in reading and writing was wider than that found nationally. At the end of Key Stage 2⁴, although the girls performed better than the boys in English, the gap was not as wide as that found nationally. In mathematics, the gap was wider than that found nationally, with the boys

² The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

³ Key Stage 1 caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

⁴ Key Stage 2 caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

performing better than the girls. The school is aware of these differences and subject managers have looked at differences in performance in their subjects, but this analysis is at a very early stage.

5. The small percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates. Those who are at the early stages of learning English receive satisfactory support.
6. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs make very good progress because they are very well supported. Support staff are of high quality and make a positive contribution towards the pupils' rate of learning.
7. In Year 2, standards are currently average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in English, mathematics and science through Key Stage 1. The pupils make better progress particularly in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 especially in the later years. This is a result of more effective teaching and learning. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents indicated that they were happy with the progress their children made and 93 per cent agreed that their child was making good progress at the school when responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire.
8. Pupils in Year 2 are able to develop questions of their own and answer questions clearly and confidently. They listen carefully to classmates and their teachers. Reading is enjoyed by all the pupils. They understand the differences between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction' and visit the library regularly. In their writing, pupils write with clear sentences, using capital letters and full stops correctly. They use the correct vocabulary in mathematics and solve addition and subtraction problems. Pupils are accurate with their mental calculations and can identify simple fractions. In science, they are able to conduct simple investigations and have an appropriate scientific understanding of physical processes such as light and shade. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils show mature speaking and listening skills. Many pupils are articulate and use quite sophisticated language. Reading skills are well developed with pupils undertaking independent research and reading entire sets of books by a favourite author. Their writing is well structured with paragraphs and clear punctuation. Pupils are confident mathematicians, working out challenging mental calculations at good speed and tackling number problems in a variety of ways. In science, the majority of pupils are able to conduct investigations that are 'fair' and also make sensible predictions using the scientific knowledge that they have developed.
9. Standards in Years 2 and 6 in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, and physical education are similar to those found in the majority of schools. Standards in religious education reflect the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Although standards in geography, history and music are average in Year 2, they are lower than expected in Year 6, mainly because the subjects have not been covered in sufficient depth.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Whatever their background or personal circumstances, pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour, personal development and relationships are all good, and often better, especially in Years 5 and 6. Pupils conduct themselves well at all times, very much as found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into school life. They are valued and respected. Attendance is very good.
11. The youngest children in the school, in the reception classes, develop good relationships with the adults who work with them and with each other. Behaviour is good. Most children show positive attitudes to learning, settle in well and enjoy coming to school. When given the opportunity, the children develop independence skills well as they select activities and change for physical development lessons.
12. Throughout the school the pupils have good attitudes to learning and are well motivated. They like school and are keen to learn. The very large majority of pupils are polite and friendly. They are confident and relate easily with adults, but never in a disrespectful way. They readily hold doors

open for teachers, and visitors, and are always prepared to offer to help. They are well mannered, using 'please' and 'thank you' as a normal part of their daily language. In lessons they listen politely and attentively to the teacher and to each other and most try to do their best at all times. This is particularly noticeable when teaching is of high quality, frequently at the top of the school, so that the pupils' attention is captured and their interest maintained. The response to instructions from teachers is usually very good. The pupils work well together and individually and show an interest in their work. Almost all are keen to participate in question and answer sessions and do so in a sensible and mature way. They readily take turns and show a willingness to apply themselves to whatever task is presented to them. The attitudes displayed by the large majority of pupils have a positive impact on standards.

13. The view of parents that behaviour is good is confirmed by inspection evidence. All the pupils respond well to the high standards of behaviour expected by the school. They are keen to collect rewards for good behaviour, effort and good work; thoroughly enjoying the various rewards assemblies. The pupils' behaviour in classrooms, in the playground, when moving to the hall for assembly or for physical education, and when eating their lunch, is rarely less than good and frequently better. They behave very well during break and lunchtimes when they play well together. There is some boisterous behaviour in the playground, but no more than that would be expected when pupils are given the opportunity to let off steam away from the constraints of the classroom. No unsatisfactory behaviour was observed during the inspection. There is little recent history of poor behaviour, although in the year preceding the inspection it was necessary to exclude one pupil who presented serious behavioural problems. The pupils show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others, with very little incidence of bullying, sexism or racism of any sort.
14. Opportunities for pupils to show initiative and display personal responsibility are readily grasped. These opportunities steadily increase through the pupils' school life. The children in the reception class are already beginning to respond well to them. They carry out routine responsibilities, such as returning registers to the school office, in a mature way. Elsewhere, the pupils are diligent in fulfilling their classroom and school responsibilities, which they undertake with enthusiasm. Members of the school council take their responsibilities very seriously. Their views are valued and contribute well to the effective running of the school. Inspectors confirm the view of the large majority of parents that the school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible individuals.
15. Pupils' attendance in recent years has been very good overall. It is better than when the school was inspected previously. Levels of unauthorised absence are somewhat higher than those experienced nationally, as a result of rigorous recording, but there is no evidence of truancy. Punctuality in the morning is good. When instances of lateness occur, they are of a minor nature and are not disruptive to lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. During the inspection 59 per cent of lessons were good or better. A fifth of lessons were very good. However, these statistics portray a slightly distorted picture, because the quality of teaching and learning is not consistent across the school. For example, in Key Stage 2 nearly 80 per cent of lessons were good or better, whilst this proportion was nearer to 50 per cent at Key Stage 1. In the Foundation Stage, only a third of lessons were good and no very good teaching was observed. Although the satisfactory lessons have more strengths than weaknesses, the pupils learn more effectively and at a faster rate when teaching is good or better. The better teaching contributes to the higher standards found at the end of Key Stage 2. Most significantly, teachers' expectations are higher and pupils are more productive, acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a faster rate and apply more effort. There are some very talented teachers in Key Stage 1, who consistently produce lessons of a high quality, but this is not reflected in sufficient enough classes to make the impact that the teaching does in Key Stage 2. Parents are appreciative of the efforts of all the teachers. When responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, 95 per cent agreed that teaching was good and, at the parents' meeting, parents described teachers as approachable and said that pupils are keen to learn and want to do their best. Inspection evidence identified pupils' interest, concentration, and independence as a strength of their learning, even when teaching is satisfactory.
17. Parents were more concerned about the provision of homework, which was described, at the pre-inspection meeting, as being inconsistent. Fifteen per cent of parents responding to the

questionnaire disagreed that their child gets the right amount of homework. The school would acknowledge that this is an issue and requires improvement. However, during the inspection inspectors did observe homework being used effectively to support the school curriculum. For example, in Year 4, pupils were asked to find angles in objects at home, as part of their mathematics work, and, in Year 3, pupils were expected to learn spellings for literacy.

18. Teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good in the Foundation Stage. Adults develop good relationships with the children and interact within groups satisfactorily but most have expectations that are too low regarding listening carefully to information and instructions. This affects the learning for all children. Planning is sound and most activities are interesting and relevant to the needs of the children. However, intentions for learning are often too general. When this happens, the information about the children's progress, which is collected on a daily basis, is not used consistently to move individuals or groups of children on to the next step of learning. This affects the learning within lessons and ultimately the progress that children make, over time, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
19. Across both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, there are some consistent strengths in the teaching. Pupils are managed well and relationships are very good. This leads to most classrooms being very positive learning environments that are welcoming and supportive to all pupils. Classroom support staff also make a significant contribution to pupils' learning in the majority of lessons. Good examples of good classroom support were seen in a Year 5 numeracy lesson, as pupils worked on the translation of shape, and in a Year 3 information and communication technology lesson, where pupils were creating abstract art. In a Year 4 lesson, where pupils used descriptive language to create mood and describe actions, and in a session in Year 6 on personal, social and health education, the pupils were equally well supported. There is a good level of high quality support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly during literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs are very well supported. Most teachers also provide an appropriate level of work and offer good additional support at other times. However, some teachers do not always make sufficient reference to targets in pupils' individual education plans in class lessons.
20. The majority of lessons are well planned, so little time is lost when lessons begin and resources are well prepared. Lesson objectives are consistently shared with the pupils so most have a reasonable understanding of their learning and what is expected of them. In some instances however, learning objectives are too broad and not specific enough. In some lessons, particularly those that are satisfactory, there is not enough consideration of the range of ability found in classes. In these instances, not all of the pupils make the progress they are capable of, particularly the higher attaining pupils. There is insufficient use of time targets for pupils' work and extension activities are not always planned for. Much of this is a result of lower expectations amongst some teachers. In the lessons that are consistently good and very good, the teachers expect more from their pupils and look to challenge the higher-attaining pupils. This was observed in the Year 2 literacy group for higher-attaining pupils, and in music in Year 5, as pupils combined musical instruments to communicate mood. In these lessons the teachers had high expectations, provided continuous challenge to all groups of pupils and conducted the lessons at pace.
21. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are generally used well to promote the skills associated with these areas of learning. More attention is paid to different ability groups in these lessons, although some teachers are more effective than others. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are often well promoted across other areas of the curriculum. For example, speaking and listening skills were well promoted in a number of physical education lessons and numeracy skills were used in geography. In a number of lessons, insufficient use was made of information and communication technology to support other areas of the curriculum. Although teachers' subject knowledge and expertise is at least satisfactory overall, there are weaknesses in music. Teachers mark all pupils' work regularly, but there are some inconsistencies in the use of marking. In the best examples, pupils are provided with further challenge in their work, or given advice on how to move to the next stage of learning. In the weakest examples, work is marked right or wrong with some cursory or supportive comments added. Not enough use is made of the information that comes from ongoing assessment. Where teaching is stronger, considerable attention is paid to what pupils achieve and understand, during lessons, and this information is then effectively fed into planning for future teaching.

22. Teaching is consistently good or better in Years 4, 5 and 6 and in a minority of lessons in Years 1 and 2 classes for instance, pupils in Year 4 made very good progress as they classified polygons using key criteria, as did pupils in Year 6 who were interpreting data from a graph. In science, in Year 5, pupils investigated the speed of an electric motor and pupils in Year 4 identified and classified animals found in the school grounds. In Year 5, pupils effectively identified and used figurative language from a narrative poem, whilst pupils in Year 4 used text to identify expressive vocabulary. During a Year 5 art lesson, pupils painted well in the style of Pierre Henri, an artist from St Lucia, and, in Years 1 and 2, pupils worked very effectively in a design and technology lesson. In all of these lessons, the teachers showed very secure subject knowledge and lessons were exceptionally well planned and organised. Expectations of what pupils could achieve were high and time was used effectively. These lessons were enjoyable and all pupils were appropriately challenged. Careful consideration was given to the needs of the pupils and what they were trying to achieve. This was well illustrated in the Year 4 science lesson, where the pupils were identifying and classifying animals. The teacher continually encouraged the pupils to think and behave as scientists, which was emphasised well when the pupils gasped in horror at their first sighting of a dead wasp. 'Focus on what you can see and not on what you think you can see', was the teacher's instruction. In all of these examples, pupils made good and often very good gains in their knowledge and understanding, they applied considerable effort to their work, were well motivated and interested in their learning.

