

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **SUN HILL INFANT SCHOOL**

Alresford

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115992

Headteacher: Mrs K Owen Jones

Reporting inspector: Mrs C Skinner  
23169

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> February 2003

Inspection number: 247607

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sun Lane Alresford Hampshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Sun Hill Infant School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Goodman
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

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9691	Jon Vincent	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion, including racial equality	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents.
16760	Dorothy Latham	Team inspector	English, art, music, religious education, special educational needs, English as an additional language.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27644	John Tate	Team inspector	Science, geography, history, physical education, the Foundation Stage curriculum.	

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
 <b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
 <b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
 <b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>13</b>
 <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
 <b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>17</b>
 <b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>18</b>
 <b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
 <b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
 <b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sun Hill Infant School caters for 192 pupils between the ages of four and seven. There are more boys than girls in the school, especially in Year 1 where there are twice as many boys as girls. The school is similar in size to most infant schools. At the time of the inspection, 60 children were attending full-time in the Reception classes. None of the pupils comes from minority ethnic groups and all speak English as their mother tongue. Thirty-nine pupils (20 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs, one of whom has a statement. This is similar to the national average. Most of these pupils have minor to moderate learning difficulties. Three pupils (two per cent) are eligible for free school meals, which is well below average. The turnover of pupils is similar to that seen in most schools: in the previous year, eight pupils joined the school and six left it at times other than those of the usual admission or transfer. Attainment on entry to the school is average. During the past two years, eight teachers left the school and eight were appointed, which is an exceptionally high turnover for this small school.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school with a number of outstanding features. The excellent leadership and management provide clear direction for the school's continuing development and have sustained high standards through a period of significant change and uncertainty. Pupils achieve very well because the quality of teaching is very good and meets their needs very well. The school gives very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and physical education are much higher than those seen in most schools, and standards in all other subjects are above average. This is because the quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is exceptionally well supported in the strategic management of the school by governors and staff.
- The school makes excellent provision for children in the Reception year, which lays a very thorough foundation for their future learning.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is reflected in the pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour and the excellent relationships that exist throughout the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is outstanding and helps them to make very good progress.
- The school works exceptionally well in partnership with parents, who are very supportive and appreciative of all that it provides.

#### **What could be improved**

- As this is a highly effective school, there are no major issues for the school to address. Minor areas for improvement are noted in the pages that follow.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998. Since that time it has made a good improvement in addressing the few key issues for improvement that were identified and has maintained and further strengthened the very high standards that already existed in many aspects of its work. All this has been accomplished despite an almost complete turnover of teachers and a lengthy period during which the school was without a permanent headteacher. There is now a very good programme of work for personal, social and health education, teachers report fully to parents about their children's achievements in all subjects, and there are more effective records of attainment in art, music and religious education. Additionally, pupils now achieve higher standards in mathematics, science, religious education and physical education. The quality of teaching and learning has also improved, and the monitoring of teaching has become more rigorous. Curricular planning is more effective and provision for pupils with special educational needs has also improved. The school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
reading	A	A	A	B	well above average    A above average        B average                C below average        D well below average    E
writing	A	A	B	C	
mathematics	A	A	B	C	

Standards in writing and mathematics, although good, were lower than those in reading in 2002 because fewer pupils reached Level 3 (above average). The school's performance in national tests has been consistently good over the past five years, although standards in writing have declined when compared to the national trend. However, the school has introduced a number of measures to raise standards in writing, which are already beginning to have a positive effect. Inspection findings indicate that standards in the current Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics, science and physical education. Pupils achieve above average standards in all other subjects. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls. Overall, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. The school sets very challenging but realistic targets for pupils to achieve each year, based on thorough knowledge of their capabilities and very high expectations.

Children in the Foundation Stage reach above average standards in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. They achieve very well, and reach very high standards in personal, social and emotional development.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy coming to school. They respond well to teachers, concentrate and work hard. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate very good independent learning skills and their interest and involvement in activities are excellent.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are courteous, thoughtful and polite, both to one another and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils show respect for each other and have a very good understanding of how their actions can affect others. They undertake responsibilities with maturity and show initiative. Excellent relationships underpin the school's warm and friendly atmosphere.
Attendance	Excellent. The attendance rate is very high in comparison with other schools and there is no unauthorised absence.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

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

Very good teaching was seen in every class, and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. In the Reception classes, the teachers and assistants provide pupils with a rich and varied range of experiences and place a very high value on personal, social and emotional development, particularly the development of independence. This provides children with a very good start to their education. The strongest features of the teaching across the school are the outstanding relationships between pupils and adults, which help to establish a positive atmosphere in lessons. This ensures that pupils concentrate very well and gain the maximum benefit from the teaching. Teachers value pupils' ideas and contributions, and build their self-esteem and confidence very well. There is very effective teamwork between teachers and assistants. Teaching assistants are highly valued, well-trained and make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. Work is planned very well to match the capabilities of lower, average and higher attaining pupils in each class and there is excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs. The quality of teaching in English, including literacy, and mathematics, including numeracy, is very good. All teachers have very high expectations of the pupils, and this helps pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding at a very good pace. Pupils are well motivated and show good levels of interest, concentration and independence, because

teachers use a varied range of teaching methods. They also achieve a good balance between imparting knowledge and enabling pupils to learn through enquiry and to work things out for themselves.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is very well planned and offers pupils a wide range of interesting and stimulating opportunities. The curriculum for children in Reception is excellent. There is very good provision for developing literacy and numeracy skills and a very good programme for personal, social and health education. However, there is no structured framework for teaching speaking and listening skills. Although the curriculum is enhanced by many visits, visitors and experiences that provide a valuable extra dimension to school life, there are no regular extracurricular clubs or activities for pupils to attend.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. There are excellent arrangements to support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. Teaching assistants provide specialised support in a range of specific programmes. Pupils' individual education plans are very well organised and used, and include clear and achievable targets for pupils. Very effective monitoring of pupils' progress contributes significantly to their achievement.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils are encouraged to develop an appreciation of, and to wonder at, the natural world during science and art lessons. Excellent provision for their moral and social development is founded on the school's caring ethos and strong sense of community. There is a very good emphasis on the arts and a strong commitment to developing pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. There are excellent standards of care and procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. Very effective procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress through the school contribute significantly to their very good achievement.

The school works exceptionally well in partnership with parents and this has a very positive effect on pupils' learning.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key	Excellent. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is very well supported by key staff in the strategic management of the school. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has created

staff	a very strong team spirit and a dynamic ethos.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. The governors are highly effective in their role and fulfil their statutory duties very well. They make a very good contribution to shaping the future direction of the school and have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. There are rigorous systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Staff and governors work closely together to evaluate the school's performance and to identify key priorities for improvement, both in the short term and over a five-year period. The school's procedures for appraisal and performance management are exemplary and contribute significantly to its highly effective management.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Financial management and administration are very efficient and effective. There is rigorous monitoring of expenditure, which is linked closely to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The school applies its understanding of obtaining best value for money very well.

The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is very good.

#### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils' behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and led.</li> <li>• The school works closely with them and they feel comfortable approaching staff with questions or problems.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the parents' very positive views of the school, and also agrees that the provision of extracurricular activities is an area for improvement. The school already has plans in place to address this.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is in line with national averages. As a result of very good teaching, children achieve very well, and, by the end of the Reception year, exceed the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Children achieve very good standards in their personal, social and emotional development because there is a very strong emphasis on promoting independent learning, and on teaching children to work and play co-operatively. Very good teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills prepares children very well for the National Curriculum, while the varied and interesting curriculum provided for them enriches their knowledge of the world around them and encourages creativity and curiosity. Very good provision for children's physical development, both in dance and gymnastics lessons and in everyday activities in the classroom and outdoor area ensures that children improve their manual dexterity, co-ordination and control.

2. In the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2002, the pupils' results were well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics when compared to all schools. In comparison with similar schools, standards were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. The results in writing and mathematics were lower than those achieved in the previous four years. However, records show that these pupils made good progress during their time in school, when their attainment on entry is taken into account. The findings of this inspection show that standards in the current Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has identified raising standards in writing as its chief priority, and evidence from the lessons seen and the pupils' work shows that the strategies being used are having a positive effect. Standards in mathematics are high because the National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented very well and pupils are being taught to use a wide range of strategies for mental calculations. Compared to the findings of the previous inspection, standards are similar in English and higher in mathematics. The school has set its own very challenging targets for pupils to achieve in 2003 and is on course to achieve these.

3. In science in Year 2, teachers' assessments in 2002 showed that standards were well above average. These high standards are reflected in the findings of this inspection. Throughout the school, there is a strong emphasis on teaching experimental and investigative science and a good balance between investigations, acquiring knowledge and recording findings. This has contributed well to the rise in standards since the previous inspection. In Year 2, standards are also well above average in physical education. This is because the school attaches great importance to this area of the pupils' development and devotes a higher than average amount of time to teaching it. It is also taught very well. Pupils achieve good standards in art, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and religious education. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection in all subjects except religious education, where they are higher. This is because of improvements in teaching, curricular planning and assessment procedures.

4. Overall pupils achieve very well in Years 1 and 2 because they are given sufficiently demanding work and are encouraged to think and work things out for themselves. There is a strong emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' thinking skills and independent learning.

Teachers are also very aware of the different needs of pupils and the way they learn, and this helps them to plan work that matches pupils' need and aptitudes. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls because teachers are alert to the need to ensure that all pupils are motivated by and interested in all aspects of the curriculum and take this into account when planning lessons. Higher attaining pupils achieve very well because they find the work stimulating and interesting and are very well motivated.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and reach good standards for their previous attainment. This is particularly notable in literacy and numeracy, and is due to the excellent provision made to support them in their learning. Almost all reach standards in line with national expectations by the time they take the assessment tests in Year 2. Much of this very good progress can be attributed to the teachers' and assistants' very good knowledge and understanding of their pupils. Pupils have clear targets to help them improve, and these are reviewed regularly. The school has developed very effective systems for tracking pupils' progress in English and mathematics.

