

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **POULNER JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Poulner, Ringwood

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115999

Headteacher: Roger Bonfield

Reporting inspector: Michael J Cahill  
19623

Dates of inspection: 6 – 9 May 2003

Inspection number: 247609

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	North Poulner Road Poulner Ringwood
Postcode:	BH24 3LA
Telephone number:	01425 474590
Fax number:	01425 476791
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Addis
Date of previous inspection:	8 December 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19623	Michael Cahill	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12682	Jim Griffin	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
22958	Terry Bailess	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music Educational inclusion	
32287	Mary Clennett	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Art Physical education Special educational needs	
22685	Natalie Moss	Team inspector	Geography History French Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Poulner Junior School provides education for children aged from 7 to 11 years. It is situated just north of Ringwood in an area of mainly owner-occupied homes; the school is popular and full. About nine per cent of pupils claim free school meals, which is below the national average. Overall, attainment on entry is above the national average. There are twelve classes, three in each of Years 3 to 6. With 340 children on roll (187 boys and 153 girls) the school is larger than average. Most children are of white UK heritage and there are no children whose mother tongue is other than English. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs is close to the national average while the proportion with full statements is below the national average. Pupils' special educational needs include physical, emotional and behavioural as well as learning. The school has also identified a number of children whose ability is significantly above average in one or more areas of learning.

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

Poulner Junior is a very effective school in which children make good progress, achieve above average standards and develop excellent attitudes towards learning. The school's results in the national tests for 2002 were well above the average for similar schools nationally. The overall quality of teaching is high and the school provides a very good range and quality of opportunities for children to learn. Children behave very well. Leadership and management are excellent and the school gives very good value for money.

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

- Attainment in English, geography, history and physical education is well above the national expectation; in most other subjects it is above expectations.
- The overall quality of teaching is high, teaching assistants provide very good support and children learn well.
- The school offers a very rich curriculum with many high quality opportunities for learning both during and outside the school day, especially in sport and the arts.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good; pupils behave very well, develop first class attitudes to learning, form very good relationships and welcome opportunities to take responsibility.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those of higher ability is very good; the school is very good at including all children in its work.
- Children all benefit from the high level of personal and academic support and guidance that the school provides.
- The headteacher and other key staff provide excellent leadership directed towards improving children's achievements; the governing body provides excellent support by fulfilling its responsibilities in an exemplary manner.
- The school maintains a very close working relationship with parents, who make an important contribution to its work.

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

- The provision and use of ICT resources to support and extend learning across the curriculum.

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

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

There has been very good improvement since the school's last inspection in December 1997. The areas identified for improvement at that time have been effectively dealt with and there has been an all-round improvement in standards. This has been brought about through very well directed improvements in the quality of the curriculum, teaching and the environment. The very strong partnership between the headteacher, staff, governors and parents provides a very good basis for further improvement.



## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	C	A	A
Mathematics	C	D	B	B
Science	B	B	B	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

*Schools are described as similar when they fall into the same band for free school meals, in this case between eight and twenty per cent (the current figure is nine per cent).*

As the above table shows, pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2002 achieved National Curriculum test results that were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets and many achieved the nationally expected standard for their age in the national tests. The proportions of more able pupils who achieved the higher than expected Level 5 were well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. The school's results in 2002 were better than those in the school year of the last inspection; the overall trend has been one of improvement in line with national standards. The school surpassed its target for the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in English but narrowly failed to do so in mathematics.

On the evidence of the pupils' work seen, standards in the present Year 6 are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Standards are also well above average in geography, history and physical education; in the case of physical education this represents a big improvement since the last inspection. In art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology and religious education pupils' achievements are better than expected for their age. In music, standards are in line with expectations.

In national tests over the past three years, boys have sometimes done better than girls and vice versa, partly because the proportions of boys and girls differs quite a lot between year groups. No significant differences were noted during the inspection although the school is conscious that fewer girls than expected have been achieving Level 5 in mathematics.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are proud of their school and join in enthusiastically with what it provides for them. They are very positive about their teachers, the trips and visits and the wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport and music.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. In lessons, around the school and in the playground, nearly all pupils consistently behave very well. This contributes significantly to maintaining the positive climate for learning.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are polite to and respectful of others. They comfortably assume significant responsibility for aspects of the life of the school. They confidently make suggestions to adults in the school through the school council. Very good relationships between pupils and adults are a strikingly positive feature and help create a very positive atmosphere for learning.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance levels are well above the national average and nearly all pupils come to school on time.