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

23. The school's curriculum is broad and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The provision for religious education meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and there is a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, other than those withdrawn by their parents. The school teaches all the subjects required by the National Curriculum and meets the related legal requirements. The recent development of a comprehensive policy for personal, social and health education reflects the importance that the school places on this area of the curriculum. There are appropriate policies for citizenship, sex education, and drugs awareness, and the school has a strong commitment to policies for equal opportunities and racial equality. These policies permeate all aspects of school life and help to ensure that it operates as a harmonious and inclusive community.
24. Although the school's curriculum is broad, it is not yet sufficiently balanced. The school has placed considerable emphasis upon English and mathematics and has succeeded in raising standards of attainment in these curricular areas. However, this has imposed a pressure upon the time available for a number of other subjects, including history, geography and music. As a result, there is insufficient time to ensure that these subjects are covered in sufficient depth and this has had an adverse effect on the achievement of pupils in these areas of the curriculum. The school is fully aware of this imbalance and has arranged to carry out a comprehensive review of curricular planning and provision in the summer term. An audit is to be carried out within the school to ensure that the curriculum is balanced and that each subject is allocated an appropriate time allocation. The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It is planned according to the national guidelines, and activities promote all areas of learning. There are regular opportunities for structured outside play.
25. There have been a number of improvements to the curriculum in the last two years and the school now provides a framework of policies and schemes of work for all curricular areas. Planning and provision in all subjects are at least satisfactory and the school has refined and developed its long, medium and short-term planning to take account of curricular improvement. There is currently a lack of balance in music provision throughout the school, due to a lack of subject expertise and the school is aware of the need to remedy this weakness.
26. The school has recognised the importance of pupils' personal, social and health education by appointing a co-ordinator for this area of learning. She has developed a comprehensive scheme of work that can be taught either as a discrete subject, or as part of the normal curriculum. Class teachers keep records of pupils' attitudes and friendship patterns and these are incorporated into pupils' reports. The school does much to raise pupils' self-esteem and to help them develop into capable, responsible people. For example, there is an active school council who meet on a regular basis to discuss problems and to suggest ways of improving school life and the manager for

personal, social, and health education encourages pupils in Year 6 to accept increasing responsibility by acting as 'pupil-friends' to pupils in Key Stage 1. The work undertaken in personal, social and health education contributes significantly to the development of the good relationships and respect for others that is deeply embedded in the life and work of the school.

27. The good implementation and high priority given to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has begun to make a positive impact on pupils' learning. Skills are reinforced on a regular basis and are taught in a well-planned and structured way. Teachers feel confident with the structures of the frameworks, which help them to develop a consistent approach to teaching the curriculum. There is good use of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects, although there is a need to make greater use of computers within the classroom.
28. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school. Pupils with a statement of special education needs receive very good provision. The curriculum is relevant and the new Code of Practice is firmly in place. Documentation is of very high quality. Records are very well organised and detailed. Procedures for referral are secure. All pupils on the special needs register have good quality individual education plans with clear, realistic targets for improvement that are reviewed and updated regularly. Great care is taken to ensure pupils with special educational needs have access to the full range of curriculum opportunities.
29. Provision for extra-curricular activities, is satisfactory. An appropriate range of sporting, musical and academic activities is offered, such as football, netball, cricket, dance, recorder, book and chess clubs, and pupils appreciate these opportunities. The school organises two residential visits for pupils; one to support science and environmental studies for pupils in Year 5, and one to encourage team building and outdoor education for pupils in Year 6. A number of day visits enrich the curriculum and these include a visit to Beaulieu to observe a Victorian Christmas. Visiting music teachers provide additional music tuition and during the week of the inspection, one particularly effective assembly included input from a talented visiting musician, who regularly visits the school.
30. The numerous links, which the school has with its local community, provide an extra dimension to pupils' experiences of the wider world, making this aspect good. The local secondary school has achieved performing arts status and their students have supported a dance club for pupils in Years 2 and 3. The school has developed close links with the Women's' Institute and pupils are currently part of their project for knitting blankets for charitable use. A recent project to develop a courtyard within school involved a local volunteer group, pupils from a local college, and support from local stores, and this has culminated in the establishment of an attractive additional area within the school. One aspect of personal and social education focuses on the world of work and, during the week of the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were visited by a policeman and a representative of the local business community. This helped pupils to develop their awareness of job descriptions, educational qualifications and the personal qualities needed to succeed in life. Local theatre groups provide drug awareness education for pupils in Year 6, and a school counsellor from the local secondary school visits the school to support pupils with educational and behavioural difficulties. The school has established links with a local Beacon school⁵ and staff have been encouraged to visit it in order to develop their own teaching expertise. The school has a very welcoming ethos and encourages visitors into school. In one design and technology lesson, for example, a volunteer parent and grandparent worked in the classroom to support both the pupils and the class teacher. As an acknowledgement of the good support that they receive, the school organises an annual Christmas coffee morning, with carol singing, for all of their visitors.
31. Very good provision is made overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for moral and social development is very good as a result of the successful effects of the school's caring ethos. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is now good, and this represents an improvement since the last inspection.
32. Assemblies promote a feeling of community and aim to develop pupils' understanding through interesting moral tales. Valuable emphasis is placed on developing pupils' moral and social maturity, and pupils usually have very good opportunities to reflect on what they hear so that many pupils are highly aware of their own and others' feelings and values. There is often a candle that

⁵ Beacon school status is a nationally recognised award given to schools that demonstrate outstanding practice.

creates a 'special' atmosphere that helps pupils to concentrate before and during a prayer. The presence of staff during these times heightens pupils' awareness of the sense of occasion. Class assemblies and key stage 'Gold Book Assemblies' are of high quality. Teachers encourage moments of total wonder. For example, a teacher created an atmosphere of expectancy in an English lesson in Year 2, and pupils were astonished when she found a scroll of writing in their classroom 'castle'.

33. The caring nature of the school's ethos ensures that provision for pupils' moral and social development is consistently very good throughout the school. Pupils have a very well developed sense of right and wrong. Each classroom has a set of rules that the pupils helped to devise and which they follow well. Rewards systems encourage good, thoughtful behaviour and hard work, and in addition pupils are spurred to become worker of the day or of the week. Adults are very good role models for politeness and care, and pupils display basic good manners as they say 'please', and 'thank you', and hold doors open for adults and each other. Pupils from other countries and those with special educational needs are welcomed into the community and are very well integrated.
34. The school has created a very strong sense of community. Relationships in class are usually very good with high levels of mutual respect and tolerance. When pupils work together in pairs or groups it is noticeable how sensibly they do so. There are regular residential trips for pupils in Years 5 and 6, which are valuable for building both self-reliance and the skill of working as part of a team. Pupils are very proud of their school council that helps them become aware of citizenship issues. For example, the council is starting to organise activities to raise money to send to Ethiopia to help avert the effects of famine. Circle time⁶ is used very effectively to encourage thoughtfulness and good relationships. Pupil friends, a service which is available particularly at playtimes, has been promoted very well and older pupils are proud to be asked if they would like to take part.
35. The provision to help pupils develop an understanding of their own culture is good and plans are being developed to improve further their understanding of some of the implications of living in a multi-cultural society. Pupils are aware of differences between African and European art and music. Visits that are organised to museums and places of interest widen their knowledge of a range of subjects, and visitors to the school bring valuable insights into life in the outside world. Pupils read a wide range of literature from Europe and beyond. In religious education, pupils celebrate Eid and Diwali, and recently thoroughly enjoyed taking part in Chinese New Year celebrations.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. Shamblehurst primary school is a very caring school that looks after the welfare of the whole school community very well. Its procedures for child protection are excellent and those for ensuring the health and safety of the pupils are very good overall. The school has continued to be very successful in promoting the health, safety and general well being of its pupils that was found when inspected previously. Parents are pleased with the support provided by the school.
37. The school is very successful in meeting its aim to be a happy place that provides opportunities for pupils to develop socially, as well as academically. The positive support provided ensures that the pupils gain confidence, individuality, assimilate good learning practices and develop intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. From the time children start school all members of the school community work together to provide surroundings in which they feel well cared for and secure. The needs of pupils withdrawn from collective worship are respected with good provision made for alternative, appropriate, activities. There is good exchange of information between teachers and support staff so that all staff have very good knowledge of the pupils as individuals and this enables them to respond sensitively and positively to their particular needs. Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the needs of pupils with language, behavioural or other difficulties. They have good strategies for ensuring these pupils are fully involved in all class activities. Educational and social inclusion have a high profile in the school, so that all the pupils are treated equally, and given proper support appropriate to individual need whatever their background or personal circumstances. They confidently turn to adults when they need help or advice secure in the

⁶ Circle time is a session provided for pupils to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

knowledge that their needs will be met sympathetically. Learning support assistants and mid-day supervisory staff relate well to the pupils. They provide very good support in classrooms and during lunchtimes, which has a positive effect on learning, behaviour and safety.

38. Procedures for the identification, assessment and review of pupils with special educational needs are very secure. The school has recently started to identify its able pupils in order to provide work that matches their ability. It is too early to judge the effect of this initiative on standards, but it is a very positive step in the right direction.
39. School staff and governors, including a recently appointed health and safety governor with specialist knowledge, undertake regular risk assessments having proper regard for the health and safety of the school community. Effective supervision ensures that the physical well being of all is protected. There is some concern about the potential hazards associated with the change of floor levels throughout the school and the impact these have on accessibility for physically disabled members of the school community, but the school is aware of this and will be making appropriate representation as part of its accessibility plan which is currently in preparation. First-aid arrangements are good. Those for fire safety are as they should be. The school's procedures for dealing with the very occasional accident are good and appropriate records are maintained. There are good procedures for liaison with parents when necessary.
40. Child protection arrangements are excellent. They meet statutory requirements. Although the deputy headteacher is the designated person, she shares the role with the headteacher. They have extensive relevant experience. Together, they ensure that class teachers and support staff are fully aware of their responsibilities and are attentive and conscientious in their approach to the proper support of the pupils in their charge.
41. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory but the school is not complacent and there is recognition that there is room for improvement to ensure that proper attention is paid to the very small number of parents who have a relaxed attitude to the importance of regular attendance. Registration is efficient and records of attendance are properly maintained. They comply with statutory requirements. Procedures for recording unauthorised absence are rigorous and there are increasingly effective procedures to deal with any unexpected absence.
42. The procedures that are in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. Behaviour management has been a focus since the headteacher's appointment with the aim being to make the school a friendly place, but with clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour. A range of strategies has been implemented that promote good behaviour very successfully. There is emphasis on the positive. A well organised rewards and sanctions policy is understood and accepted as fair by all pupils. The procedures allow them to take advantage of the opportunities for learning presented to them in an environment in which there is an absence of oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism.
43. The school's arrangements for the monitoring and support of pupils' personal development are good. They make a positive contribution to the way in which staff ensure that the needs of all the pupils are recognised and met, whatever their personal circumstances. Pupils' self-esteem is promoted well with a wide variety of strategies for the promotion of their personal development. School council, 'circle time', class and school monitors, shared and paired activities, individual portfolios, weekly achievement assemblies and charity activities promote personal development effectively. Monitoring of personal development is effective, although informal arrangements that reflect the very good knowledge that teachers have of pupils as individuals, are stronger than formal ones.
44. Assessment procedures have improved considerably in the last two years and are now satisfactory with some good features. Assessment has been a focus of school improvement and a new policy statement has been agreed recently. Each subject manager is reviewing and developing new assessment procedures as an area of their action plans and the new assessment manager is co-ordinating this work with the headteacher and deputy. There are effective procedures for assessment in English and mathematics and these are making a significant contribution to improving standards of attainment in these areas. They are detailed in how and what is assessed and assessments are regular and appropriate, with the rigorous evaluation of key skills. Pupils have records in reading, writing mathematics and special needs and these are regularly reviewed

as targets are set and progress towards these targets is monitored. Other assessment procedures include an analysis of the performance of pupils in National Curriculum tests, regular levelling of work and an English tracking document that has been introduced. All of these measures allow the school to build a clear picture of how their pupils perform over time and compare this achievement to what is expected and achieved elsewhere. Useful and informative systems have yet to be fully implemented in the core subject of science and most other areas of the curriculum. In some subjects, such as design and technology, history and science, subject managers are piloting assessment procedures in their own year groups. These tend to be designed to highlight the key skills in each unit of work but, as yet, it is too early to judge what impact they will have upon standards. The school has drawn up a newly agreed policy for assessment, recording and reporting and this will lead to greater consistency across the school. It is intended to ensure that all staff are familiar and confident with the procedures for assessment and how the information gained should be used. The current assessment manager is both knowledgeable and enthusiastic and, although relatively new to her post, she has a clear vision for future development and a capacity to succeed.