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

6. Pupils' attitudes, responses to learning and behaviour are very good and these standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy coming to school. They settle quickly and enjoy their lessons, respond well to teachers, concentrate and work hard. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent and are consistently underpinned by the caring, family atmosphere which is consistently promoted by all adults who work in the school. Pupils show respect for each other and for school property. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate very good independent learning skills and their interest and involvement in activities is excellent. Pupils collaborate and co-operate willingly with their teachers and each other. They have a very good understanding of how their actions can affect others. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes towards learning and respond well to teachers and assistants. Boys and girls have equally positive attitudes, even in those classes where there is a noticeable gender imbalance.

7. Behaviour in and around the school is very good and parents appreciate the high standards promoted by the school. At three whole school assemblies attended by members of the inspection team, pupils demonstrated exemplary behaviour. Pupils are courteous, thoughtful and polite, both to one another and to adults. A pleasant, quiet and friendly atmosphere is present throughout the whole school and voices are only raised when it becomes a necessary part of a lesson. No bullying or oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and there have been no exclusions during the last year.

8. Pupils' personal development is excellent and is constantly fostered by the school. This trend has been maintained since the last inspection. In group tasks, pupils help and encourage each other when necessary without prompting and are keen to acknowledge each other's successes. All members of staff take every advantage of furthering pupils' personal development. Routine tasks are carried out with quiet efficiency and self-discipline and contribute very well to the smooth running of the school.

9. Pupils use their initiative when they spot a need. One example noted during a lesson was when music started in a nearby classroom and a pupil quietly checked with the teacher and then closed the door of her classroom to prevent any disturbance to the lesson. Pupils of all ages take pride in volunteering for and carrying out various tasks and take their responsibilities very seriously.

10. Reception children display very positive attitudes towards learning as soon as they enter school. They listen attentively, concentrate for long periods of time and conduct themselves in a very responsible and mature way. Their behaviour is very good indeed. They play together happily and co-operate well in the classroom. Relationships between children, teachers and assistants are excellent.

11. Pupils' attendance is excellent. Lessons start promptly, registers are completed correctly and there has been no unauthorised absence in the past year. This reinforces the parents' view that their children like school.

12. Overall, pupils' attitudes, values and personal development continue to be a significant strength of the school.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

13. The previous inspection found that the quality of teaching and learning was good. The findings of this inspection are that the quality of teaching and learning is very good. The percentage of very good lessons observed has increased from 43 per cent in the last inspection to 78 per cent. Of the 41 lessons seen during this inspection, one was satisfactory, eight were good, 27 were very good and five were excellent. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. This has been achieved despite a very high turnover of teachers. The strongest features of the teaching across the school are the outstanding relationships between pupils and adults, which help to establish a very pleasant atmosphere in lessons. This ensures that pupils concentrate very well and gain the maximum benefit from the teaching. Teachers value pupils' ideas and contributions, and build their self-esteem and confidence very well. All lessons are very well paced and teachers make very good use of a broad range of interesting resources to make learning enjoyable for the pupils. As a result, pupils are very well motivated and apply considerable effort to their work.

14. One of the key factors in the very good teaching throughout the school is the teamwork between teachers and assistants. Teaching assistants are highly valued and well-trained. They make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning, and are involved productively in planning with teachers, observing and assessing pupils' progress and working very effectively with small groups of pupils in lessons. Most assistants have specialist knowledge about particular aspects of learning, which they share with colleagues to enrich the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

15. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. One of the eleven lessons observed during the inspection was excellent, nine were very good and one was satisfactory. Particular strengths include the cohesive planning, which is supported by very effective methods of assessing children's work, and the emphasis placed on the development of thinking skills. Effective teaching of basic skills and knowledge ensures that children acquire these in a logical progression. Teachers achieve a very good balance between structured, whole class activities and those which children are able to choose for themselves. There are excellent opportunities for children to learn through enquiry, discussion and play. The teachers and assistants know the children very well as individuals and are skilled at developing warm and constructive relationships. Well-organised routines enable the children to become used to the pattern of the day and to respond quickly to the adults' high expectations of behaviour, attentiveness and following instructions. The very good teamwork between the teachers and the teaching assistants is a strength of the teaching in the Foundation Stage.

16. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is also very good. Of the 30 lessons observed, eight were good, 18 were very good and four were excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in English, mathematics, science, religious education, information and communication technology, art, music and physical education. It is good in design and technology, geography and history. The quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of all subjects and use a wide range of interesting and appropriate teaching methods and resources. This ensures that pupils are very well motivated, concentrate carefully and progress at a very good pace. The marked emphasis on developing thinking skills is particularly effective and teachers are very skilful at asking questions that challenge and extend pupils' thinking. As a result, pupils develop high levels of independence and have a very good knowledge of their own learning. This is further enhanced by the setting of individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics. Teachers and pupils refer continually to these targets to focus attention on them and ensure that pupils know exactly what they are working towards.

17. Marking and day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress are very good and are used very well to influence teachers' planning. Marking is constructive and helpful and teachers discuss pupils' work with them to show them what they have done well and how they could improve it. Teachers set challenging targets for pupils to achieve and regularly assess how well they are progressing, giving praise and encouragement which helps to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Homework is also used effectively to support and reinforce learning. This is mostly reading, spelling and number work, but sometimes extends to finding information about particular topics in other subjects. Parents are given very helpful information to enable them to support their children's learning at home.

18. All of the mathematics lessons observed showed how well teachers are developing pupils' thinking skills. In the first part of the lesson, all extended pupils' mental strategies very well through skilful questioning, and matched that and subsequent group activities very well to different pupils' levels of attainment. The school is addressing the main priority in its improvement plan very effectively through teaching a range of writing skills both in daily literacy lessons and in a weekly extended writing session. Some excellent teaching was seen in these latter lessons, as teachers taught pupils in groups formed on the basis of their previous attainment and used many effective strategies to improve their writing skills. A significant factor in the excellent teaching was the way all teachers fully integrated thinking, speaking, listening, reading and writing into a coherent approach, which helped pupils to formulate their ideas clearly before attempting to commit them to paper.

19. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good teaching. In literacy and numeracy particularly, support in groups based on prior attainment and in special tutor groups is excellent, and is provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator and well-trained teaching assistants. Diagnostic assessment is carried out at the end of the Reception year to identify pupils needing special help, and a variety of specific programmes are matched to pupils' individual needs. Pupils with special educational needs learn very well and make very good progress under this caring and expertly organised system of support.

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

20. Overall, the quality and range of the curriculum provided by the school are very good, and promote the aims of the school very well. This curriculum includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education and personal, social and health education. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and offers pupils a very good range of opportunities. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects, and each receives an

appropriate amount of teaching time. There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection: science has improved, personal and social education has been added to the curriculum, and the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have both been successfully implemented and are now very well established. These have been well resourced and are having a good impact on maintaining and raising standards throughout the school.

21. Yearly and termly or half-termly planning is very good and provides for the coverage of all National Curriculum subjects, religious education, and personal, social and health education. Weekly plans are detailed and focus very clearly on key objectives that groups of pupils are to learn. The headteacher and subject managers monitor the planning of the curriculum carefully. However, there is no framework to guide teachers in planning activities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.

22. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and the lack of a structured programme identified in the previous inspection report has been fully addressed. Health and sex education and the use and misuse of medicines and drugs are taught as part of personal, social and health education, and through the science curriculum, in ways appropriate for the age of the pupils in the school. Other lessons are devoted to a consideration of particular issues. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson about stereotyping, many very good analogies were used to enable pupils to understand that age, gender and colour do not make people the same but might make them similar. In a whole school assembly, where the theme was the recycling of rubbish, pupils were made very aware of the social benefits of collecting and recycling all types of waste. On display were several containers with contents ranging from plastic bags, unused foreign currency and one large box full of shredded paper. After an interesting discussion about how these unwanted items could be recycled, the pupils were fascinated to learn that the shredded paper from the school office was to be used as bedding for an asthmatic horse, which is allergic to straw.

23. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are excellent. The school's innovative approach combines opportunities for children to learn independently through enquiry and play with more structured activities that prepare them very well for the next stage of their education. All areas of learning are planned for very effectively and activities are devised that match the children's different interests, aptitudes and capabilities.

24. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent, and is another area where there has been improvement since the last inspection. There are excellent arrangements to support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy, where the special educational needs co-ordinator and teaching assistants work with individual pupils or small groups. Teaching assistants have specialised in a range of specific support programmes. Through these, they are able to provide extremely effective, carefully implemented programmes to help pupils. Extra literacy support groups and setting are also part of the school's strategies for making sure that pupils receive teaching appropriate to their individual capabilities. Individual education plans are very well organised and used, and include clear and achievable targets for pupils. These focus on literacy, numeracy and behaviour, and many education plans also include targets for personal and social development. These form part of the provision of very focused support and effective monitoring of individual progress, which is having a very positive effect on pupils' achievement. The needs of a pupil requiring regular support are very well met, and annual reviews provide a good focus for further support and achievement. Traveller children also receive very good support.

25. The aims of the school show a very strong commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils and this is reflected well in all aspects of school life. The school compares how well boys and girls perform in different subjects, and pays good attention to the learning needs of both boys and girls. The

excellent provision for those with special educational needs and those from Traveller backgrounds ensures that they have appropriate access to all aspects of the curriculum and other activities and events arranged by the school. The school also makes very good provision for the most able pupils and ensures their needs are met. Teaching assistants are trained to support the most able pupils across all year groups. The school's commitment to the inclusion of all pupils is reinforced by formal policies on equal opportunities and racial equality. The school offers good access to pupils in wheelchairs and disabled toilet facilities are provided.