Relationships are a very important strength of the school and owe much to the very good example set by the adults in the school community.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	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.*

The overall quality of teaching is very good so that pupils make good progress in lessons and as they move up the school. During the inspection the teaching in the vast majority of lessons was good or better, and in a large number it was very good or excellent. This represents a substantial improvement since the last inspection. The skills of English, including literacy, and of mathematics, including numeracy, are very well taught. The skills of ICT are well taught but pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their skills to support and extend their learning in other subjects. Science and the other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are all taught well, often very well.

Teachers and learning support assistants provide very well for pupils with special educational needs, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school has identified pupils of well above average ability and makes very good provision for them, too. As a result, pupils of all abilities make good, sometimes very good, progress from their different starting points; all achieve well.

Important features of the best teaching include teachers' subject knowledge and the effective way that they manage both pupils' learning and their behaviour. There are very good relationships in the classrooms and these enable adults and pupils to maintain a pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere. Lessons are planned well, with work set for pupils of different abilities, and are interesting. Teachers communicate high expectations and use questions very well to revise and extend pupils' learning.

Pupils clearly enjoy learning and develop very good work habits and a pride in their work. They organise themselves well and work well with partners or in larger groups. Because of the way they are taught they develop a very good understanding of their own learning and become confident in their ability to learn. As they move up the school they become increasingly capable of learning independently. The quality of their learning is very good and they achieve well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a rich curriculum for all its pupils. There is a very good range and quality of learning opportunities in all the subjects of the National Curriculum, French and religious education. These are complemented by the excellent provision of extra-curricular activities, including residential trips and opportunities to take part in sport and the arts. Literacy and numeracy are given high priority and the provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress in line with their targets. Very good collaboration between the co-ordinator, class teachers and learning support assistants promotes a very focused help for pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, provision is very good, especially for moral and social development. The school does much to encourage pupils to develop in terms of character, values and appreciation of life.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are very well looked after and supported in their learning and wider personal development. Very good support is provided when they join and leave the school. Pupils' views are listened to and taken into account. The school has very good systems for keeping track of pupils' progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. This information is used well in planning subsequent learning. The school is developing its procedures in other areas and recognises the need to relate assessments to National Curriculum standards of attainment.

The school is held in high regard by parents and the local community. It provides very good information about what is being taught and about children's progress. There is a very strong partnership between school and home in terms of supporting children's learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent; the headteacher gives outstanding leadership to the work and development of the school. He receives first-class support from his deputy, who is responsible for important aspects of the school's development and its day-to-day running. All other staff discharge their responsibilities in an exemplary manner.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have excellent collective knowledge of the school and are committed to its further development. They provide excellent support and hold the school to account very effectively. All statutory requirements are fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, staff and governors keep all aspects of the school's performance under continuous review, seeking to improve pupils' achievements through improving the quality of education provided. The direct monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is very good but does not yet involve all subject leaders.
The strategic use of resources	The school's use of its budget is directly linked to its priorities for improvement. Financial planning and control by the headteacher, bursar

	and the governing body are excellent. The school is very successful at obtaining best value from the financial resources allocated to it.
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The school is very well staffed and the whole team works together very effectively to maintain a pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere. The accommodation has been very well developed over the years and is used very well to promote pupils' learning. High quality resources have been purchased and these, too, are used well.

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

The views of the 208 parents (61 per cent) who returned completed questionnaires and of those who met with members of the team before or during the inspection were taken into account.

<b>What pleases most parents</b>	<b>What some parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of teaching is good and children make good progress.</li> <li>• Children like school and the staff have high expectations of them.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and the school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and led and there is a good range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• They are comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about children's progress.</li> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• How closely the school works with them.</li> </ul>