45. The procedures to monitor pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall. Most teachers know their children well and have a clear picture of how they believe individual pupils are performing within their classrooms. Informal assessments are made on a regular basis and teachers keep their own assessment information. Teachers in the same year group plan collaboratively to ensure that all pupils receive equal access to the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents are supportive of the school. With good reason they think it is a good one, finding many things to like about it. The parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, those attending the pre-inspection parents' meeting, and those meeting with inspectors during the inspection, have positive views about almost all aspects of the school's provision for their children. The response to the pre-inspection questionnaire is much more positive now than it was when the school was inspected previously, reflecting parents' views that the school's links with them have improved since the appointment of the new headteacher.
47. Particular strengths of the school are seen to be that teaching is good with high expectations. The school is thought to work closely with parents who are comfortable when approaching the school with questions or problems. Parents feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible and that it is well led and managed. A small number of parents have concerns about the school's provision for activities outside the usual classroom ones, the mix of Years 1 and 2, the school's homework policy, and the use of temporary classrooms. Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views, but finds no support for the concerns expressed, although the school is presently reviewing its homework policy to ensure that parents have a better understanding of what is required of them and their children.
48. The school has very effective links with parents. It reaches out to parents to mutual benefit. All the good features found at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained or improved and others have been raised to a high level. Home-school links are supported by a recently updated home-school agreement that provides for commitment by all to the improvement of standards. Parents and other helpers are warmly welcomed into school and are encouraged to participate in its work. They help with reading, sewing, art and craft, library, extra-curricular activities and day visits. There is clear guidance in the prospectus and elsewhere to tell parents how contact with the school can be made either to offer support or to discuss matters of concern or interest. Parents are involved in the very effective Parents in Partnership group, which meets regularly to discuss school incentives and policy. Parents are also involved in the Friends of Shamblehurst School Association; these committed members efficiently organise social and fund-raising activities. Both parent groups are very good. The many parents that help in the classroom, and elsewhere, make a valuable contribution to the provision for, and quality of, the learning that takes place in school.
49. The quality of information provided formally by the school is very good. Regular newsletters, home-link books, access to school counsellor, workshops, parents' evenings, curriculum newsletters and easy access to most teachers keep parents very well informed about school activities and the part they can play in them. When necessary, the school provides translators to support those parents for whom English is difficult. The school prospectus and the recently reviewed governors' annual

report to parents are of very good quality. They are both well organised, comprehensive documents, although the prospectus is a little formal and in this respect suffers in comparison with the latest annual report. Together they provide parents with all the information to which they are entitled.

50. Parents are informed of their child's progress and development each term and annually through a written report. The quality of the latter is good overall with much of very good quality. Reporting requirements are met. They provide a good summary of pupils' effort, attainment and progress with parents being given clear indications of how attainment compares with that expected. Targets are given to assist parents in helping their children to improve academically.
51. In addition to the formal arrangements for parents to discuss their children's attainment and progress, there are regular opportunities for informal discussion with staff. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are very anxious to ensure that parents are comfortable with what the school is doing and they make themselves available at any time to meet with parents. Questionnaires provide parents with an opportunity to comment on the school's provision for their children. Teachers are usually happy to meet with parents informally, before or after school, or by appointment to ensure availability due to teaching commitments, although the contact with parents of children in reception is somewhat less than is often the case. Overall, there is no reason for any parent to feel ill informed about any aspect of the school's provision for their children if they take advantage of the opportunities available to them.
52. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of progress and attend review meetings regularly. They regard the work of the school highly and appreciate its strong commitment towards helping all pupils to succeed. Links with outside agencies are also very good. Very positive links with Wildern Secondary School have resulted in effective shared use of a school counsellor. Pupils with behavioural difficulties benefit greatly from this additional input.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. Since the arrival of the current headteacher, the school has improved significantly and moved forward at a tremendous pace, most notably in the quality of education and standards at the end of Key Stage 2. This is recognised by the parents and governors. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents commented on how all of the improvement since the previous inspection had taken place as a result of the appointment of the current headteacher. One parent commented that one of their older children, who had moved on to secondary education, regretted that they were no longer at Shamblehurst because they were jealous of all the improvements. The headteacher is popular with staff, parents and pupils. Her tremendous energy and commitment is an inspiration to all involved in the school. The significant developments have come about because of the excellent leadership provided by the headteacher and the deputy, who have ensured very clear educational direction. This was started on the headteacher's arrival by involving all staff in producing agreed values and aims, and a vision for the school based on becoming an effective school. From this point, all monitoring and evaluation was set against the agreed vision, aims and values. The school has undergone a significant cultural change and during the inspection it was noticeable how well the staff worked together in their year group teams and how positive everyone was about the school and the direction in which it is moving. As a management partnership, the headteacher and deputy complement each other well. Both are very committed to ensuring that the school is successful and strategies are planned in very clear detail, after very specific evaluation, to ensure positive and successful outcomes. Much has been achieved in a very short period of time.
54. The quality of teaching and learning has developed significantly during the last two years. This was recognised by the headteacher as essential if standards were going to improve. Some of the improvement is due to the appointment of new staff who are confident, dynamic and enthusiastic, but the school's teaching and learning policies have also had a significant impact, particularly in areas of the school where teaching and learning were unsatisfactory not that long ago. The school's teaching and learning package provides a rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching that provides teachers with written and verbal feedback and individual action plans that are related to improving aspects of teaching and learning. This innovative approach that is far more rigorous than found in a majority of schools dispels any complacency and, as all teachers are given a category of performance, it also provides a level of support and professional development. Although staff understand they are likely to be monitored regularly, they also appreciate that if they

are committed to the process, the support provided to improve teaching and learning is significantly more than one would normally expect. The process also identifies and celebrates teachers' strengths. Integrated in to this process have been classroom climate reviews where pupils have been asked about teaching and learning. This has allowed many teachers to consider and reflect on their practice. Another strength of this process is that it links very well with the school's performance management strategy, which far exceeds the minimum requirements. Credit should go to the deputy headteacher who has driven and managed much of the teaching and learning package.

55. A third member of the school's management team is a senior teacher who has also had a significant influence in improving teaching and learning as an outstanding role-model in the classroom, and an experienced teacher through all of the phases in primary education. She has been actively involved in supporting teachers through their individual action plans by observing colleagues, teaching alongside them or providing other support. Initially, much of what went on in the school was driven by the headteacher and deputy, as this was the only way to get things done. However, since September, new staff and a new management structure have provided a conduit to cascade good practice. Essential to this process are the phase leaders, (a phase is two year groups for example, Years 3 and 4), who have direct responsibility for overseeing standards and the quality of education in their phase. Added to this, subject managers now have more responsibility for action planning and eventually, monitoring and evaluation will become the responsibility for a wider group of staff. This also enables the school to operate its Strategic Timetable and Action to Raise Standards which identifies the school's very ambitious priorities for development that are focused on curriculum development, improving standards and the quality of education. It is the headteacher's view, that from September 2002 a 'new' school was in place. It is very noticeable that like a new school, there is a fresh feel and a very strong commitment to continued development and improvement amongst the staff, and more importantly, the capacity to succeed.
56. Provision for special needs is managed very well. There is a clearly structured policy, which has been updated to take into account the recommendations of the new Code of Practice. Special educational needs is given a very high profile within the school. The governing body has a separate special needs sub-committee and the governor with responsibility for overseeing provision is supportive and hard working. The school deliberately invests more of its resources in special educational needs than allocated. This heavy commitment ensures that a good level of high quality classroom support is provided, ensuring a beneficial effect on pupils' progress. Currently, the manager for special needs has not been allocated time to monitor provision in the classroom and has to rely heavily on information supplied by teaching and support staff in order to gain a realistic overview of provision.
57. Governors, many of whom are relatively new, are properly involved in the work of the school, both as members of various committees, and as individuals, properly undertaking their responsibilities. They are aware of the need to challenge what is going on in the school and are doing so sensitively as critical friends. A number of governors have specific responsibilities, such as literacy and numeracy and special educational needs. Some have particular expertise, such as health and safety that is well used to the benefit of the school. Governors liaise appropriately with the school, both formally and informally, to offer support and to monitor developments in provision and standards. They are undertaking their duties in an increasingly effective way, acknowledging that they feel their role is much clearer since the appointment of the headteacher. As a result, they have a good idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses that is enabling them to be increasingly effective in holding the school to account for the standards it achieves. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher, formally through her regular reports and informally through meetings and discussion, so that they have a clear picture of what goes on in the school. They are proud of the school, showing an active interest in all aspects of its work. Governors fulfil their statutory duties, including agreeing performance targets. They provide good support to the headteacher in helping to shape the direction of the school.
58. The school's strategic use of the financial resources available to it, which are similar to the national average for primary schools, is good. Following the previous inspection, the school underwent a period of turbulence, one effect of which was that the school overspent its budget and went into a deficit situation. However, the matter was robustly addressed and it is to the credit of all concerned that a very difficult financial situation was resolved in a short period of time. This was achieved

without any external financial assistance, and without seriously impacting on the quality of education provided, apart from the fact that monies, which could have been directed elsewhere, had to be used to reverse the deficit position, thus slowing the rate of improvement in provision.

59. Financial planning is well organised with a clear cycle of planning and review that is linked directly to the school development plan. There is good liaison between governors, the headteacher and staff in formulating the budget. Governors play an active part in managing the budget. The school benefits from the expertise of some members of the governing body, together with that of the headteacher.
60. Governors feel ownership of the budget. They explore all options open to them fully, and take decisions with confidence, because of their individual expertise and the objective information provided to them by the headteacher. There is effective corporate decision making that ensures that the financial resources available to the school are properly targeted to improving the quality of education and raising standards throughout the school.
61. Levels of financial reserves; that is the money the school holds to protect it against unexpected happenings, have varied from unacceptably low, a deficit, to the present level which continues to be low compared with suggested practice. However, school managers have proper regard for the way in which monies are spent and there is prudent contingency planning in place, such as the constant reviewing of the school organisation and staffing structure, aimed to ensure as far as possible that the school's finances will be sufficient to ensure the continuation of its present strategies, despite ongoing uncertainty about admission numbers. The headteacher and governors are very aware of the need to provide as high a standard of education as possible and their planning is solidly based on ensuring that the school's educational provision is sustainable and that, as far as is possible, its educational targets are met. Expenditure has been targeted to directly benefit pupils' attainment and progress by maintaining staffing levels, providing additional learning resources and creating an improved working environment.
62. The use of the specific funds element of the school's finances, and other additional funding, is very well focused. There is very good use made of the funding for pupils with special educational needs, and others in need of support. The school contributes from its own funds to supplement the specific grants it receives to ensure that there is effective raising of the attainment of those who receive extra support to address special learning, language or behaviour needs.
63. The school's overall administration arrangements, and the day-to-day control of its finances, are of high quality. There has not been an external financial audit since the previous inspection but nothing seen during this inspection suggests any reason for concern. Clerical staff are well organised, competent and committed. They make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the daily life of the school community. The school office is well equipped with appropriate use of new technology here as elsewhere in support of the work of the school.
64. There is satisfactory implementation of the four principles of compare, challenge, consult, and compete by the headteacher and members of the governing body to ensure that the school provides best value in its educational provision. Although the school suggests that there is an opportunity for improvement, there are no weak aspects, with consultation and comparison being strong features. Staff and governors avail themselves of a variety of information to inform them how the school is doing and identify areas for development. These include a range of monitoring activities, analysis of assessment testing results, objective self-evaluation and comments from partners. The school's self-evaluation procedures are developing well. All elements of the school's spending are evaluated to ensure that the most economic, effective and efficient quality of education and support is provided for the pupils in its charge.
65. Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable changes in staffing, with a high number of teachers leaving or joining the school in the last two years. Consequently, a high proportion of teachers have only recently, been given responsibility for their subject and some have been teaching for a relatively short time. Nevertheless, the headteacher and her deputy, ably supported by the senior teacher, have worked hard and very successfully during this time to establish a dedicated and enthusiastic team, adequate in number to meet the demands of the curriculum, and suitably matched to their area of curriculum responsibility. This has been supported by the creation of a strong team of phase leaders who have provided strong support and

sharply focused professional development for colleagues. Learning support assistants work closely with teachers, are clear about their roles and very well briefed before the start of lessons. The school ensures that assistants have opportunities to develop expertise through in-house support, but many also take initiative to organise further training for themselves and are highly qualified. They are much appreciated for their work by teachers and pupils alike. Lunchtime supervisors and cleaning staff carry out their duties conscientiously and efficiently and are also greatly valued for their contributions.