26. The school provides many activities and events that enrich the experience of pupils. These include visits to places of interest, visiting theatre groups, and a wide range of visitors to school who demonstrate arts and crafts or present concerts and musical workshops. There are strong links with local churches, and opportunities for pupils to participate in exciting projects, such as the photography of the local town for the historical society, the sundial project in Jubilee year and the newly completed outdoor large-scale weaving of the sunset and sunrise representations. However, while these activities provide a valuable extra dimension to school life, there are at present no regular extracurricular clubs or activities for pupils to attend. A significant number of parents would like to see more activities of this nature. The school is aware of this lack, and plans are already afoot to amend this situation.

27. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is excellent and this high standard has been maintained and improved still further since the last inspection. The school is adept at taking advantage of all the skills and talents available within the local community and, as a result, is becoming the focus for community events. Visits from several local artists have resulted in ongoing school initiatives. A local weaver has been instrumental in teaching pupils how to weave and these efforts have culminated in the sunrise feature in the playground and imaginative and colourful displays in the school. A professional potter helped pupils create clay sun tiles and these decorate an outside wall of the school. A sculptor worked with pupils to create, design and build the Golden Jubilee sundial. Local organisations and business contributed funds and sponsored 'hours' around the sundial. The unveiling took place during the Golden Jubilee celebrations and was celebrated not only by the school and the surrounding community but was also featured on local television. Not only is the sundial a permanent reminder of the Queen's Golden Jubilee but plans have been made for its educational use and inclusion in the school's curricular planning. Other regular visitors include the vicar of the parish church who leads enthralling and very entertaining whole school assemblies. There are visits from the fire brigade, police and other agencies. Local musicians, including violinists, flautists and accordionists explain how their instruments are made and enable pupils to hear live, classical music. All these close links add variety to and greatly enhance pupils' learning.

28. Relationships with partner institutions are excellent. The school is a member of the 'Seven Alresford Schools' partnership, which includes the local secondary school and other primary schools. It results in close contact and smooth transfer of pupils. The proximity of the junior school ensures regular communication and also results in many joint enterprises. The two schools also share resources. The school has regular contact with the pre-school nurseries and playgroups which children attend before coming to the school.

29. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development and their cultural development is very good, while that for their moral and social development is excellent. This is an improvement on the situation reported in the last inspection. The provision for spiritual development is enhanced through religious education, where pupils learn about Christianity and Judaism, and in very good assemblies. Pupils conduct themselves reverently during the calm atmosphere of assemblies, enjoy listening to well-chosen music, and take

part in prayers and reflections. Pupils are encouraged to develop an appreciation of, and to wonder at, the natural world. Pupils gasped with amazement while looking at bubbles floating across the span of the overhead projector.

30. The excellent provision for moral development is founded on the very high expectations that all adults have of pupils. All members of staff provide excellent role models for the pupils and are extremely consistent in the way they show respect for both pupils and other adults. Encouragement and on-the-spot counselling are given to engender the same respect between pupils. The school has a very positive approach to the management of behaviour. Classes have made their own sets of rules, which are displayed prominently in each room, and pupils adhere to these very well indeed. Rewards, such as special badges, accompanied by teachers' and the headteacher's praise, are successful in building pupils' self-esteem and their consideration for others. Members of staff make pupils aware of what is acceptable and help them to develop an idea of what is right and wrong. Pupils have a clear idea of this, appropriate to their ages. Their behaviour is very good and they display the ability to co-operate with one another very well indeed.

31. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' social development. It successfully creates a very strong sense of identity as a very caring community in which everyone is respected and supported. Pupils are given many opportunities to work and play together, and like to help one another. They care for their own school environment, and they sometimes take part in events within the local community. They participate with enthusiasm in whole school projects, like the sundial project, the sunrise and sunset outdoor weavings, and the memory tree weaving. Pupils and teachers choose a national and a local charity each year to support. The chosen local charity raises pupils' awareness of social needs within their own community.

32. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Although the school rightly values its place in the local community, it draws also on many examples from a variety of cultural traditions and helps pupils to begin to appreciate the ethnic and cultural diversity of modern Britain. The very good provision for art and music in the school enhances pupils' cultural awareness and knowledge. They study the work of famous artists such as Monet, Kandinsky and Van Gogh, and there are attractive displays of Indian and Chinese textile. Pupils enjoy Indian dancing and music, and contrast mediaeval plainchant with the richness of Beethoven's music. There are also opportunities through the curriculum to learn something of the cultural and faith traditions of Britain's multicultural population. In some classes recently, pupils have experienced a Jewish Passover meal, and have learned about the symbolic meanings of some of its features in terms of Jewish history. All pupils derive great benefit from taking part in school productions and concerts, such as *Baboushka*.

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

33. The school looks after its pupils extremely well. Procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are excellent and have improved since the last inspection. The caring culture promoted by every staff member ensures pupils' wellbeing. This, together with the family atmosphere of the school, creates a secure environment where learning can flourish. Teachers and other staff know their pupils very well and are familiar with their background and circumstances. Support and guidance for pupils are very good.

34. The school has a suitable child protection policy with the headteacher as the nominated child protection officer. The detailed knowledge staff have of their pupils ensures child protection matters are very carefully monitored. In addition to one staff member being fully qualified in first aid many

others have received training in emergency first aid. The school has very good procedures for monitoring attendance and registers are kept in accordance with statutory requirements. There is a very comprehensive health and safety policy supported by a useful list of emergency procedures

35. The school's behaviour policies continue to promote very good standards of behaviour, which were recognised at the last inspection. Based on acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and using sanctions as a last resort, the policy is observed and understood by all pupils. This, coupled with the examples set by staff, ensures pupils meet and enjoy the high standards of behaviour expected from them.

36. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are very good, both on a formal and informal basis. Pupils' academic targets are set termly and discussed with parents. Pupils' personal development is a priority of the school and starts from the child's first day at school. Pupils are constantly encouraged to become independent and think for themselves. Their personal development is reported to parents both informally and in the pupils' annual reports. Reception children benefit from being in a happy and caring environment in which they feel valued and secure. These factors protect children against early failure and low self-esteem. Classroom assistants support the children very well, monitoring progress in all aspects of work and play.

37. The school cares exceptionally well for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are drawn up for each pupil, and regular evaluations and assessments are made to adapt and change learning targets as necessary. The special educational needs co-ordinator also liaises with external agencies of special expertise as and when needed in response to the needs of individual pupils.

38. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress were found to be very good at the time of the last inspection. The findings of this inspection are similar. The school has continued to refine and improve aspects of the assessment process in line with current recommendations and good practice, and has successfully addressed the weaknesses in art, music and religious education. The main framework for assessing pupils' attainment and progress remains intact. At the beginning of the first term after entry, children are assessed using the Local Education Authority's baseline procedures designed for children of this age. This information provides the school with initial data for each child. From this starting point, the school has devised methods of assessment and target setting for children in Reception which are now well established and very effective. Daily assessments of progress are made by all the staff, including the classroom assistants, and the information gained is fed directly into the planning process.

39. On entry to Key Stage 1, key assessments become tighter and more objective. Test data are collected at specific times during the two years and are used effectively to check pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics. Following the example set in Reception, all methods of assessment, both formal and informal, are linked directly into the planning process. Teachers keep individual profiles of pupils' work and this is regularly moderated against national standards of attainment in all subjects. Tracking procedures have been developed, again with particular emphasis on English, mathematics and science, which show where children are at a particular time, their immediate targets for improvement and how they are going to achieve them. The systems used for assessing progress in other subjects are not generally as sophisticated, but nevertheless provide adequate information to enable teachers to plan further work effectively and to judge whether pupils have made sufficient progress or not. All this information is used to provide parents with an accurate picture of how well their children are achieving, not only at the end of the academic year but in-

between times as well.

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

40. The school works very well in partnership with parents as at the time of the previous inspection. The school fosters very strong parental support and in return receives a great deal of assistance from parents. Parents view the school as very good. They appreciate the genuine 'open door' policy and take advantage of this to talk regularly to staff on an informal basis. Parents, grandparents and other members of the local community help the school in many different ways. They assist with reading, running the library and other tasks. The Friends of Sun Hill raise funds for various projects and help the school in other practical ways.

41. The quality of information provided for parents is excellent. Communication between home and school is also excellent. There are regular newsletters, very informative annual reports to parents and updates on their child's curricular targets every term. This is in addition to the more formal consultation meetings and is a good example of the thorough way the school approaches its reporting responsibilities. The school prospectus is very informative. This and the annual governors' report to parents now fulfil statutory requirements and give both prospective and existing parents a complete picture of the school. The home/school agreement is in place and there is a useful reading 'log' book that is appreciated and well used by parents in supporting their children's learning at home. Parents confirm that they are well informed and kept up to date with the various school activities, both academic and social.

42. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is excellent. Parents feel that the school is family orientated and their support for the school is very strong. During the inspection many parents were in school helping with various activities. A walk to recognize local geographical features involved the help of eight parents who not only ensured the safety of pupils and endured the rain but also carried out duties as individual group leaders. Without this willingness to help this lesson could not have taken place. This pattern was repeated the very next day with a different set of parents and a different class – but this time in fair weather. This very strong parental support and involvement combined with the efforts of the Friends of the School greatly enhance pupils' learning opportunities.

43. There are very positive links between the school and the parents of children in the Reception class. Teachers give good guidance to parents to ensure that they know how to help children learn and the school benefits from the large number of parents who help in the classroom on a regular basis. Parental support for reading is strong and helpful.

44. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed at all stages, and discussions often take place between school and home even before the identification of special educational needs is made. Teachers discuss pupils' individual education plans with their parents, who are kept well informed of their children's progress.