66. The accommodation is satisfactory, overall. At the time of the previous inspection, inspectors noted a number of weaknesses. Since her appointment the headteacher, with very good support from governors and parents, has worked hard and successfully to improve the buildings and grounds. For example, many areas of the school have been freshly painted, carpeted or curtained and this has greatly improved the general appearance of the building, resulting in a more comfortable and attractive background for teaching and learning. Teachers and other adults have created attractive displays in classrooms and corridors and there have also been successful capital programme initiatives to develop attractive open spaces such as the quadrangle. Pupils have regular access to specialist teaching rooms for music, special educational needs and design and technology, and the library continues to provide a valuable and much used resource for the development of reading and research skills. Despite the best efforts of all those involved in the school and the good improvement that has resulted, some of the deficiencies reported in the previous inspection still remain. First, four classes in Key Stage 2 continue to be taught in temporary classrooms detached from the main building. Two of these are in a particularly poor state of repair, are cramped, and are in urgent need of replacement. Second, the school hall is barely large enough to accommodate both key stages for a whole-school assembly. Third, the room designated for teaching information and communication technology is badly positioned, so that, when in use, it prohibits both entry to two reception classes and the use of a main corridor, which often leads to disruption or delays in lessons. The headteacher and governors are acutely aware of these problems and continue to pursue all means of solving them.
67. The quality, range and accessibility of resources are satisfactory overall. The school has begun to make good improvement in recent years in relation to the storage and accessibility of equipment in many areas of the school and governors are making good use of available funding to address the priorities identified in the subject audits. The resources for most subjects are at least satisfactory. They are good for music, history and the school library, but there are too few resources for religious education to ensure that the subject fully meets the requirements of the curriculum.
68. With the very strong leadership and management, the above average standards in English and mathematics, the good teaching, the pupils' enthusiasm for learning and good behaviour, their very good moral and social development, and the very good care provided, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. The inspection recognises the recent rapid improvement in the school. In addition to the work already undertaken, and the priorities identified by the school through its improvement plan, to improve standards and the quality of education further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- ❑ Raise standards in geography, history and music in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - providing sufficient time in the curriculum to ensure sufficient depth of coverage in the subjects;
 - ensuring all elements of music are taught and providing teachers with in-service training to improve their knowledge, understanding and confidence in the subject.
(Paragraphs 9, 24, 116, 117, 119, 120, 122, 130, 132, 133, 134, 135 and 137)

- ❑ Provide a better and more consistent match of work for the range of different ability groups within all classes by:
 - planning work for different ability groups and providing extension activities for higher-attaining pupils;
 - ensuring that day-to-day assessment is used more consistently;
 - developing greater consistency in teachers' marking.
(Paragraphs 7, 16, 18, 20, 21, 73, 75, 76, 80, 81, 86, 87, 91, 93, 94, 86, 98, 100, 116, 117, 120, 121, and 127)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

68

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

48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	14	25	28	0	0	0
Percentage	2	20	37	41	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	469
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	95

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	38	28	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	30	33
	Girls	28	28	27
	Total	55	58	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (88)	88 (83)	91 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	29	29	35
	Girls	28	26	27
	Total	57	55	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (86)	83 (85)	94 (85)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	34	27	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	27	32
	Girls	24	18	25
	Total	53	45	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (78)	74 (70)	93 (89)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	27	31
	Girls	23	20	25
	Total	50	47	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (76)	77 (78)	92 (85)
	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	455	1	1
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African	2		
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background	2		
Asian or Asian British - Indian	4		
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese	6		
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded			

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.7
Average class size	29.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	266.5

Financial year	2001/03
	£
Total income	1,001,114
Total expenditure	931,692
Expenditure per pupil	1,999
Balance brought forward from previous year	-27,284
Balance carried forward to next year	22,140

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	469
Number of questionnaires returned	180
Percentage of questionnaires returned	38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	33	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	47	6	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	54	4	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	57	10	4	3
The teaching is good.	53	42	2	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	49	11	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	29	3	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	43	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	44	50	5	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	53	41	3	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	48	3	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	37	15	9	21

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

70. Children are admitted to school at the beginning of the autumn term before their fifth birthday. The Foundation Stage consists of three reception classes containing a total of 64 children who attend full time. The school has developed sound procedures for introducing the children into school, and these have resulted in them coming into school happily each day. The children come to Shamblehurst from a large number of pre-school settings. Links between the major ones and the school are satisfactory. The small number of children who have been identified as having special educational needs, receive satisfactory support, as do those who use English as an additional language.
71. The children currently in the reception classes are of average ability overall, and this reflects the standards reported during the previous inspection. Profiles, which track pupils' individual progress in communication, literacy and language, are developed during the children's year in reception. These procedures have recently been improved to include mathematical development. The Early Years manager is aware that these procedures are under developed, because they do not clearly show the progress the children make in all of the areas of learning.
72. The provision is satisfactory. Since the previous report, when the Foundation Stage was described as a strength of the school, the quality of the provision has fluctuated. A report from the local education authority clearly shows that the provision deteriorated drastically; during the last two years there has been a considerable amount of training in this area. This has helped to improve the quality of provision. Planning is clear and focuses soundly on all areas of learning. In addition, the children are given weekly opportunities to plan for themselves. There are many opportunities for children to begin to develop confidence when speaking during class discussions, for example, when the children use their imagination and pretend to be secret agents. As they do this, they begin to develop a sound idea of asking and answering questions directed at them, or the group in which they are working. Mathematical skills are promoted soundly, when counting skills are developed each day as children decide how many are present. One higher-attaining child correctly worked out that if one child was absent there would be 21 children in the class. Learning resources are satisfactory to promote all areas of learning inside and outside the classroom. The secure outside area is used well during fine weather to support learning in many areas. There are regular opportunities for physical development by using the outside area, the music and drama room, and the hall.
73. Teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good. An example of good teaching was seen when the reception classes joined together to listen to stories and poems told to them by a visiting speaker from the local library service. Adults worked well together as they supported a few children who needed extra attention. Praise was used effectively to promote good sitting and listening and all children's ideas and comments were valued. Learning was good because the speaker demonstrated high expectations regarding the importance of listening carefully at all times. This resulted in the children listening attentively to instructions and taking part enthusiastically. Planning is satisfactory but learning objectives are often too general. Adults do not systematically feed information, which they collect on individual children into their weekly planning. This results in some children getting work, which is either too easy or too hard, and affects learning within lessons and progress over time. Learning is satisfactory and children generally concentrate appropriately on the tasks they are given. Adults interact soundly with groups of children, but they do not consistently promote the importance of listening carefully during lessons. This also affects the learning for all abilities.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. Teaching is sound and this area is consistently promoted in lessons. This results in most children developing good relationships with each other and with the adults who work with them. Progress is satisfactory. Most children show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Behaviour is good because adults work hard at developing acceptable behaviour and personal independence. There are many opportunities for children to work in pairs and small groups, and they begin to develop the skills necessary to work independently. Children are encouraged to

select activities and most do this confidently. By the end of their time in reception, the majority of children are likely to reach the expected levels. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted satisfactorily in this area of learning. Planning shows that they learn about their own cultures and beliefs and those of others, for instance, they learn about the Christmas story and the Chinese New Year.

Communication, language and literacy

75. The quality of teaching of communication, language and literacy skills is satisfactory. The children are keen and eager to learn and this generally results in satisfactory progress. There are weaknesses in the quality of teaching and sometimes these weaknesses affect learning within lessons and progress over time. The children have many opportunities to develop confidence in speaking in all activities. However, speaking and listening skills are not consistently promoted in lessons. Teachers too often allow children to shout out or chatter amongst themselves, in particular during class discussions at the beginning and the end of lessons. When this happens the learning within the lesson is hindered. In the reception classes, most children enjoy selecting and looking at books, either with a friend or independently. All the children handle books properly, as they begin to tell the story by looking at the pictures or by attempting to read the text. Higher-attaining children recognise familiar words such as 'monster', 'big' and 'come' in their reading books. These children know many sounds and are beginning to develop an idea of initial blends such as 'sh'. However, past work shows little evidence of this knowledge being developed. Average-attaining children accurately and confidently match their voice with the text as they read. Most name the characters in their books and these children begin to show some idea of reading with expression. Lower-attaining children are confused between letters and words and have a limited idea of the initial sounds of letters. They have difficulty recognising words other than their name. However they confidently tell the story using the pictures. In all classes the children work on developing their pencil control, letter formation and begin to learn how to write their name. All children are given opportunities to begin writing skills and most children begin to form letters as they write. Teachers emphasise the initial letter of words well, but past work clearly shows that children have too few opportunities to develop writing skills further. No evidence was found of higher-attaining children developing their dictionary skills as they used word banks to improve their attempts at writing. There were few examples of children being encouraged to write or copy complete sentences where capital letters, words, spaces and full stops were highlighted. Past work also indicates that work is not always matched accurately to the needs of all children. By the time the children reach Year 1, most are on course to reach the expected standards for their age.

Mathematical development

76. Mathematical skills are developed satisfactorily as the children gain an idea of how numbers up to ten are sequenced. They count cubes which are put into a jar and join 'dot to dot numbers' to form familiar shapes. Basic mathematical vocabulary, such as 'one more than' or 'one less than' is developed satisfactorily. Past work shows that the children have investigated words such as 'taller' and 'tallest' and recorded this information. However, it also shows there were few opportunities to write numbers correctly, which has resulted in many children writing numbers with incorrect formation. In addition, opportunities to develop the idea of adding and subtracting numbers are limited. Tasks are sometimes too similar and when this happens, higher attaining children are not challenged sufficiently. For example, during the inspection, children were encouraged to add two sets containing four and five objects together and write down the total. However, higher-attaining children were not extended effectively by being shown how to write $4 + 5 = 9$. Past work shows little evidence of children working on the addition and subtraction of numbers. The children learn about different two-dimensional shapes as they make shape patterns and pictures. They begin to develop an understanding of the different properties of basic shapes, such as the number of sides on a triangle, or the number of corners on a square. Higher-attaining children develop an idea of properties of more sophisticated shapes such as hexagons. Teaching is satisfactory, although in some lessons, when teachers do not promote listening skills effectively or match work accurately to the needs of all children, learning is hindered. Although most children are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of reception, their rate of progress is slowed because of weaknesses in teaching.

77. Teaching is satisfactory and the children make sound progress. There is a sound range of activities to support this area and adults interact effectively to develop the children's basic knowledge and understanding in this area. The children have learnt the names of parts of their body and this is reinforced as they enthusiastically sing songs, such as 'I've got a body'. Past planning and work shows that they have looked at their school and drawn simple plans of their 'journey' around the school. Present planning indicates that they are due to learn where they live and begin to write their address, and develop their knowledge of the five senses. The children learn simple facts about the past, as they look at photographs of themselves as babies. One boy very confidently said that 'Everyone was once a baby'. Examples of children's writing clearly show that although they confidently attempt to write about 'then' and 'now', teachers' expectations regarding developing writing to show capital letters, full stops, words and spaces are low. Although teachers encourage children to say what they have written, and then sometimes scribe the sentence for them, there are too few opportunities for them to then actually copy a correctly written sentence with emphasis on accurate letter formation. All children have regular opportunities to develop computer skills in the information communication and technology suite. Most children, including those with special educational needs, confidently use the computers both in the suite and in the classroom. Children work amicably and confidently using building and construction toys as they work in small groups. They confidently select from a range of materials to develop skills needed to cut, stick and join materials together. Past work shows that they have made models of themselves with moving arms and legs. To do this they used scissors to cut card and split pins to join the body parts. After listening to a story about magic shoes, the children made their own shoes by using a range of coloured paper, glue and glitter. By the time they leave reception, the majority of children are likely to reach the expected standards.

Physical development

78. All classes regularly use the hall and the music and drama room to develop physically. Personal independence is well promoted, as children undress and place their clothes in neat piles in the classroom. Adults generally develop the children's personal and social skills consistently as they encourage them to have a go at undressing and dressing themselves, but are there to help them and guide them when necessary. A good example of this was observed when a learning support assistant gave clear instructions to one girl and encouraged her to get undressed by herself. The child persevered and was delighted with her own efforts. In reception, most children develop a satisfactory awareness of space, but the quality of movement is not always emphasised sufficiently. Teaching is satisfactory, and occasionally good, but learning within lessons is restricted when teachers do not give the children the responsibility to set up the apparatus themselves or insist that all children listen whilst they give instructions. All children have many opportunities to develop skills by working with construction toys and to use soft materials, such as dough, to develop rolling and cutting skills. Examples were seen during a mathematical development lesson when lower-attaining children confidently rolled out play dough and then skilfully cut out shapes. By the end of their time in reception most children are likely to reach the expected levels in this area.

Creative development

79. Sound teaching and support enables most of the children to make satisfactory progress during their time in reception. In all classes children have many opportunities to sing songs with enjoyment. In one lesson all the children, including those who speak English as an additional language, sang the 'Hello' song, with enjoyment and confidence. They learn other songs such as 'Would you like to play an instrument?' and sing songs tunefully which they have learnt by heart. The children all begin to learn the names of the percussion instruments as they make music to go with their favourite stories, such as, 'The Happy Hedgehog'. There are opportunities in all classes for children to express their own ideas and communicate their feelings through role-play sessions, such as in 'The Boat'. In doing this they develop their basic vocabulary and learn the names of items such as 'telescope'. One higher-attaining child said that 'things look bigger if you look through a telescope' as he made one from cardboard boxes. Three-dimensional art is developed well as the children use recyclable materials to make models. Past work in the reception classes shows that children use paint satisfactorily as they paint with confidence, using mirrors to develop self-portraits. Teachers link this area with mathematical development as they develop shape collages. Artwork is created using a sound variety of materials and techniques, such as collage

and painting. Adults who work in the reception classes value all artwork and work is displayed to enhance the learning environment.

ENGLISH

80. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are similar to those found in most schools in the key areas of speaking and listening, reading and writing. Taking full account of a detailed scrutiny of pupils' previous work as well as observation of day-to-day teaching and learning, pupils throughout the key stage are making satisfactory progress, reflecting a satisfactory quality of teaching overall. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language receive appropriate support from teaching assistants and make similar progress to their classmates. Teaching in many lessons is good and, occasionally, very good. However, some teachers in the key stage have relatively little experience and, in some cases, do not consistently set work at the right level of difficulty for all groups of pupils. This slows the overall rate of progress over time, which could be better. Nevertheless, there are very good strategies in place for supporting teachers' professional development and there is good potential for further improvement. Standards by the end of Key Stage 2 are securely above average and all pupils are making good progress. This is because the quality of teaching is good overall throughout the key stage, and consistently good or better in Years 5 and 6. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection and is clearly reflected in the sharp rise in standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 in the national tests taken in 2002.
81. Throughout the school, teaching in English and in subjects across the curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills. Standards are similar to those found in other schools by the end of Key Stage 1, and above average by the end of Key Stage 2. In Years 1 and 2, teachers make imaginative use of role play and 'hot-seating'⁷ to promote the development of these skills. At the time of the inspection, for example, teachers in Year 2 had constructed attractive castles in their classrooms, which greatly encouraged creativity, provided a stimulating focus for speaking and listening activities and made a very positive contribution to pupils' enjoyment of fantasy in literature. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils ask questions of their own and answer in clear sentences with a degree of confidence appropriate for their age. Some higher attaining pupils are consistently articulate, reflecting above average standards. One pupil, for example, during an 'interrogation' of the castle cook, asked, 'Where were you on the night when the Queen's crown went missing?' A small minority of lower-attaining pupils, on the other hand, relies on support and encouragement from adults to fully join in discussions, which represents below expectations for their age. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities for discussion and role-play that are planned for them and the enthusiasm with which teachers take part. On occasions, teachers and learning support assistants could take fuller advantage of these and other occasions by expecting, wherever possible, that all pupils listen more attentively to their classmates' contributions and always answer, as fully and clearly as they can when it is their turn to speak.
82. From Year 3 onwards, teachers continue to make good use of drama and also of group discussion to further develop these skills. By the end of Year 6, most are confident about reporting clearly back to their class on a wide range of issues. They listen discerningly to what others are saying and ask questions or suggest improvements. Higher-attaining pupils use more complex language in their day-to-day speech, reflecting standards well above average for their age. A pupil in Year 6, for example, when discussing his preference for reading non-fiction, explained, 'I'm looking at the adaptation and independence of plants and I've been using the Encyclopaedia of Nature.' Only a very small minority are hesitant or limit contributions to short phrases or single word answers. Pupils throughout the key stage enjoy group discussions, co-operate well and behave responsibly. Teaching in subjects across the curriculum makes a positive contribution to this development. In a very good mathematics lesson seen in Year 6, for example, pupils gave very detailed explanations of how their data produced straight-line graphs. This challenging activity quickly developed their confidence in speaking and listening and made a positive contribution to the acquisition of mathematical vocabulary and numeracy skills.

⁷ 'Hot-seating' is when a teacher or member of the class takes the role of a real or imaginary character and is questioned by the rest of the group.

83. Standards in reading are similar to those found in other schools by the end of Key Stage 1 and are above average by the end of Key Stage 2. In Year 1, pupils receive appropriate support by reading regularly to classroom support assistants, volunteer helpers or to their teachers in guided reading sessions. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher-attaining pupils read expressively and are confident at deciphering unfamiliar words using letter sounds and picture cues, reflecting above average standards for their age. Most pupils are familiar with the terms 'author' and 'illustrator' and know the difference between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction'. Some lower-attaining pupils still rely on adult support at this stage, which is below expectations. The school has recently introduced a useful assessment sheet that identifies individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses in reading but teachers and assistants have not yet sufficiently developed the use of these in order to increase pupils' rate of progress in learning to make sense of new words. Pupils visit the school library regularly and the school arranges opportunities for them to listen to storytellers from the very supportive Hampshire Library Service. This makes a positive contribution to their enjoyment of reading and ensures the development of good reading habits, as they grow older.
84. From Year 3 onwards, the pupils continue to be encouraged to talk and write about what they read and have a good range of interesting material to choose from. The school library is very well managed and equipped by the library manager and her assistant and teachers make good use of this facility to develop very positive attitudes to reading. There is a successful book club and the school organises interesting visits to book fairs where they have met and spoken to popular writers of children's literature such as Anne Fine and Jacqueline Wilson. These arrangements make a very positive contribution to the good progress that pupils make. Consequently, by the end of Key Stage 2, the lower attaining pupils read independently, although often from less challenging books, whilst many more confident classmates develop mature attitudes to literature and some have reached the stage where they are reading an entire series of books by a favourite author, reflecting standards well above average for their age. Most pupils at this stage have well developed research skills and some read non-fiction for pleasure on a regular basis.
85. Standards in writing are similar to those found in other schools by the end of Key Stage 1 and above average by the end of Key Stage 2. In Years 1 and 2, teaching develops writing skills in a structured way. Pupils in Year 1 gain confidence in spelling commonly used words and using adjectives to enliven their writing. By the end of Key Stage 1, many write clear, consecutive sentences using capital letters and full stops. Higher attaining pupils introduce accurate detail, for instance when writing about their own lives, as in, 'Sometimes we have to have our chimney swept after a long time, so that it is all right to be lit.' A minority, still need help from adults to build sentences, which is below the expected level. The quality of handwriting at this stage is variable and satisfactory, overall. Most pupils, space words correctly and maintain uniform size and style of writing, although the quality of writing in their books varies in neatness and presentation.
86. In Years 3 and 4, pupils successfully develop skills in writing, overall. The extended writing skills of many pupils are well developed, although there are some variations from class to class in the amount and quality of the extended writing which is produced. Pupils' rate of progress is faster in Years 5 and 6, because of the consistently good quality of teaching. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils structure their work using paragraphs and clear punctuation. They write persuasively, for example about moral issues such as the pollution of Antarctica. A higher attaining pupil in Year 5, for instance, argued, 'On the other hand, the mining companies say that they could do research and would obey strict rules to stop oil spills.' Many higher-attaining pupils have a good appreciation of the devices used in stories to create atmosphere and tension and introduce these into their own writing. A small minority of lower-attaining pupils at this stage need adult help to develop ideas and organise their work into paragraphs. There are inconsistencies throughout the Key Stage 2 classes, even where teaching is good, in the quality of handwriting. Written work is sometimes presented well, for example in some of the pieces on display. Nevertheless, pupils are not consistently expected to take care and pride in their finished pieces of work. Lesson observations showed that they have a good knowledge of the strategies they need for writing, but do not always put these into practice when asked to work independently.
87. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall. It is often very good and was excellent in one lesson seen. The best feature of teaching is the teachers' knowledge and understanding throughout the school of the National Literacy Strategy. They collaborate well in year groups to plan an interesting and wide range of activities to develop pupils' skills in the key areas of English. Pupils enjoy these activities, and respond enthusiastically in the majority of

lessons. In the excellent lesson seen in Year 6, for example, the teacher had very high expectations of her class and set them increasingly challenging work, which was very closely matched to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils because she had a thorough knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, all pupils were regularly achieving success, so that their attitudes to learning were mature, academic and in this instance, exemplary. Teachers make good use of assessment information to set long term writing targets for individuals and groups of pupils. They share these with pupils and parents and older pupils in Year 5 and 6 in particular are aware of the standards they are trying to achieve. The quality of day-to-day marking is good, overall. All teachers mark work conscientiously, often with encouraging comments, and the majority link their comments to the objectives of the lesson, using these as a way of guiding pupils towards improvement. Teaching is only occasionally less successful when teachers do not make the fullest use of these good strategies to plan future work at a suitable level. Consequently, groups of pupils are sometimes given work that is either too hard or too easy for them, which slows progress and leads to occasional restlessness or loss of concentration. Teachers throughout the school have begun to include in their planning opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their writing, for example by recording the results of science investigations in their own words, and this makes a positive contribution overall to the development of literacy skills. However, teachers' expectations of the quality and amount of writing that their pupils should produce vary from class to class and from subject to subject. This accounts for some inconsistency in pupils' attitudes to presentation and the quality of their completed work and is an area for future development.

88. Pupils are given reasonable opportunity to use computers for editing, improving and publishing their writing. Teachers throughout the school make good use of overhead projectors in literacy lessons, and during the inspection, very good use was made of a variety of communication media in Year 6 to assist and enliven teaching and learning. The library manager is in the process of establishing an electronic mail connection with a neighbouring school to compare book reviews. Teachers and learning support assistants throughout the school have established close and efficient working relationships and these have a positive impact on the progress of pupils with special educational needs.
89. The subject manager is providing very good leadership and clear direction in the subject and has worked hard and successfully with colleagues to achieve the rising standards in Key Stage 2. There is a potentially strong team in Key Stage 1, comprising some less experienced, but enthusiastic and promising teachers, very ably supported by a senior colleague. Over a short period and with very good support from key members of staff, she has established a solid platform for future improvement.

MATHEMATICS

90. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are average and pupils make satisfactory progress. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils throughout the key stage acquire secure numeracy skills and adequate breadth of mathematical knowledge. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above average. Pupils demonstrate increasing confidence when applying their good mathematical skills to problem solving activities. Pupils' knowledge of space, shape and measures is satisfactory and their data handling skills are improving. The pattern of progress in this key stage mirrors the quality of teaching. During the first two years of Key Stage 2, progress is satisfactory, before accelerating markedly in Years 5 and 6 because standards of teaching are higher. These findings reflect the standards attained by pupils in the national tests and assessments last year, and also represent improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to attain the targets set by the school.
91. Much of the credit for recent improvements is directly attributable to the subject manager. Although only in post since the start of this academic year, she has identified areas of greatest need with pinpoint accuracy and, more importantly, she has introduced assessment procedures, analysed data and tracked progress with impressive detail. The results are very encouraging. Teachers are now more secure about the standards pupils can and should achieve. Although further work remains to be done, particularly with regard to improving the consistency of teaching, further developing the use of assessment and monitoring provision, the picture is very positive for the future.