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

45. The leadership and management of the school are excellent, as at the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher was appointed in May 2000, following a period of uncertainty for the school as a result of the long term absence of the former headteacher. There has also been a very high level of staff turnover in the past two years. However, the headteacher's outstanding leadership, and the excellent support she has received from governors and senior staff alike, have enabled the

school not only to maintain high standards but also to implement a number of changes and improvements. The headteacher has managed change constructively at an appropriate pace in order to improve the school without placing undue stress on staff. This has included the introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and Curriculum 2000. Additionally, all of the outstanding issues from the previous inspection have been addressed very effectively. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has communicated this very well to staff, governors, parents and pupils, securing the commitment of all who work in the school. This has helped to create a very strong team spirit and a dynamic ethos. The school is very well placed to continue to improve and has an excellent capacity to succeed.

46. The delegation of responsibilities within the school is highly effective. The leadership team has a very good overview of standards and the curriculum and works effectively to analyse the school's performance and identify priorities for improvement. Teachers who have responsibility for one or more subjects are influential in bringing about changes in practice to raise standards. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Co-ordinators who are relatively new to the post show a good understanding of their role. There are very good systems in place to develop these roles further. Subject leaders are given time to carry out their management responsibilities, which include observing lessons, checking pupils' work and teachers' planning and ensuring that resources and paperwork are up-to-date.

47. The quality of leadership in the Foundation Stage is excellent. The co-ordinator is very experienced and has a clear vision of the way forward. She is well supported by enthusiastic and competent colleagues. Teachers and assistants work as a very effective team in a bright, stimulating environment. The teaching space is organised to meet the needs of all the children with a secure outdoor area in which children can explore and develop their large motor skills.

48. The special educational needs co-ordinator organises and manages the support for pupils with special educational needs exceptionally well. She manages teaching assistants efficiently and organises their training, liaises with teachers and parents, and is in touch with relevant specialist external agencies.

49. The governors are highly effective in their role and fulfil their statutory duties very well. They make a very effective contribution to shaping the future direction of the school. During a period of great uncertainty for the school, they have been a solid and stabilising influence, and have shown considerable discernment in making appropriate appointments, as has the headteacher. They are kept very well informed by the headteacher, and fulfil their role as a critical friend very effectively. They have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work closely with the headteacher and staff to address identified areas for improvement. Governors fully understand the implications of their monitoring role and carry it out very well. Several visit the school regularly and most have oversight of a particular subject. They meet with teachers to discuss the pupils' work, curricular planning and any improvements that are needed.

50. There are rigorous systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher observes lessons regularly and subject managers check pupils' work and teachers' planning in order to gain a good overview of standards and the quality of provision. Staff and governors work closely together to evaluate the school's performance and to identify key priorities for improvement, both in the short term and over a five-year period. For example, detailed analysis of the results of national tests has led to a specific focus on improving the standard of pupils' writing and thinking skills. The school improvement plan and subject

action plans identify clearly what needs to be done to raise standards and bring about improvement in the school's provision. The plan also includes timescales, costs of implementing the improvements and criteria for judging their success, which, where appropriate, are measurable in terms of pupils' attainment.

51. The school's procedures for appraisal and performance management are exemplary and contribute significantly to its highly effective management. The headteacher's and teachers' objectives are firmly linked to the targets that are set for individual pupils and for the whole school. They also form an integral part of the measurable targets in the school improvement plan. There are also very good procedures for the management and appraisal of teaching assistants and other support staff. As a result, all staff feel valued and well supported. Appraisal procedures for all staff help to identify appropriate priorities and opportunities for continuing professional development. Consequently, staff training is well planned and directed towards specific areas of development. The coherence of all these management strategies is a key factor in their effectiveness. There are excellent induction procedures for new staff which provide high levels of support and have contributed significantly to building a strong team after a period of turbulence.

52. The school's management of its resources is excellent. Financial management and administration are very efficient. The headteacher, administrative officer and finance committee monitor all expenditure rigorously. They regularly undertake budget reviews to ensure that the school is achieving best value for money. The headteacher, staff and governors evaluate the school's performance in comparison with other similar schools and assess the effectiveness of spending by reviewing its impact on standards and the curriculum. Spending decisions are fully discussed and alternatives considered, and the school ensures that competitive quotes are obtained for major items of expenditure. Extensive consultation takes place prior to any large expenditure, through governors' committees, and with staff and parents. Subject leaders have responsibility for their own budget, and the priorities identified in subject action plans inform budget allocations each year.

53. A very good example of efficient financial management is the way the school has managed its resources to cope with a 'bulge year', which has created three classes in one year group. Financial reserves have been maintained at a sufficient level to meet the additional costs of another class teacher and all necessary resources. The school has maintained a budget surplus of approximately six or seven per cent of its income to ensure that all additional costs would be met. Expenditure plans show that this will be reduced to around five per cent of budget in the next financial year.

54. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is very good. The support staff are very well trained and have a significant impact on pupils' learning. Newly qualified teachers have a detailed support programme and all staff understand each other's roles and work very well together as a cohesive team.

55. The accommodation is very good. Classrooms are well planned and organised and enhanced by attractive and colourful displays, which create a stimulating environment for learning. A quiet room and library and additional shared accommodation are put to good use. Outside, the clay 'sun' tiles and the sunrise weaving display complement a well equipped hard play area. Children under five benefit from a large and secure outside play area accessible from their classrooms. The 'science garden' is at present being developed as a useful learning resource. There is a large playing field, shared with the neighbouring junior school. The site is kept extremely clean and tidy.

56. The school has a good range of resources for learning. These are very good in information and communication technology, mathematics and the Foundation Stage.

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

57. This is a very effective school, which is firmly committed to ongoing improvement and self-evaluation. As a result, there are no major issues for the school to address. The following minor issues have been identified by the inspection team as areas for improvement:

1. The range of extracurricular activities that are provided for pupils.

(Paragraph 26)

2. The formulation of a coherent framework for developing pupils' speaking and listening skills throughout the school.

(Paragraphs 21, 81)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

41

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

36

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	27	8	1	0	0	0
Percentage	12	66	20	2	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 two percentage points.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

YR – Y2

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

192

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

3

#### **Special educational needs**

YR – Y2

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

1

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

39

#### **English as an additional language**

No of  
pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

No of  
pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

8

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

6

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	2.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	28	33	61

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	26	26
	Girls	32	32	32
	Total	56	58	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (98)	95 (98)	95 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	27	27
	Girls	32	33	33
	Total	58	60	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (100)	98 (100)	98 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

***Ethnic background of pupils*****Exclusions in the last school year**

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	189	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	27

**Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	424355
Total expenditure	437162
Expenditure per pupil	2376
Balance brought forward from previous year	38495
Balance carried forward to next year	25688

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	192
Number of questionnaires returned	97

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	31	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	39	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	30	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	45	5	3	2
The teaching is good.	70	26	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	39	6	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	20	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	31	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	69	29	1	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	75	22	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	29	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	31	18	15	14

## **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**

58. The excellent provision for children in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school, as at the time of the last inspection. Children benefit from being in a happy, calm, caring and very purposeful working environment. The school admits children into the Reception classes in September. There are currently 60 children attending. Positive links have been established with the parents through daily contact and a good induction programme prior to the children coming to school. Children are soon settled and get used to school routines. When children enter Reception they show a broad range of abilities, with average overall attainment in all areas of development. Children make very good progress, due to very good teaching and learning. As a result of this they achieve very well. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are such that children have many opportunities to make choices about their activities and become very independent. Children develop skills progressively throughout the Foundation Stage.

59. High standards of achievement have been maintained and even improved upon since the last inspection. High quality teaching ensures that children achieve, and often exceed, the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. More able pupils work consistently within Level 1 of the National Curriculum in all areas of learning. Children with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and given very good support to help them overcome any difficulties.

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

60. Children's personal and social development is given a very high priority and is taught very effectively. The children make excellent progress, resulting in a far higher number of children achieving and exceeding the Early Learning Goals than is normally expected. Achievement is especially good relating to the development of thinking skills, in concentration and independence. The very good relationships between adults and children are a very strong feature, as at the time of the last inspection. This helps children to develop very positive attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Opportunities for children to think about and plan activities for themselves are very well planned; this results in growing independence. A good example of this occurs each morning as the children enter the classroom. Prior to taking the register, children 'sign in', locating their names on Velcro cards and transferring these onto a class list. The Reception classrooms are a shared teaching area and children from both classes then refer to a central display which indicates where each child is going to spend the first session. The children organise themselves accordingly at the appropriate time. The planning, organisation and management of this process is excellent. Time is used to its fullest extent and all the adults working with small groups focus their attention on and carefully monitor the progress of each individual. The quality of record keeping is very impressive, enabling both teachers to track children's progress towards individual targets for learning in a precise manner.

61. Teachers work very well in partnership with well trained and enthusiastic assistants, which enables them not only to plan a wide range of activities, but also to provide adult help to very small groups of children. All adults treat the children and each other with respect and this helps to create trusting and caring relationships. Very good opportunities exist for the children to play together, with construction equipment and in the role-play area or alternatively to work independently. This was

illustrated well in the art area, where children organised themselves and the equipment before painting a picture of Cinderella. They thought about what they wanted to do, prepared the paint and paper and set to work without any reference to the teacher at all. On completion, the area was tidied up and left as it was found. This same encouragement of independence is seen when children change for physical education, most children managing with the minimum of help. A high priority is given to role-play as part of children's social and emotional development. Adults are sufficiently skilled in knowing how and when to intervene in children's play. During the inspection, the role-play area had been turned into Cinderella's home and a group of children were re-enacting the story. The assistant carefully examined thoughts and feelings about Cinderella and her unhappy life, allowing the children to express themselves and think about less fortunate people.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

62. Attainment is average when children start school. They make good progress and achieve well. A higher than average number of children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. The teachers have effectively introduced the National Literacy Strategy. More able children work within the early stages of the National Curriculum. Children speak clearly and with confidence. They listen very well and respond to stories and discussions with interest, often asking relevant questions. Teachers and assistants ask relevant and challenging questions. Moreover, there is a very strong emphasis on widening the children's vocabulary and frequent opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills in imaginative and creative ways. With such an emphasis placed on developing thinking skills, children are frequently asked to explain themselves, developing a broad and varied vocabulary in the process.