92. Teachers use the oral part of the numeracy lesson well to promote good speaking and listening skills. Very good relationships in the classroom mean that pupils listen attentively to the class teacher and each other. Numeracy skills are also developed effectively in subjects such as science, where pupils regularly use bar charts, tables and graphs. Information and communication technology is starting to have a positive impact on standards. Older pupils use their weekly lessons in the computer suite well to increase skills. Work is linked very effectively to numeracy topics. However, information and communication technology is not as strongly developed on a day-to-day basis in the classroom and does not yet make a major contribution to pupils' learning.
93. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher-attaining pupils confidently add and subtract with three digit numbers. Some already use an increasing range of strategies to solve problems. Pupils of average ability know how to work out halves and quarters, practically, and many have secure enough skills to calculate mentally. Lower-attaining pupils show a simple level of understanding about how to solve money problems. However, although progress in lessons is often good, evidence taken from previous work reveals that pupils' progress over time is satisfactory rather than good. Teachers rely too heavily on worksheet-based activities, and there is some inconsistency in the volume of work produced in the two year groups, with a smaller amount of work in Year 1. In that year group, the progress of higher-attaining pupils suffers most, particularly when these pupils complete the same work as everyone else before moving on to more challenging activities.
94. Throughout Years 3 and 4, pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their class lessons. In the lessons where teachers provide challenging activities, pupils' progress is sometimes very good. In a high quality lesson on shape in Year 4, for example, activities built well on pupils' previous knowledge and pupils were confident with the language of symmetry because the teacher used the correct vocabulary very precisely. Pupils made swift progress and, by the end of the lesson, most could classify polygons competently. However, evidence from previous work once again shows that, all too often, lessons in these two year groups do not provide pupils with an appropriate level of challenge. As a direct consequence, higher-attaining pupils make least progress and pupils with special educational needs make most because they receive a good level of high quality support in mathematics.
95. In Years 5 and 6, through consistently good teaching, pupils develop very secure skills and apply their knowledge to problem solving in a variety of ways. Pupils of all abilities make accurate and informed judgements about their own level of understanding. Many display mature mathematical thinking when interpreting data from a graph or reasoning their own explanations. The level of work set matches pupils' needs and pupils of all abilities work out mental calculations with reasonable speed and are not frightened of large numbers. However, even in these year groups, the school's highest-attaining pupils do not always receive enough work to challenge them further.
96. The overall quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, with half of lessons observed being judged good or very good. In a very good Year 2 lesson on addition and subtraction, a talented teacher used lively and exciting methods to capture pupils' interest. Pupils responded with great enjoyment as they tried to work out the answer before the 'function machine' stopped working. They needed very quick mental recall. Activities were pitched at exactly the right level. In discussion, pupils expressed how much they loved mathematics and it was easy to see why. This lesson was a quality, fun learning experience, where pupils were highly motivated to succeed. However, in teaching groups that combine average- and lower-attaining pupils, there was a noticeable lack of understanding about the purpose of matching work to ability. All too often, pupils of different abilities cover the same work at the same level. For some it is too easy, whilst others need considerable adult support because it is too hard.
97. In Key Stage 2, the overall quality of teaching is good, with three-quarters of lessons observed being good, or very good. In general, teachers in Key Stage 2 have higher expectations of their pupils and use time, support staff and resources more efficiently. There is more evidence of planned work matching pupils' ability. A good example of these strong features was observed in a very good Year 5 lesson on shape. Work was challenging, questions searching and the pace of the lesson excellent, with not a minute wasted. The teacher had a very accurate knowledge of what individual pupils should achieve. Lower-attaining pupils made equally good progress because the extra support enabled them to complete the given tasks. By the end of the lesson, most pupils had made very good progress, and were confident enough to make informed predictions about their work.

98. Teachers throughout the school are far more confident with the National Numeracy Strategy than in the past. The school's focus on improving mental calculation work at the start of lessons has resulted in purposeful introductions to activities that motivate pupils well. Problem solving skills have also improved significantly, following targeted input. Teachers promote the language of mathematics well. They demonstrate skilful management of pupils and lessons are purposeful and productive. Relationships are strong and pupils are keen to contribute and do well because they know their work is valued. However, the quality of presentation varies considerably and does not always reflect pupils' ability. There are also weaknesses in marking. Although there is evidence of some marking being used constructively to help pupils understand, other marking does little to aid pupils' progress. The school has recently introduced targets for pupils' future development. Although their introduction is a step in the right direction, these targets often lack precision. By contrast, pupils with special educational needs have very precise and achievable numeracy targets that relate well to their individual needs. The quality of homework varies considerably between classes and year groups and parents were justified in their concerns. In addition, lengthy lessons in Key Stage 1 classes do not always make the most efficient use of time. Frequently activities expand to fit the available time.
99. Recently introduced assessment initiatives have signalled a welcome move in the right direction. Teachers are increasingly confident about predicting the standards individual pupils can and should achieve. Monitoring of teaching and learning has also impacted positively on standards, but further work remains to be done. With the subject manager's strong commitment towards improvement, the school is well placed to succeed in the future.

SCIENCE

100. Although standards were above the national average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2002, attainment during the inspection was judged to be average. There was little indication that higher-attaining pupils in Years 2 and 6 work beyond nationally expected levels consistently. At the end of Key Stage 1, this is because most teachers are still becoming accustomed to the need to ensure that higher attaining pupils always have appropriately harder tasks in the mixed age classes. In Year 6 it has been found that pupils lack some elements of knowledge and so teachers are both building pupils' skills and filling gaps. Pupils' achievement is generally satisfactory through the school and in some classes pupils achieve well due to high quality teaching. The recently appointed subject manager is keen and experienced, and his expertise is ensuring that the subject is moving forward.
101. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' standards of attainment are satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of how to conduct simple investigations. Through observations, they have discovered that ice melts at different rates in different places. They also know how to reverse the process and that some changes, such as toasting bread, are irreversible. Pupils throughout the key stage have done similar work on light sources and shadows, and higher attaining pupils in Year 2 understand clearly how a shadow is formed.
102. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a clear idea of what makes a 'fair test' and the majority know how to set up such a test in order to check which conditions suit some plants best. They have covered a satisfactory range of topics, show thorough knowledge of them at the expected level, and use their knowledge to make sensible predictions. This term, pupils have identified different parts of plants and the higher-attaining pupils, in particular, show good understanding of their functions.
103. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates, but at lower levels. Their progress is especially noticeable when they receive support. In some year groups, pupils use their literacy skills well to write observations and comments. In other classes pupils answer questions or copy work, and while this ensures that the basic facts are recorded, it limits the development of pupils' own ability to record their thoughts and findings. The samples of pupils' work showed little use of information and communications technology in science, but a computer microscope was used very effectively in a class lesson to further pupils' understanding of the need for precise observation. Everyone was fascinated when, they saw part of a dead wasp magnified 200 times, and the experience helped to reinforce pupils' awareness that science can be awe-inspiring. Good use is made of pupils' mathematical knowledge to make accurate measurements,

and to record findings in the form of charts and graphs.

104. Samples of pupils' work throughout the school indicate that the quality of teaching has been generally satisfactory during the year and that teaching in some classes is consistently good. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was always satisfactory, much was good and occasionally it was very good. This was particularly the case towards the top of Key Stage 2. Where teaching was good, teachers had prepared carefully and ensured that the topics were presented in ways that stimulated the pupils so that they worked at appropriate levels and lessons proceeded at a good pace. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were grouped by ability and this was reflected in the complexity of their investigations. This enabled pupils to follow clearly and with good understanding. An average attaining pupil was planning how to devise a pattern of regularly recording the progress of his investigation. He realised that the weekend posed a problem and was delighted when, after considerable thought, he came up with a workable solution. Resources in the same lesson were appropriate so that pupils were able to choose and to settle immediately to setting up investigations. Good teachers use questions judiciously which clarify and extend pupils' thinking. Throughout the school, teachers have very good relations with their pupils and high expectations of good behaviour. Pupils respond well, co-operate sensibly or work well independently, and the atmosphere in all lessons is conducive to learning.
105. Schemes of work are detailed and the school's provision for science is good. Timetables indicate that the school gives less time than average to science in Key Stage 1 and Year 3. The subject manager is very keen and knowledgeable and is starting to share his expertise through team teaching, demonstrations and advice. There is clear understanding of the need to provide challenging tasks for the higher-attaining pupils in each year group in order to raise standards further. Assessment is being piloted in three classes and will shortly be introduced to all year groups, so that there will be clear tracking of pupils' attainment and progress through the school. Resources are satisfactory and are used well.

ART AND DESIGN

106. Standards of attainment are in line with expectations at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. Three lessons were seen during the inspection, all of which were in Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on those observations, evidence from work on display and some that was done last term, and discussions with teachers and pupils. These indicate that the quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good, and that teachers throughout the school have a firm grasp of the requirements for planning and teaching art and design. However, the difference between classes in quantity of recent work indicates that there are some inequalities in the time spent on art.
107. In Key Stage 1, there are examples of different techniques used by pupils as they develop both their skills of observation and their imaginations. Pupils have studied Van Gogh and produced very sensitive clay sunflower heads, using a variety of tools to achieve the effect of leaves, petals and flower centres. Younger pupils have created highly imaginative and colourful pastel drawings of cats. In connection with a history topic, pupils in Year 2 made detailed sketches of household artefacts.
108. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their skills satisfactorily, through a range of activities that involve different media, and work is often related to topics in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 have been studying the Aztecs in history and have designed and made highly effective Aztec jewellery in plasticine, coated in gold paint. Teachers continue to plan for pupils to look closely at the work of famous artists. Pupils in Year 6 studied the work of Klimt, from his early portraits to his abstract pictures, and most decided they preferred his later work. They then created collages in his style using a combination of paint and sticky papers. Pupils in Year 5 looked at a series of watercolours by an artist from St Lucia, Pierre Henri, and worked hard at recreating his techniques of using a very wet brush and simple strokes to build an impression of a market place. Several pupils achieved a feeling of movement with simple flowing lines. Technical skills vary, but overall are satisfactory by the end of the key stage.
109. Pupils use information and communication technology to design patterns. For example, pupils in Year 3 created abstract pictures in the style of Rousseau on computers. Pupils also use the Internet to do research about artists. There is no evidence that pupils develop their literacy or

numeracy skills through planned activities in art.