63. Children are quickly introduced to books and become familiar with a wide range of stories and rhymes. Planning shows good development of phonic skills. Pupils demonstrate confidence in using picture clues to tell stories. Teachers make good use of big books for shared whole class reading. Children read simple texts with good understanding and accuracy. They quickly learn how to handle books which are generally of good quality. They use their knowledge of phonics to write simple words and clearly have the idea that there should be spaces between words. More able children are beginning to write linked sentences, as illustrated in the shared writing activity describing the dress which Cinderella might wear. In another example, children were presented with a parcel for Cinderella which contained something to help her with the housework. A discussion of what might be in the parcel produced some imaginative ideas, including "A magic Hoover what does all the cleaning for you". Children then had the task of writing to Cinderella to explain what was in the parcel and this they did with enthusiasm. This was a well integrated lesson which incorporated reading, writing and thinking skills very effectively.

64. The teaching of writing shows good planning and high expectations for different ability groups. Children are encouraged to write for a good range of imaginative and factual purposes. Progress in developing knowledge about sounds and letter names is good and is regularly assessed. A cursive style of writing is introduced from the very beginning and is practised regularly. Good progress is made in developing pencil control.

### **Mathematical development**

65. Children enter Reception with broadly average understanding of numbers, counting, shapes and measurement. Progress and achievement are good in both classes, largely as a result of the sound planning, which is shared, and the input of well trained and competent classroom assistants. This helps

children achieve above average standards by the end of the Reception year. Children develop their skills in adding and subtraction, becoming confident at handling numbers in a practical way. Mathematical language is developing very well indeed. The samples of work confirm a good level of challenge for all children, including those with special educational needs.

66. The quality of teaching and learning is never less than good and is often very good or excellent. An example of this featured a logic trail in the secure outdoor area, where children followed the instructions to locate blue circles, red squares, green rectangles and so on. In the classroom, a variety of activities enables children to reinforce their understanding of numbers up to ten. For example children match and count beads on to a string in a sequence. In one lesson, children learned how to count 'one more' by using a large model train travelling round a circuit and adding a new 'passenger' each time it passed the station. In this example, the teaching assistant brought the whole process to life in a very dramatic way with predictably good results. Overall, the planning is very good, enabling children to think and learn for themselves in addition to the more structured activities. As at the time of the last inspection, the purpose of the activities is made clear to children and discussed with them again at the end of each session. This enables them to develop a good understanding of their own learning.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

67. Children achieve very well in this area of learning and reach above average standards. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Work is well planned so that children can develop a growing understanding about their own lives as well as different cultures and lifestyles. It is also clear that the children are encouraged to look at the world around them and are given good opportunities to explore the immediate area. During the inspection, they were taken on a walk to observe local features, in particular doors and doorknobs! Teachers developed the children's understanding of geographical vocabulary and encouraged them to look at something with a more perceptive eye and reason out why, for example, some houses had a porch whilst others did not. The variety of letterboxes was also something which generated discussion. Parental support for this mini-excursion was excellent and the teachers made sure they were all well briefed to enable the children to gain maximum benefit.

68. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning and teachers give children a very good foundation in computer skills and control technology. Small groups working with a programmable toy robot quickly understood the basic commands and could type in simple instructions. A climbing frame construction program provided a good level of challenge for children who had to build a structure using a colour code as the key. This activity demanded a fair degree of concentration which was evident whenever children were at work. Children use construction apparatus with growing confidence as they build spaceships with intricate attachments and subsequently devise games and adventures. Part of the classroom had been developed as a place in which to find out about the five senses. Supervised by a teaching assistant, small groups discussed these and tried to imagine, for example, what it would be like being unable to see. They used a 'feely box' to sharpen their sense of touch and describe what a particular object might be.

### **Physical development**

69. Children make very good progress and achieve very well. By the end of the Reception year they reach above average standards in this area of learning. Furthermore, the high quality plans for physical development show that the development of thinking skills, so fundamental to the overall

programme, is evident in this work as well. This has led to an innovative and exciting approach.

70. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Hand and eye co-ordination skills are developed through a wide range of activities, which allow children to use different tools and experiment with malleable materials, such as clay. Pupils make very good progress in learning how to manipulate pencils, crayons, small tools and construction equipment. There are opportunities to develop a good range of skills in the outside play areas, including riding bikes, controlling vehicles and developing balance and agility on climbing apparatus. In the hall, children are adept at putting the apparatus up and using it safely. During the inspection, they were completing a circuit, using the apparatus as directed, but were also required to count through a sequence of rolls and stretches in-between each activity. This was very demanding but most children were able to follow the instructions closely whilst also using and leaving the apparatus as taught. The range of resources for physical development is good.

### **Creative development**

71. Pupils achieve very well in creative development and reach above average standards by the end of the Reception year. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have good plans that help children to grow in confidence and try many new things. Many opportunities to develop children's knowledge and skills in music are provided in the daily programme of work, suitable background music is played throughout the day, and children are introduced to a good variety of instruments. Music is also used as a vehicle for imaginative work, as seen in a lesson when children were encouraged to create a print using music as the stimulus for their ideas. Developing thinking skills is also a feature of the creative arts programme. The children devised a repetitive chant, adding a beat to match the rhythm of the words. Long and short sounds were introduced and eventually percussion instruments as an accompaniment. This work presented the children with a significant challenge which they responded to very well indeed.

72. Role-play is very well organised to develop children's imagination and wider language and social skills; this is another strength of creative development. The home of Cinderella was a popular place to be during the inspection and all the children enjoyed acting the story out and discussing what they would do in a home like that. Painting is of a good standard and children mix colours and select paintbrushes for themselves without difficulty. The development of children's imagination in painting is good, with strong links to language skills. For example, two children were painting Cinderella and could describe the colour of her hair, its style, and the sort of dress she was wearing. The maturity of the children was very noticeable in this aspect of Foundation Stage. They always behaved well, concentrating hard for fairly long periods of time. They enjoyed themselves and were very proud of their work.

### **ENGLISH**

73. Provision for learning in English is very good. Children join the school with average literacy skills, and by the time they move from the Reception year into Year 1, they achieve good standards. In Year 2, standards in English are very good overall and are well above the national average. In the last inspection, standards in Year 2 were also reported as being well above average, but with an almost complete change of staff in the intervening period, the school has done very well to maintain these high standards. Pupils achieve very well, including those with special educational needs. Although girls sometimes make better progress than boys, differences are usually small and no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls were noted during the inspection.

74. In Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are good, and are particularly well developed for thinking and reasoning. Pupils listen carefully and speak confidently for their age. They generally speak clearly, and offer ideas and relevant information in well-formed sentences, and take a keen interest in stories, rhymes and poetry. Good opportunities to promote adventurous vocabulary and expand pupils' imaginations support the development of language skills for communication. In Year 2, pupils suggested a good variety of interesting verbs to replace the words "went" and "said", in order to make texts more exciting. In Year 1, pupils responded very well to pictures and sounds of wolves, and to feeling what a wolf's fur might be like, when choosing adjectives for the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*.

75. Standards in reading in Year 2 are well above average. Pupils read confidently and accurately from texts that are matched well to their capabilities. Their learning of phonic skills is very sound, and most are able to use these to help them when faced with unfamiliar words. Many pupils read fluently and with good expression, responding appropriately to different punctuation marks. They understand what they read, and can talk about the text. However, only a few were able to predict what might happen next or name a favourite book or author. Pupils take reading books home every day together with their new logbooks for parents to mark. These provide an effective channel of communication between teachers and parents since they detail ways of supporting pupils' reading and their individual targets. Pupils enjoy the opportunities for shared reading and studying texts in the literacy hour and are able to transfer some simple skills from this reading to their writing.

76. Standards in writing are also now well above average. Pupils are aware that a story has a structure, and have also experienced a good range of different purposes for writing. They write clear instructions, for instance, and use imaginative vocabulary in their stories. The more able use an increasing range of vocabulary effectively. For example, they used lively verbs in their writing in a lesson about a farmer and his runaway goats such as 'boasted', 'snorted', 'grumbled', 'exhausted'. Pupils are also beginning to use some more complex sentence structures in their work, and are already extending their use of punctuation, including speech marks. Less able pupils generally use simpler sentences, but are able to join them effectively, and are able to use full stops and capital letters in their sentences.

77. Joined handwriting is taught from Reception onwards, and pupils generally form words carefully and appropriately. However, some pupils are not quick to develop a fluent hand, and sometimes their slow speed of writing tends to impede the flow of ideas. In spelling, pupils are not afraid to use new and exciting words, even if they cannot spell them quite correctly, and make good attempts that move their learning forward. Pupils use information and communication technology well for word-processing their writing, and for editing texts to improve them. They have also made and "published" their own books, and proudly enjoy reading them to listeners.

78. Standards in literacy are the same as those found in English and literacy skills are used very well across the curriculum, for example, as in some Year 2 written assignments for assessment in religious education. In art, sketchbooks are used appropriately for making notes as well as for drawing, designing and sketching. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy was delayed until 2000, but it has now become very well established and is making a significant impact on pupils' learning.

79. The quality of teaching and learning in the subject is very good in Years 1 and 2. Throughout the school, teachers' calm, efficient manner and very good organisation mean that pupils are well

aware of routines and procedures, and settle quickly and cheerfully to activities so that no time for learning is lost. Planning is consistently excellent in literacy, with very clear objectives. Carefully chosen tasks are matched very well to pupils' different capabilities to ensure success. The deployment of assistants in English lessons is also excellent. Many teaching assistants have specialist training to support pupils with different needs in appropriate ways. Dividing classes into different groupings for certain aspects of teaching makes this all the more effective. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the English programme for this age group, teach basic skills very well, and have high but realistic expectations of their pupils.