110. The quality of teaching during the inspection was usually good. Teachers showed good subject knowledge and planned carefully. Pupils responded enthusiastically and achieved well. Resources were appropriate and pupils used them well. Although the subject manager was absent during the inspection, it is clear from the evidence and documentation that she left, that she is a keen and well-organised manager. The scheme of work is comprehensive, and assessment of pupils' attainment at the end of each main piece of work is just being introduced.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. As only one lesson was observed during the week of the inspection, judgements are based predominantly upon discussions with pupils and the co-ordinator and a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages. Throughout the school, most pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment and those with special educational needs make good progress due to the good support that they receive from learning support assistants which enables them to participate fully in lessons. At present, the time allocated to design and technology in both key stages is considerably less than in most schools.
112. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are introduced effectively to the processes of planning, designing and making. They learn to draw and plan their ideas appropriately, over a range of topics, before they progress to make what they have designed. For example, pupils in Year 1 plan to make a fruit salad and recognise the importance of eating more fruit and vegetables. Their designs show that, having decided what ingredients they will need, they can transfer their ideas to paper in the correct sequence and then put these plans into action. In Year 2, pupils become more sophisticated in their design work and learn to make decisions relating both to the choice of materials and the techniques to be used. For example, when considering appropriate joining materials, two pupils had selected cello tape because 'It was easy to use', whilst rejecting the use of glue 'because it gets sticky on your hands'. The curriculum for design and technology is often linked to other curricular areas such as literacy and information and communication technology. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, use the computer to design their coloured coats for Joseph, before making them from a variety of different materials. All pupils become increasingly aware of the need to carry out evaluations on their finished products and this is a strong feature of their work in design and technology. Written evaluations contain suggestions for future improvement, such as when pupils observed that joining materials by sewing them together would lead to greater strength.
113. Pupils in Year 3 to 6 continue to make satisfactory progress in the designing process and in the investigation of a wide range of purposes for designing. They acquire appropriate knowledge in the use of tools and materials and this is evident in the products that they make. Pupils in Year 3 construct stand-up photo frames, using wood and card, and attempt to overcome design problems by strengthening their structures in different ways. As part of a problem-solving exercise, pupils in Year 4 employ their scientific knowledge of simple circuits to design a light for the inside of Sir Francis Drake's sea chest and pupils in Year 6 improve their knowledge of mechanisms by designing and making fairground rides. As in Key Stage 1, pupils are encouraged to complete written evaluations of their finished products and to make suggestions for future improvement, such as when pupils in Year 6 listed the ways that they might have been able to slow their motors down. This is a very strong feature of the curriculum in design and technology and it encourages pupils to think carefully about their work.
114. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, the quality of teaching in the lesson observed during the inspection was very good. This lesson was very well planned and pupils were provided with a range of challenging activities and a very good selection of tools and materials. The teacher received good support from a parent and a grandparent, and this enabled the class to be divided into small groups, each with adult support. Consequently, pupils handled a range of tools such as staplers, scissors and sewing needles safely and with increasing accuracy. All pupils made good progress because the lesson had appropriate pace and challenge. Pupils clearly enjoy this subject and pupils in Year 6 talked enthusiastically about what they had designed and made whilst at the school. Pupils work well as individuals, in pairs, and within groups, and the subject makes a considerable contribution to the good attitudes and behaviour observed within the school.

115. Although the subject manager for design and technology has only been in post for a year, she has already done much to raise the profile of the subject. She has implemented a curriculum for design and technology that is based on nationally recognised guidelines, but is adapting it to meet the particular needs of the school. It seeks to ensure that what pupils learn is carefully matched to their previous experiences and gives good opportunities for pupils to increase and to practise their skills over time. She has improved both the quantity and quality of resources and ensured that they are stored centrally and are easy to access. The school now has the facility of a new design and technology room and a new oven will further improve resources. The subject manager has good subject knowledge and sufficient expertise to ensure that further improvements are made in the subject. She has developed procedures for assessment and these are being implemented within her year group. She has a clear overview of her subject and has developed an action plan that includes the full implementation of assessment procedures and the provision of teacher support packs to improving their confidence. She is aware of the need to ensure that the subject receives an increased time allocation to enable pupils to achieve further progress.

GEOGRAPHY

116. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils reach standards that are average. These pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards are below those expected by the end of Key Stage 2. They are lower because the amount of time allocated to teaching the subject has been too low. In addition, past work shows that tasks are not consistently matched to the needs of all pupils. As a result, the pupils have a limited knowledge of topics that they have covered and have not made as much progress as they should have done.
117. Progress is satisfactory for most pupils in the mixed Years 1 and 2 classes, but examples of pupils' previous work clearly shows that tasks are not always matched accurately to the abilities of all pupils. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. However, discussions with pupils in Year 2 show that they develop a clear idea of what maps are used for. They confidently name what they might see on a map such as islands, roads, and seas. Pupils correctly identify what they would see on a local map of Hedge End. They name places, such as Portsmouth, and know that we live in England. Most pupils know that Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Wight are situated near to England. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are enthusiastic. In the classrooms where good displays reinforce the geography elements of the curriculum pupils gain a wider perspective of the whole world. For example, one classroom has a world map placed where pupils can look at it and identify where countries and seas are situated. As pupils move up the school, they build on the geographical skills they have previously learnt. Pupils in Year 5 spoke maturely and more knowledgeably about St Lucia than pupils in Year 6. The pupils in Year 6 spoke in a muddled way about the continents of the world and although they name some European countries they are not sure if France is in Europe. Higher-attaining pupils easily name the countries that make up the United Kingdom, but many are unsure of these. Discussions with Year 6 clearly illustrate a limited knowledge of the topics they have covered in geography.
118. In the two lessons seen in Key Stage 2, teaching was variable. In the best lesson, in Year 5 the teacher had planned it well. Pupils were placed in ability groups and the tasks were well matched to the pupil's different abilities within the class. Lower-attaining pupils were well supported by the teacher, and relationships between the teacher and the pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves, were very good. This promoted good learning within the lesson because the teacher had high expectations regarding completing the task and getting on independently. Pupils' attitudes to the subject and their behaviour were very good. There were good opportunities for the pupils to discuss points with a partner and they all worked extremely hard showing confidence and enthusiasm as they compared the rainfall and temperature between London and St Lucia. Mathematical skills were used well to develop graphs and all written work was well presented. Literacy and numeracy skills were well promoted.
119. The subject is satisfactorily managed by a newly appointed subject manager. She has quickly identified what is needed to raise standards in the subject, for example to develop the resources alongside the guidelines which teachers are using to plan and to develop assessment procedures in the subject. However the amount of teaching time for geography is very low in Key Stage 2. This has limited the progress the pupils have made, and also the standards pupils have reached in Year 6. The lack of monitoring of teaching, and of the work completed, has also contributed to the lower standards. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used well to support the

subject. For example, displays in Year 5 classrooms show that photographs and pictures from the Internet have been used well to develop pupils' understanding of the topic they have been working on about St Lucia. In classes where geography is being taught this half term, displays are informative and reinforce what has been taught. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have had many opportunities to develop satisfactory research skills. The subject satisfactorily supports pupils' cultural development as they learn about life in different countries.

HISTORY

120. Pupils reach standards that are average by the end of Key Stage 1. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory but, on occasions, work is not accurately matched to the needs of all pupils and, when this happens, learning is more limited. There has been too little time allocated to the teaching of history in Key Stage 2 and, as a result, the pupils in Year 6 have a limited knowledge of the topics that they have covered. This has resulted in standards being below the expected levels by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress is unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2 because of this, added to which, past work sometimes shows that teachers do not consistently match tasks to the different abilities within the classes. This hinders pupils' learning within lessons and ultimately their progress over time.
121. In the one lesson seen in a mixed Years 1 and 2 class, teaching was satisfactory. Pupils were encouraged to ask and answer questions about the past and this promoted literacy skills well. The lesson was well resourced with old objects from the past and the pupils were given good opportunities to handle these items. They then sketched them after discussing in small groups what they might be. The teacher highlighted historical vocabulary, such as 'evidence' and 'artefacts' well, and gave the pupils the opportunity to write in note form. However, because the task was not well matched to all ages and abilities, a number of pupils had difficulty concentrating and spent too long chatting and wasting time.
122. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop a simple understanding of historical events and different periods of time as they learn about life long ago. Planning shows that senior citizens have been invited in to school to talk to the pupils about the past. Past work shows that pupils have looked at old and new houses in their local area. In Year 3, past work shows that pupils have studied the Victorians and developed their research skills as they have looked for information about Victorian railways, in particular, The North Star built by George Stephenson. Pupils in Year 4 are currently learning about Aztec life. Displays and previous work in the classrooms greatly enhance pupils' learning. There are good links with art and design as pupils make jewellery. Previous work shows that information and communication technology has been used well as pupils make leaflets about Queen Elizabeth I, when they studied the Tudors. Pupils' past work shows that in Year 5 they have looked at the Romans and used the computers effectively to enhance their work as they developed word processing skills and move pictures into their texts. In Year 6, pupils recently completed their Greek topic, and the tasks set show they have continued to develop note-taking skills, research skills and the use of information and communication technology to enhance their work. However, discussions with pupils in Year 6 show that they have difficulty recalling historical facts about the topics that they have covered. In particular, many are very confused when trying to decide when these periods of time were. For example they had no idea when Henry VIII lived. Apart from saying that he had many wives, they could recall little about Tudor times other than that Henry VIII had 'something to do with religion'. The headteacher is aware of the need to increase the time spent teaching history and to monitor what is being taught, particularly in Key Stage 2.
123. The subject manager leads the subject well and has a clear idea of what is needed to improve standards. She has monitored planning and is currently developing a portfolio of past work to enable all teachers to become more aware of the levels achieved in each year group. Resources are good and have been developed to link into the guidelines that the teachers use to plan lessons. They consist of an informative selection of videos, books and historical objects, which are well organised and easily accessible to all staff. In classes where history is a focus, displays are good and reinforce what has been taught. Good examples were seen in the Year 4 where information and past work about the Aztecs give the pupils a clearer idea of what Aztec life was like. Assessment procedures have recently been satisfactorily developed. The co-ordinator is aware of the benefits of visiting historical places and inviting visitors into school to bring history to life. Many topics, such as The Roman and the Victorians, are supported well by educational visits.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages and most pupils make satisfactory progress. A broad and sufficiently balanced scheme of work based on good whole-school curriculum guidelines is now taught, covering all of the required elements of the National Curriculum programme of study. This places an emphasis on the systematic development of computer skills. Resources have improved in recent years with the provision of a computer suite that is just large enough for class lessons and sufficient time is allocated to the subject during the year. Pupils are now matching the expectations for their ages, by the end of Years 2 and 6. The training of most teachers has been carried out, which has increased their subject expertise and confidence, and they benefit from the valuable support provided by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic technician. The newly appointed subject leader has already developed a good action plan for future development.
125. By the end of Year 2, pupils use the mouse control and keyboard accurately and acquire a range of basic technological skills. They enter, save and retrieve their work and discuss the various functions of certain keys. As well as developing keyboard skills, work in information and communication technology lessons is frequently linked to other subjects, particularly literacy, mathematics and art. Pupils in Year 2, for example, experimented with straight lines, geometric shapes and colour to design coats as part of their 'Joseph' topic, whilst pupils in Year 1 word-processed poems, incorporating pictures from 'Clip Art'. Some pupils have very good computer skills. In one lesson in Year 2, for example, higher-attaining pupils were able to use the 'delete' and 'backspace' keys to edit the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', and were then able to suggest and substitute more interesting vocabulary. Almost all pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, show great confidence when asked to log on to programs, and most are able to explain how to save their work. Although no examples of control technology were seen during the inspection, an analysis of teachers' planning reveals that these elements occur in both key stages as part of planned curriculum. The wide range of experiences that pupils now have in Years 1 and 2 allows them to make appropriate progress and planned access to the computer suite enables them to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding on a regular basis. They are beginning to develop a good understanding of information and communication technology and to use it confidently and with purpose.
126. Between Years 3 and 6, all pupils continue to make at least satisfactory progress and there are no significant differences in the standards achieved by pupils of different gender, ability or ethnic background. This is to their credit, as many of the older pupils were in school before the computer suite contributed significantly to an improvement in resources. These pupils have now been provided with good opportunities to catch up on aspects of the subject that were not previously addressed and by the end of Year 6, their knowledge, skills and understanding are in line with expectations. All pupils now use the Internet effectively as a tool for research. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, pupils were considering the average temperatures and rainfall in St Lucia, before developing their own graphs by plotting temperatures on a grid. Pupils in Year 3 research the work of a range of artists before using computers to develop their own abstract paintings in the style of Henri Rousseau. In many lessons, work on computers is linked to other areas of the curriculum. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils developed their understanding of reflective symmetry, when designing an Aztec coat as part of their history topic. Pupils in Year 5 develop their literacy skills by word-processing newspaper articles describing aspects of their Roman topic, and pupils in Year 6 develop written opinions about the respective actions of Romeo and Juliet. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were developing a simple database to compare, contrast and interpret information about themselves and in a Year 4 science lesson, pupils used a microscope to facilitate detailed observation and analysis. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are beginning to exchange information and have already established e-mail links with another local school.
127. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. As a result of training, most teachers are becoming increasingly confident in the use of information and communication technology and the marked improvement in resources is having a positive impact on curriculum delivery. Teachers plan effectively and generally set appropriate targets for their pupils. However, the work is not always sufficiently targeted to the needs of all pupils. All pupils have regular weekly lessons in the computer suite when teachers focus on developing computer skills. Pupils enjoy these lessons and work successfully as individuals and in mixed-ability groups and this successfully promotes their social and moral development. A school technician supports teachers

in many lessons and this does much to ensure that lessons run smoothly, particularly when equipment fails to function correctly. Some pupils have very good computer skills and one pupil in Year 2 was able to assist the teacher by suggesting an alternative method of achieving a particular objective. Almost all pupils are highly motivated by the developments in this subject and discuss their work enthusiastically. They work well, both as individuals and in pairs, and this contributes significantly to the development of the good relationships and respect for others that is seen throughout the school.