80. The quality and use of ongoing assessment are excellent. Teachers note pupils' needs from one lesson to the next, ensuring that revision and reinforcement in learning are sufficiently effective. Data from assessments carried out by the school, and from the annual national tests, are carefully analysed to check progress, and there is careful tracking of individual pupils' progress. The marking of pupils' work is helpful, and shows pupils clearly what they need to do in order to progress. Teachers use questioning techniques skilfully to promote recall, thinking and reasoning, and they model handwriting, spelling, reading and writing processes very well for their pupils. They also select imaginative texts and activities that appeal to pupils, thus ensuring high levels of motivation. Pupils are introduced to a good range of purposes for writing for their age.

81. The curriculum in English is broad and balanced, and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum very well. The National Literacy Strategy is now firmly embedded in the school's practice and is being tailored effectively to meet its changing needs. It is supplemented by the Early Literacy and other additional programmes that support different aspects of literacy. Although there is a good subject policy, the school lacks a separate structured framework for the development of speaking and listening skills, with accompanying assessment points for monitoring progress. Standards in speaking and listening are good, and there are frequent opportunities to promote them within the literacy programme. The subject contributes very well to the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through the stories and poetry presented to pupils, and which encourage reflection on the lives of others.

82. The English manager co-ordinates the subject very well throughout the school, and has a very good grasp of the development needed. Targets detailed in the subject action plan are appropriate and have already brought about improvement. Overall targets for the school's yearly achievement are set with progress in mind, but are also realistic. The subject manager and the headteacher observe teaching, examine planning, and sample pupils' work on a regular basis. Pupils all have specific targets for their own work, which are regularly reviewed and changed as they achieve them, and most pupils know what these are and refer to them frequently. Teachers often refer to these targets in lessons, encouraging pupils to focus on the next steps they need to make progress.

83. Resources in the subject are very good. Appropriate ranges of fiction are in the classroom book corners, and pupils borrow from these daily so that they can share a book at home, as well as use their general reading books. The library is pleasant, with adequate space for the size of the school, including tables to work at, and the books are well organised, using appropriate systems. It is generally well stocked with attractive books. Activities and events enrich the subject, such as Book Weeks, visiting authors and theatre groups, and drama productions, including the last Christmas show put on by the school, entitled *Baboushka*.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. Standards are well above average in Year 2. Pupils achieve very well in numeracy, and in the other areas of the mathematics curriculum. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be above average. It is also an improvement on the results of the national tests in 2002, which were above average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because work is planned to match their capabilities and to build effectively on previous learning. These pupils also receive very good support from teachers and assistants in lessons, which enables them to make very good progress. All of the pupils in Year 2 are on course to reach Level 2 (average standards) and approximately half are working to achieve Level 3 (above average) by the end of the year. The higher attaining pupils are given very challenging work which extends their thinking and encourages them to apply existing knowledge to a variety of new situations.

85. Year 2 pupils apply and extend their problem solving skills as they learn how to add up costs and give change when shopping. They add and subtract tens and units competently and higher attaining pupils put three digit numbers in the correct order. Pupils recognise shapes such as a triangle, a pentagon and a hexagon and describe the properties of three-dimensional shapes. They measure parts of the body in centimetres and understand the basics of telling the time. Throughout the school, pupils are very good at using a range of strategies for mental calculation because these are taught very well. For example, in the lessons seen, pupils in Year 2 added 9, 19, 29 and 39 to a given number by adding the nearest 10 and adjusting by one. In these lessons, the teachers' very skilful questioning and clear explanations helped pupils to understand the concept and apply it in their own work. Carefully planned tasks for different groups within the class ensured a good level of challenge for all pupils. There was very good support from teaching assistant and parent helpers, who were very well briefed and had a thorough understanding of the topic.

86. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, with some that is excellent. High standards of teaching have been maintained since the last inspection, but teachers have also now implemented the National Numeracy Strategy very successfully. In particular, the development of pupils' ability to understand and use a wide range of mental strategies is very effective and is a key factor in achieving high standards of attainment. This was illustrated in an outstanding Year 1 lesson, in which pupils first learned to count on and back in tens from any given number up to 100 and were then presented with a number of subtraction sums, which they had to check for accuracy. The teacher immediately captured pupils' interest as she told them that the big bad wolf had crept in during the night and changed all the answers around, so that some sums were correct and some were wrong. Pupils had to use all the strategies they knew to work out and check the correct answers. Pupils' grasp of mathematical concepts and vocabulary was excellent as they suggested ways to check the answers: 'You could try counting back' and 'You could use an unstructured number line'.

87. In Year 1, pupils count accurately in tens and subtract one number from another by counting back, using a number line and using a 100 square. They find objects that are longer or shorter than a piece of string and recognise different shapes. They use a very good range of mathematical vocabulary and are developing very good thinking and reasoning skills.

88. The excellent relationships between teachers, assistants and pupils help to create a very positive atmosphere in all lessons. Teachers' excellent knowledge of the subject and their ability to motivate pupils ensure that pupils acquire knowledge and skills at a very good pace and that they enjoy learning. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher began with a game, in which two teams of pupils competed to add and subtract ten from a given number. The excitement mounted as pupils watched their team's progress to see which would be first to reach the target. Another very good feature of the teaching is the teachers' ongoing assessment and marking of pupils' work. This is very thorough and teachers use the information gained to ensure that the next steps in learning are

carefully planned. All pupils have individual targets which teachers often refer to in lessons. Pupils automatically check their targets before beginning work. This helps them to have a very good understanding of their own learning and what they need to do to improve.

89. Numeracy skills are applied well across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 collect information about 'minibeasts' and record it in the form of a graph. Teachers take every opportunity to reinforce pupils' counting skills, as when taking the register and finding the total of pupils absent and present. Similarly, the recognition of shapes and pattern is reinforced through other subjects, such as art and geography.

90. The headteacher provides very effective leadership in the subject. There is rigorous analysis of the school's performance in national tests and thorough evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. Both of these have contributed significantly to raising standards. Assessment and target setting procedures are very good and there is very careful tracking of individual pupils' progress throughout their time in school. The subject is resourced very well, which ensures that all pupils have an interesting range of materials to use to support learning. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to extend pupils' understanding in mathematics. Above all, the subject meets the school's aims very well, particularly in providing 'exciting and interesting learning experiences', developing independent thinking and giving pupils confidence and enthusiasm. Pupils are inspired by the enthusiasm of teachers and assistants to become young mathematicians and to take great delight in learning and using new skills.

## **SCIENCE**

91. Standards in Year 2 are well above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection and on the results of teachers' assessments in 2002. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because work is planned to match their capabilities and they are given very good support in lessons. Pupils achieve very well in the subject.

92. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 1 and 2. There is a very good emphasis on experimental and investigative science, with many valuable opportunities for pupils to learn through enquiry. In a very good Year 1 lesson, for example, the pupils were finding out about magnetism. The teacher first of all reinforced and confirmed their understanding of investigation and prediction through a well planned discussion. There was a positive and prompt response from the pupils. The task involved predicting which of the articles in a group were magnetic and which were not. The teacher used a key as an example and an immediate gasp of wonder set the tone for the rest of the lesson. Small groups worked with a selection of objects to test their predictions and helped to establish that metal objects are attracted to magnets. An analysis of pupils' work in Year 1 shows that pupils have a very good understanding of the properties of various materials in relation to floating and sinking. The process of prediction, setting a fair test, running it and evaluating the results have been well taught.

93. Pupils in Year 2 have a very good understanding of electrical circuits. They used this knowledge very effectively in tandem with their work in design and technology, where they designed and made robots. The pupils incorporated an electrical circuit into the head of their robot which caused the eyes to light up and twirled the nose. In the lessons observed in Year 2, pupils used and extended their understanding of electrical circuits, this time linked to their history topic about Grace Darling. Pupils constructed parallel circuits to light Grace's room and the lighthouse itself. Skilful

questioning by the teacher confirmed a clear understanding of the difference between series and parallel circuits and this was checked during the subsequent practical work. Almost all the pupils were able to distinguish between the two types of circuit and explain why a series circuit would be unsuitable for the task. Lessons are well planned and pupils are given suitably demanding work, which helps them to progress at a good pace.

94. Pupils make effective use of information and communication technology to support learning. For example, they used a computer program to record the results of an experiment on forces and create graphs to present information about 'minibeasts'. During the inspection some pupils used a computer program to draw electrical circuits. Teachers provide pupils with a broad range of experiences to increase their knowledge and understanding of life and living processes and materials.

95. The science curriculum is supported by a good policy and scheme of work. The scheme of work was developed with the assistance of an external adviser. It meets the needs of the pupils and reflects the stated aim of the school to approach science through investigation and experimentation, placing emphasis on the development of thinking skills. The established assessment procedures enable teachers to monitor the progress of individuals closely, providing opportunities to take all pupils forward, regardless of ability. The subject co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about the subject and provides good leadership. The monitoring of standards of teaching and learning is good and is an area of ongoing development. There is a good range of resources to support teaching and learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

96. Provision for art and design is very good and the subject enjoys a high profile in the school. Standards in Year 2 are above average, as at the time of the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well in the subject. They make good progress in developing skills and in their appreciation of art as they move through the school. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls.

97. The quality of teaching and learning in the subject is very good, and this again has been maintained since the previous inspection. Improvements since the last inspection include a new and very detailed scheme of work, which provides a good balance between the practical and knowledge strands of the subject, and a good balance between two-dimensional and three-dimensional work, which were not sufficiently in evidence before. Also, there is now appropriate guidance for teachers on a new system of assessment in the subject. Planning is very good: it is detailed, and includes assessment and evaluation points. Teachers use ongoing informal assessment well. This supports very well the development of pupils' skills and knowledge.

98. There is very good teaching of basic skills and techniques in drawing, painting, colour mixing and the use of malleable materials such as clay, printing, collage and textile work. Pupils study the work of many famous artists, including Monet, Kandinsky, Hepworth, and Van Gogh. Art and craft traditions from cultures around the world are also introduced, as illustrated in a very attractive display of textiles from India and China which show a variety of different ways of colouring and patterning cloth. Sketch books are used well throughout the school and provide another means of evaluating pupils' progress.

99. Pupils in Year 1 build on their early experiences through the interesting and exciting opportunities planned to inform and motivate them. At present, pupils in this year group are concentrating on weaving aided by a visiting weaver as well as their teachers,. They use their own

designs and notes, accompanied by samples of the selected colours and materials, to work collaboratively in pairs on producing their own woven product. Both notes and designs show a clear understanding of the process, and of the need for selection to achieve a patterned effect. Pupils are also helping to produce some exciting weavings using different looms, grids and even a bicycle wheel. Wools, threads and fabrics for the weaving come in a stimulating variety of colours, patterns and textures, and some pupils are bringing special pieces from home that have special meanings or memories for them personally to add into the designs.

100. Year 2 work shows greater maturity in the use of line and shape, and an increasing awareness of detail in drawing. The observational drawing done by these pupils is very good for their age. Pupils have designed imaginary machinery, giving captions or titles to reflect the purposes of their machines. They have used detailed drawing and sometimes paper collage as well to give clear representations of their creations. Year 2 pupils have also explored colour mixing, making hues, tints and shades, and know how to make colours lighter and darker. Using pastels, they have produced some very attractive and sensitive still life compositions of flowers and candles, with a good awareness of differences in texture. They have also used a computer program to produce Christmas card designs in colour, one of which won a county competition.

101. As well as the use of computer programs for designing and making pictures, pupils find information about famous artists and their work on appropriate Internet websites, and from a variety of books from the school library. Resources in the subject are good. The subject manager has a very imaginative approach to its development. She has only recently begun to develop the subject, having previously focused on the development of the music curriculum, but her influence is already beginning to permeate the art and design programme. She surveys planning in the subject, has a very good overview of what is achieved, and has already carried out some monitoring of lessons, although this is not yet systematic. The subject is further enhanced by the visits of a sculptor, who helped with the Jubilee sundial project, a weaver and other artists. Pupils worked closely with the sculptor to create a huge sundial in the school grounds, and also contributed to an impressive sunburst mural of clay tiles on the outside front wall of the school. More recently, the woven “murals” on the school fences, made of plastic bags in shades of yellow, orange, red and purple depict both sunrise and sunset. These projects have produced work that is both visually exciting and impressive.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

102. Standards in design and technology are above average in Year 2. Pupils make good progress in the subject and achieve well in Years 1 and 2. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because work is matched well to their capabilities and they receive good support in lessons from teachers and assistants.

103. It was not possible to observe any lessons in design and technology during this inspection due to timetabling arrangements. However, the work completed by pupils earlier in the year, discussions with pupils and an examination of teachers’ planning show that the quality of teaching is at least good in Years 1 and 2, with some very good features. Teachers’ planning clearly shows what is to be taught and learned and there is very good teaching of the skills needed to create a high quality finished product. Teachers lead pupils carefully through each stage of the designing and making processes to create a well finished product. Pupils are also taught to evaluate their work critically with a view to finding ways to improve it. This well structured approach helps pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills at a good pace and to develop a good understanding of their own learning. A strong feature of

the teaching is that each project includes opportunities to develop specific skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 practise sewing techniques when they make puppets.

104. Year 2 pupils had recently designed and made robots. After discussing ideas with a partner, they created designs, and drew sketches, labelling the different parts to show what resources they would use to make their robot. The teacher provided opportunities for pupils to investigate joining techniques, giving them a selection of materials to try out, such as sellotape, staples, split pins and paper clips. After exploring different methods, pupils selected the one they would use and identified how they would join the pieces of their robot together. In a good link with science, pupils incorporated an electrical circuit and a motor in their models. One pupil explained with pride how his robot's eyes flashed and its nose spun round. Very good teaching of finishing techniques was evident in the quality of the final product, which pupils proudly photographed with a digital camera.

105. The subject has received good leadership since the last inspection, and is now being overseen by year group leaders pending the appointment of a new subject manager. A very good curricular framework provides clear guidance for teachers and ensures that skills and knowledge are taught in progression from year to year. There is good ongoing assessment and recording of pupils' progress throughout the school. The subject is well resourced and teachers make effective use of information and communication technology to support learning.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

106. The findings of this inspection are based on discussions with pupils and teachers, analysis of past work, and planning documents. No lessons were observed due to timetabling arrangements. Indications are that above average standards are achieved in Year 2, a judgement which is similar to that made by the previous inspection. Pupils achieve well in the subject and pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are supported well in lessons.

107. The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some aspects that are very good. The programme of study in geography is based on first-hand experience and a general understanding of the environment, particularly round the school and nearby Alresford. Pupils in Year 1 create simple routes on a map, using clues to find their way around, starting on the school campus and gradually extending elsewhere. The use of information and communication technology is evident at this stage in the form of a programmable toy robot, which reinforces understanding of distance and direction. Visits to Alresford, Winchester and Marwell Zoo enhance the practical nature of the subject and introduce pupils to places of importance and the flora and fauna from other countries.

108. The study of islands, in particular St. Lucia, forms the basis of geography for Year 2. The teachers present this work in an exciting and innovative way by taking the pupils on an imaginary trip to the island. Beforehand, pupils are introduced to the geographical features and climate of the area and find out about its industry and the lives of the people who live there. Teachers then dramatise the work by making passports and taking the pupils through a 'flight' to St. Lucia, using the hall as the cabin of an aeroplane, complete with in-flight movie about the island. Discussions with pupils showed that this approach was very successful in motivating and inspiring them to learn more. Recall of the event, and more particularly of the geography of St. Lucia, was sharp and clear and they had obviously enjoyed the experience very much.

109. Good use is made of information and communication technology in Year 2. Pupils follow Ocean Racing on the Internet. The progress of particular yachts has been plotted on a daily basis and

mapping skills developed and improved for all pupils. This work has also enhanced pupils' knowledge of climate change and weather in different parts of the world. Visits by specialists, for example a Round the World yachtsman and a former resident of a Scottish isle, all help to bring geography to life and make the learning experience meaningful. The teaching of specific skills such as observing, recording and communicating ideas, follows a good progression through Years 1 and 2 and there is evidence that pupils' knowledge of their immediate area has been well developed. Pupils also make use of a broad geographical vocabulary.

110. The recently appointed subject manager is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject. There are planned opportunities to monitor standards of teaching and learning and to check teachers' planning and pupils' work. A sound policy and scheme of work support the subject and enable teachers to plan work to ensure continuity from year to year and progression in the teaching of knowledge and skills. Good assessment procedures are in place and the subject is adequately resourced.

## **HISTORY**

111. Indications are that the above average standards recorded by the previous inspection have been maintained. Lesson observations in Year 2, supported by an analysis of work, discussions with teachers and pupils and an examination of planning documents, all confirm that the full programme of study is taught effectively. All pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In Year 2, pupils were finding out about Grace Darling. A visitor, in period dress, described the event for which Grace Darling is remembered to the pupils. This was very realistic and captured the full attention of the class. As the lesson progressed it became clear that pupils had been well prepared. They posed questions to 'Grace Darling' and good speaking and listening skills were apparent during this part of the lesson. Subsequently, the teacher illustrated how difficult it is to build an accurate picture of something which happened so long ago. In the parallel class, pupils recorded Grace Darling's experience in a sequence of events. The work was particularly well planned, enabling pupils of all abilities to experience a worthwhile challenge. Skills acquired in English were also reinforced and the teacher used drama effectively to establish a good understanding of Grace Darling's place in history. Finally, the work had a scientific link when pupils were asked to devise a lighting system for Grace Darling's room, and the lighthouse, in their science lesson.

113. Teachers also make good use of the surrounding area to enhance pupils' knowledge of local history. Pupils learn about Alresford Fair, an ancient celebration, and produce detailed observational drawings of old buildings in the area. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the Great Fire of London. Their recall of where and why the fire started is impressive and they are fully aware of the importance of Samuel Pepys and his diaries as a reliable source of information. Teachers create good links with other subject areas, in particular English for creative and descriptive writing and various techniques in art. Pupils use the Internet to find information about Grace Darling and other topics when appropriate, but the use of CD-ROMs as a resource is under-developed.

114. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator is well organised and knowledgeable. There is a clear vision for the development of the subject supported by a sound policy and a coherent scheme of work, which is based on national guidelines and adapted to include the wealth of history in the area. Good assessment procedures are in place and these enable teachers to build on pupils' previous

learning effectively. The monitoring of standards of teaching and learning in history is developing soundly. Opportunities to bring history to life are numerous, including visits to Winchester, Buckler's Hard, the Weald and Downland Museum and, of course, Alresford itself. In addition to artefacts and resources collected by the school, particular displays and materials are provided by the Local Education Authority. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly in respect of the valuable insight it provides into pupils' own heritage.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

115. Standards are above average in Year 2. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in the subject in Years 1 and 2. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. There is a strong emphasis on teaching specific skills and using information and communication technology in other subjects to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they have plenty of opportunity to use computers and other equipment and receive good support from teachers and assistants. Higher attaining pupils are given challenging tasks to carry out independently and often help less able pupils to understand how to operate a new program.

116. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 1 and 2. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers are confident in the subject and make very good use of both the computer 'pods' in the shared areas and the computers in classrooms to teach new skills and allow pupils to explore different programs. Work is planned very well to provide opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and skills in their work across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 1 use the Internet to find out about synagogues as part of their religious education topic, while Year 2 pupils search websites to find information about St Lucia and the Isle of Wight in geography. Teachers provide pupils with a broad range of opportunities in all aspects of the subject, which enable them to acquire knowledge and skills at a good pace and in appropriate progression. Pupils in Year 2 have good word processing skills. In a literacy lesson, they edited a piece of text, eliminating words that did not make sense, inserting punctuation marks and using bold text for emphasis. Pupils use the keyboard and mouse competently to highlight text, change the size, colour and style of font and use a variety of features to draw and 'paint' pictures. Pupils enter data about 'minibeasts' on to the computer and create simple graphs.