128. The school has invested heavily in resources in order to ensure that there are regular opportunities for pupils to access computers and this has improved their attainment considerably. However, the computer suite is not well designed. It is too cramped; the carpet areas are too small to accommodate pupils away from the computers and the pillars restrict vision. Indeed, the only inappropriate behaviour seen in information and communication technology lessons was a result of pupils becoming disinterested, because they could not see what was being taught. The school has recently purchased equipment to help prevent this. Although information and communication technology lessons take place in the computer suite, very little use is made of computers in the classrooms and this is an area of the subject that is underdeveloped.
129. Management of the subject is satisfactory overall. Although the subject manager has only been in post for one term, he has completed a thorough subject audit and developed an action plan that includes monitoring of teaching and the development of assessment procedures. The school has used its funding well to furnish the computer suite and resources have improved considerably in the last few years. However, the subject manager recognises the limitations of the computer suite and is anxious to discuss how this could be improved. The school is well aware of its obligations to pupils about safety and security when using the Internet and health and safety procedures are satisfactory.

MUSIC

130. The subject has been without a co-ordinator since September 2002 and no one has had responsibility for monitoring provision. An enthusiastic non-teaching assistant oversees the subject. The school has gone through a period of considerable staffing instability since the previous inspection and music provision has suffered more than many other subjects. Although there has been a strong commitment by the same learning support assistant to keep the subject alive, insufficient progress has been made over time and standards are below average by the time pupils leave the school.
131. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a rich enough experience of music to make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards. In discussion, pupils in Year 2 recalled with great enthusiasm their part in 'The Grumpy Sheep' and remembered a good selection of songs and carols. 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' had really captured their imagination, and they expressed secure opinions about why they liked to listen to particular kinds of music. Music is used very effectively at the beginning of each assembly to consolidate pupils' learning. During the week of the inspection, pupils listened thoughtfully to 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' and 'I Closed My Eyes'. In a lesson in Year 2, pupils interpreted simple musical scores well. Most recognised the difference between high and low sounds and demonstrated an increasing understanding of pitch.
132. In Key Stage 2, the picture is not as positive. A small minority of pupils, who benefit from good quality string, woodwind, brass, keyboard, recorder and percussion tuition make good progress and achieve above average standards. Pupils who participate in the extra-curricular instrumental group display good musicianship. Concerts supplement provision well and provide good opportunities for pupils to perform at a high level. However, the vast majority of pupils do not make enough progress to reach expected standards because music has not featured strongly on some timetables until recently and pupils have not developed skills in any systematic way. The small time allocation for teaching music in Year 6 does not allow pupils sufficient opportunity to gain breadth and depth across the whole music curriculum.
133. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 give greater insight into why standards are below average. Although these pupils recalled their enjoyment of learning songs from 'Captain Noah' in the past, they remembered very little detail about other work. Their overarching knowledge and

understanding was weak. Although they listed a good range of 'Songs From the Shows', they displayed superficial knowledge of aspects, such as composing and appraising.

134. In the small number of lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was equally balanced between satisfactory, good, and very good. The learning support assistant with good musical skills made a strong positive contribution to many of these lessons. The most effective teaching occurred when staff with expertise took other classes for music. In a very good Year 5 lesson on combining instruments to create mood, the teacher worked very successfully with a class other than her own. She promoted musical vocabulary at every opportunity, resources were well organised and pupils developed the performing and composing element of music successfully. By the end of the lesson, pupils were confident in their performance. The theme for the lesson developed literacy skills well. The teacher used the poem 'The Listener', as a starting point, and encouraged good quality discussion and collaboration. However, although there are many good individual examples of teachers developing literacy skills in this way, there is no structured whole-school approach. Similarly, numeracy skills are not developed in any systematic way and information and communication technology does not make a strong contribution to pupils' learning.
135. In lessons where teaching is less effective, teachers demonstrate insecurity with the subject. Even teachers who are skilled practitioners in other subjects, struggle to overcome their lack of confidence. They miss opportunities to establish good routines for playing musical instruments correctly and sometimes give pupils inaccurate information.
136. The school offers pupils an interesting range of musical experiences outside the classroom to enhance their learning. Visiting instrumentalists, such as a steel band, motivate pupils well. Drumming workshops, enjoyed by pupils in Year 6 in the autumn term, have been followed up by further sessions for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Some older pupils have had the opportunity to watch 'Swan Lake' at the Mayflower Theatre in Southampton. Staff and pupils make effective use of the separate music and drama room. There is a good range of familiar, and more unusual, tuned and untuned instruments that is well organised and accessible.
137. Much work remains to be done to raise standards in Key Stage 2. The school is very aware of the urgent need to address this area for improvement. The temporary subject manager has a refreshingly honest approach towards her role and fully accepts the need to improve teachers' subject knowledge if standards are to rise. Currently, class teachers do not have a clear enough understanding of the standards pupils can and should achieve. Although self-evaluation systems are being tried out, assessment procedures are not yet firmly established. No one monitors how well pupils are taught or the progress they make. Consequently, no one has a clear enough overview of standards achieved.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. During the inspection, the majority of physical education lessons observed were in dance and, in this area, the majority of pupils achieved standards that are similar to those expected nationally at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Some pupils achieved above-average standards in dance as a result of good teaching and the high expectations of some teachers. Insufficient lessons were seen for standards to be judged in other areas such as games or gymnastics. However, the majority of pupils reach and often exceed, the national target of swimming 25 metres unaided by the age of eleven. This was confirmed through discussion with teachers and pupils. All pupils are fully involved in lessons. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 talked about their enthusiasm for the subject and pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates.
139. During the inspection, the majority of dance lessons were taught very well and pupils learnt very effectively, making rapid gains in developing their skills and applying very good physical effort. Much of this was due to well-organised lessons that started with an effective warm-up session followed by the main activity. Good examples of this were seen as pupils in Years 1 and 2 devised movements linked to the musical 'Joseph and his Technicolour Dreamcoat'. Likewise, pupils in Year 6 worked in groups to produce good quality dance routines to Madonna's 'Like a Prayer', their routines based on the actions of different Olympic sports. In both of these lessons, the teachers showed good subject knowledge as previous work was successfully built upon and interactions with the pupils, as they worked, encouraged significant physical effort. As the pupils in Years 1 and 2 moved around the school hall, showing high and low 'travelling', a quick observation and

comment by their teacher, 'You are just using your arms', improved the pupils' movements instantly. The teacher for Year 6 linked the lesson warm-up to the pupils' scientific knowledge and in both lessons good opportunities were provided for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others. In this way, pupils' speaking and listening skills were well promoted. In lessons where learning was not so rapid, too much time was spent explaining activities. This limited the pace of lessons and pupils' physical effort, and was a weakness, given that most lessons started very actively. The control and management of pupils and the quality of relationships in lessons was always strong and supported learning overall.

140. The pupils receive a balanced curriculum, based on national guidelines. In Year 2, pupils described gymnastic lessons, where they had performed cartwheels and forward-rolls and had paid special attention to how they had jumped off apparatus and landed. They identified that after they worked very hard their bodies became warmer, hearts beat faster, and they breathed more heavily. They were very aware that muscles could be 'pulled' if they did not warm-up properly. This knowledge develops well as the pupils get older. In the Year 6 dance lesson, some pupils led the 'stretching' session at the start of the lesson and one pupil compared cold muscles with chewing gum before it is used when it easily snaps. The older pupils identified invasion games, such as football, netball and rugby, and described how they had devised their own games during the previous term.
141. The subject contributes well to the pupils' personal development, particularly their social skills. Good examples were observed during the inspection of pupils working together in pairs or larger groups. Pupils in Year 3, for example, replicated the movements of an Irish folk dance, and spontaneously applauded each other's efforts. Group work was less effective in Years 1 and 2 as pupils began to develop their orienteering skills following outdoor trails in the playground, using simple maps and diagrams. This activity would have worked more successfully during a warmer time of the year. Although an original way of introducing the younger pupils to outdoor activities, the severe cold weather at the time of the lesson did not lend itself to the pupils carefully considering the information presented to them, and, consequently, pupils followed their trails in a haphazard manner, rather than working effectively together.
142. The management of the subject is satisfactory. An action plan for is in place and assessment procedures have just started through the school. It is too early to judge the impact of either of these strategies. The manager is currently monitoring teachers' planning and the subject is part of the school's strategic plan later in the year. Swimming records are not available in school and this is a weakness given that this element of physical education is a statutory requirement, and the monitoring of pupils' progress in this area is important. The school takes part in competitive sports, such as football and netball, and these opportunities also contribute successfully to the pupils' social development. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall. There is sufficient equipment for games activities and the resources for gymnastics are just about adequate, although very old and uninspiring. There is sufficient and suitably marked playground space and a good-sized school field for outside activities. The school hall is large enough for gymnastics and dance, in principle, but resources and equipment stored around the edges of the hall severely limit the space available for lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

143. Standards at both key stages meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Teachers throughout the school conscientiously plan according to the curriculum guidelines and pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress from year to year.
144. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils gain reasonable insight into the origins of Christian festivals and begin to appreciate the similarities and differences between Christianity and other worldwide religions such as Hinduism. For example, they are aware that Hindus and Christians have special places of worship and that the followers of both religions light candles as a symbol of their faith. They are given opportunities to explore moral issues such as jealousy and forgiveness by listening to Bible stories such as 'Joseph's Coat of many Colours' and, to this extent, teaching makes a positive contribution to their personal development.
145. Teaching throughout Key Stage 2 broadens pupils' understanding of the diversity of religious faith, both internationally and within their school and local community. They continue to read and listen to stories from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible and to appreciate that all major religions

have reverence for special books. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, are aware that in Judaism children are taught to read from the Torah from an early age. In a good lesson seen in Year 6, the whole class showed clear respect for the ritual associated with the use of the Qur'an in Islam. By the end of the key stage, older pupils in Years 5 and 6 discuss more abstract issues, such as the notion of deity or the significance of bread and wine in Holy Communion, with reasonable confidence.

146. Taking full account of lesson observations, discussions with teachers and with pupils about their previous work, the quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. Teaching in the lessons seen during the inspection was good, overall. Teachers prepare lessons well and create good opportunities for discussion and role play, which make a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. There are also good links with teaching in other subjects. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 learn songs about 'Joseph's Coat', use computer software to create a design of it, and go on to make one in design and technology. Teachers also arrange visits to places of interest, such as the local church and mosque, and invite visitors, including parents of pupils at the school, representing a diverse and interesting range of religious backgrounds, to discuss their beliefs and traditions. Pupils enjoy the range of activities planned for them, and they develop positive attitudes to and appreciation of the cultural and religious diversity in the world around them.
147. There is, currently, a temporary subject manager, who is providing satisfactory leadership by ensuring that teachers have adequate time each week to teach religious education to the required standards. However, despite the good teaching that takes place in many individual lessons, through discussion with pupils, and scrutiny of their previous work, it would appear that there are some gaps in the curriculum. For instance, there are too few resources for some topics, whilst others are not supported by the arrangement of interesting visits or visitors. This accounts for the satisfactory progress throughout the school, which could be better. The lack of permanent management for the subject, which limits the consistent support and guidance for teachers in the planning and organising of work, also prevents some pupils from learning as quickly as they could.