117. Pupils' good understanding of control technology was seen in a very good Year 1 lesson. The teacher built effectively on pupils' previous learning and increased their knowledge and skills in programming a toy robot to follow a route. She made learning more interesting for the pupils by setting the task in the context of the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*. This held their interest very well as they worked out how to avoid the big bad wolf and the dark wood by programming turns and counting how many squares to travel in each direction. The teaching was very good because the teacher encouraged the pupils to think carefully, work out each stage of the route and record it using symbols and numbers on individual whiteboards. Pupils were able to take turns in entering instructions on the robot and all watched breathlessly to see if it followed their chosen route correctly. There were well planned opportunities for pupils to extend and consolidate learning by working in small groups to create their own sequence of commands for the robot to follow. Higher attaining pupils were expected to use all four directional arrows and enter several commands, while those at an earlier stage of learning devised a more simple sequence.

118. The recently appointed co-ordinator provides very good leadership and has a clear view of the priorities for improvement in the subject. The policy and scheme of work offer helpful guidance for all staff and are kept under review as teachers evaluate the effectiveness of each term's units of work.

Good assessment procedures are in place and the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development as they learn to co-operate on shared tasks and find out about the uses and importance of information and communication technology in society. The school has made a significant investment in computer equipment and software and the school is very well resourced. This ensures that all pupils have plenty of opportunities to increase their competence in using a range of computer programs, and to use other equipment such as a digital camera.

## MUSIC

119. The school makes very good provision for music. Standards in Year 2 are above average, as at the time of the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. They make good progress in improving their musical skills and appreciation as they move through the school. There are no significant differences in attainment between girls and boys.

120. The quality of teaching and learning in the subject is very good, an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was good. Further improvements in the subject include the establishment of a whole school approach to assessment, and the integration of information and communication technology within the subject. Also, although the scheme of work for music was previously described as extremely comprehensive, this has now been re-written and updated. It provides a framework for the subject that is detailed in its guidance for teachers and shows a good balance between making music and appreciating it. Planning is very good, detailed, and includes assessment and evaluation points, and this develops very well pupils' skills and knowledge. Teachers use ongoing informal evaluation and assessment well, and pupils' performed compositions are taped for assessment purposes.

121. There is very good teaching of musical elements such as timbre, duration, dynamics, beat, rhythm and tempo within activities that are made interesting for pupils to enjoy. As a result, they learn very well and develop a good understanding of the concepts they have tackled. Musical appreciation is also taught very well, not just in terms of listening and responding to music, but in a more analytical way by comparing different pieces. For example, through listening to a wide range of music in assemblies, pupils have increased their knowledge and understanding of musical styles and structures from mediaeval to modern times. Year 2 pupils were able to compare some aspects of mediaeval plainchant with the symphonic music of Beethoven, while most admitted that their own preferences were for a variety of styles of modern music.

122. In Year 1, pupils continue to build on the good start they have had in the Reception year. In a lesson on the duration of sounds, pupils enjoyed making long and short sounds on instruments, and discovered for themselves, with excitement, that continuing vibration creates long sounds whereas, in making short sounds, the vibration is stopped. This discovery was discussed and re-explored at length, ensuring that all pupils understood the idea, and could use it effectively. Pupils play instruments properly and take care of them appropriately. In Year 2, pupils have a good grasp of the concept of dynamics, and even of crescendo and diminuendo, and can explain these features. They also contrast a rhythmic pattern with the pulse of a steady beat, and, again, explain the difference. Pupils all enjoy making music, and listening to it, and display great enthusiasm for the subject. They have a good sense of rhythm, but, while they enjoy singing, their sense of pitch is not yet well developed, and the volume of singing when together as a community lacks fullness. Pupils are taught how to record their ideas for simple compositions using informal graphic notation, with symbols made up by themselves, so that they can practise and reproduce their ideas for performance.

123. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning. Pupils use a simple composition program and search Internet websites for information on the works and lives of famous composers. The school has a wide repertoire of music in different styles and traditions for pupils to listen to and other resources in the subject are good. The subject manager provides inspiration and stimulation through the new scheme of work and her enthusiastic approach to the subject. She has a good overview of what has been achieved, examines teachers' planning and has already carried out some monitoring of lessons, although this is not systematic. The subject is further enriched by visiting musicians who perform for the pupils and conduct music workshops, including members of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, violinists, a flautist, a pianist and an accordion player. Pupils have also enjoyed learning about Indian music and dancing, and have taken part in a music day at the local secondary school. School festival times also incorporate music making, and the musical Christmas show *Baboushka* included singing and dancing, with all pupils taking part. The subject contributes very well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development through the wide experience of music and its appeal to the senses and emotions.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. Standards were above average at the time of the last inspection. The findings of this inspection are that standards have now improved and are well above average. Pupils experience the three elements of dance, gymnastics and games, developing their skills and enjoyment to a high level. They achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make very good progress.

125. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the lessons observed, pupils were well motivated, changed independently and did not waste time. On entering the hall, they listened carefully to instructions and were made aware of safety issues. Pupils completed a brisk warm-up before commencing the main activity. When in use, apparatus was set up efficiently and returned in the same way. Teachers develop independence very effectively and have very high expectations of the pupils. This was illustrated in a very good Year 2 lesson, where pupils were rehearsing a group dance by following their own dance score. The movements were based on either machines or robots. In a previous lesson, pupils had worked in pairs but for this one the pairs came together as a larger group of four. There was a significant level of challenge in this activity. The score for each pair required them to memorise a series of movements, all choreographed to music. Each pair then had to mirror the sequence created by their partners and attempt to synchronise it. In a gymnastics lesson, pupils travelled from one piece of apparatus to another, practising movement across it and jumping off in a controlled manner. The pace of the lesson was very good indeed, the pupils concentrated throughout and their behaviour was excellent.

126. In Year 1, pupils were interpreting a piece of music from *Carnival of Animals*. Taking the parts of animals such as mice, lizards and horses, pupils were encouraged to think carefully about the rhythm, pace and pitch of the melody whilst moving around and between each other in the hall. The activity allowed pupils to express themselves imaginatively, using different parts of their bodies to represent the movements of the animals. Once again, pupils behaved very well indeed, listening to the teacher and following the instructions closely. Video footage of a recent performance of *Baboushka* shows that pupils achieve very high standards in dance, and that they respond very sensitively to music when interpreting it to tell a story.

127. Lessons are well planned with clear progression in the development of skills. Teachers make

good use of pupils for demonstration purposes and the brisk pace of lessons ensures that pupils are constantly engaged in physical activity with sustained effort. Learning is developed very well by extending the level of challenge. Assessment profiles are maintained by the teachers and it is not unusual to see pupils refer to their notes and scores during and after the lessons.

128. The physical education co-ordinator is a skilled and experienced practitioner. The subject is seen as being a particularly important component of the curriculum and is given an allowance of time which reflects this. Throughout the programme of study, there is a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to think and plan their activities in the same way as in other subjects. The subject is supported by a good policy and scheme of work, adapted to meet the needs of the pupils and complement the overall curriculum. Resources in the subject are good and it makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

129. Provision for this subject, which makes a valuable contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, is very good. Standards exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were in line with expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in the subject. They make good progress in understanding relevant concepts, in learning stories that are part of the religious education programme, and in their appreciation of the spiritual dimension of life. There are no significant differences in attainment between girls and boys.

130. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, an improvement since the last inspection when it was found to be good. Further improvements to the subject since the last inspection have been the introduction of a structured whole school approach to assessment, and an updating of the scheme of work, which reflects appropriately the local authority's recommended syllabus for religious education. Planning is very good, and includes assessment and evaluation points, which help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. Teachers use informal ongoing assessment well, and also ask questions skilfully to promote recall and thinking, as well as to check pupils' understanding. They also use stories, pictures, and artefacts to illustrate the information to be imparted, making lessons interesting and so motivating pupils to learn. While the main emphasis is on learning about the Christian tradition, pupils also develop a good understanding of the Jewish faith and traditions. Teachers also make effective links with other subjects, such as when pupils combine learning in science with a celebration of harvest-time.

131. In Year 1, pupils build on their experiences of religious festivals and their meanings. In a recent series of lessons, pupils have been studying the Jewish festival of the Passover and its historical origins, as well as the symbols and practices which characterise its celebration today in Jewish families. They shared a Passover meal, discussed the items of food, and examined a number of artefacts associated with the celebration, as well as hearing relevant stories and looking at illustrations that depicted the occasion. In a lesson following this experience, they were able to talk about celebrations that were meaningful in their own lives, when the sharing of food and other festivities took place. In this way, the teacher made learning meaningful and relevant for the pupils.

132. In a lesson about the story of healing of the paralysed man in the Bible, pupils understood a number of spiritual and moral issues, such as the sympathy and kindness of the man's friends in taking him to Jesus, and how he must have felt to be made better. Their understanding was much enhanced

by the opportunity for role-play provided by the teacher, when, in small groups, they acted out the story after hearing it told. Such active learning methods aid recall, and promote good achievement.

133. There is a good action plan to bring about improvements in the subject, and these include increasing the use of information and communication technology, although pupils already use computers to draw pictures and find information from the Internet. The subject leader has a very good grasp of the appropriate syllabus, and a very good overview of how it is taught throughout the school. She examines colleagues' planning, observes lessons and samples pupils' work. A portfolio of work is being established to aid teachers' judgments when evaluating work. Enrichment activities and events include celebrations of festivals such as harvest, Easter and Christmas-time, and in particular the school's Christmas musical show *Baboushka*. The school also has strong links with local churches and sometimes pupils make visits to them, as well as local clergy coming to school to speak to pupils.