The inspection team finds that those areas that please parents are all at least good; several are very good or excellent. The quality of information about what children are to learn and about their progress, including written reports and opportunities to see children's work and to meet teachers, are very good. Appropriate amounts of homework are regularly set. The school actively seeks to involve parents in its work and a high proportion takes advantage of the opportunity.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The attainment on entry of pupils varies from year to year but in most year groups there is a much greater proportion of pupils with above average attainment than there is of pupils of lower attainment, including those with special educational needs. Overall, attainment on entry is above average; in the national tests for Year 2 in 2002, those pupils in the present Year 3 who transferred from the neighbouring infant school achieved results that were above the national average in reading, writing and science, and average in mathematics. Girls performed less well than boys in mathematics. The school is monitoring closely the performance of boys and girls and taking steps to build the confidence of girls, particularly in year groups where there is a substantial imbalance in the proportions of boys and girls.
2. In the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 in 2002, results show that pupils' attainment was well above the national average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The overall trend of results since the last inspection is one of improvement in line with the national trend. When compared with similar schools, results in English and science were well above average while those for mathematics were above average. Many pupils with special educational needs have achieved well in attaining the national expectation of Level 4. The proportion of more able pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Pupils of all abilities benefit from the overall high quality of teaching that they receive and from the very effective way that the school keeps track of their progress and plans their future learning. The school exceeded its target for the proportion of pupils expected to achieve Level 4 in English but narrowly failed to do so in mathematics. It is on track to meet its targets for the present Year 6.
3. Pupils throughout the school with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them in their Individual Education Plans. They benefit from the support provided by teachers and learning support assistants, particularly in English and mathematics lessons. Through this they are fully included in lessons and their attainment is often close to national expectations. More able pupils also benefit from special provision made for them either as part of the class or as separate groups, for example, in English, mathematics and gymnastics.
4. The inspection team judged that pupils' attainment in English in Year 6 is well above national expectations and that in mathematics and science it is above those expectations. In geography, history and physical education standards are well above national expectations. In art and design, design and technology and ICT, pupils' attainment is above what is expected for their age. In music, standards are in line with national expectations although in past productions, for example *Twelfth Night*, pupils have often demonstrated higher standards in dance and drama as well as music. In religious education pupils exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
5. Overall, standards have improved since the time of the last inspection and pupils of all abilities make good progress; pupils' achievements, relative to their attainment on entry to the school, are good. There have been variations in the relative performance of boys and girls in national tests over the past three years. For example, boys did much better than girls in the tests of 2002, while in 2000 girls had done better than boys. In 2001, results were similar in English and mathematics but boys did better than girls in science. At least part of the variation can be attributed to differences in the proportions of boys and girls in successive year groups. Another factor is that the school has been strikingly successful in motivating boys, particularly in English. The school currently has designated the improvement of girls' attainment in mathematics and science, especially with regard to the proportions achieving Level 5, as a key development priority. (For further details of pupils' achievements and progress in the subjects of the National Curriculum, French and religious education, see paragraphs 56 - 130)

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

6. Pupils show excellent attitudes towards school and their work, behave very well, form very good relationships and their personal development is very good. The very good partnership with parents and pupils' personal development at school make significant contributions to these very positive attitudes and values. Pupils' attitudes towards school, and their behaviour and personal responsibility have all improved significantly since the last inspection.
7. Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent overall. Nearly all pupils are proud of their school, which they like attending; this is clear from questionnaire returns and discussions. The well above average attendance is a strong indicator of how keen pupils are to attend. Most look forward to returning to school at the end of holidays. School plays an important part in pupils' lives. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils ranked school ahead of hobbies, level with friends and only behind family in a list of the important things in their lives. They like the way class teachers and learning support assistants encourage them and make their learning interesting. They value the fact that their views are taken on board by adults, the wide range of clubs and teams, school trips and the friendships with other pupils. They also appreciate the very good range of facilities and equipment, such as the new computer suite, the swimming pool, the large playing field and the wide range of musical instruments. In nearly all lessons pupils listen and concentrate very well, are eager to answer teachers' questions and start promptly on their individual work. Pupils' favourite subjects and lessons are those where they are practically involved, such as physical education, art, design technology and experimental science. The best attitudes and behaviour occur in lessons where expectations are high, work is demanding and pupils are busy and engaged in a variety of activities, which provide the right level of challenge for them.
8. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to their learning and very good standards of behaviour. They respond positively to their teachers and peers, they enjoy learning and are inspired and motivated by very good teaching, showing a high degree of independence and initiative.
9. Behaviour is very good. The consistently good behaviour of nearly all pupils is an important element in the prevailing positive atmosphere for learning. In lessons, nearly all pupils are very well behaved, though in a few classes, teachers still need to address the behaviour and attentiveness of a few pupils. Before moving to groups, pupils form orderly lines and move about in a calm and responsible way. Behaviour of pupils at lunchtime and playtime is very good. A strikingly calm, social atmosphere prevails in the dining hall. Outside, skipping and a range of playground ball games are clearly enjoyed by pupils. There is no sign of any bullying or other anti-social behaviour. There were no exclusions in the last school year. Parents' questionnaire responses fully support this very positive picture. Pupils take very good care of property and resources and regularly help keep their school in attractive condition by taking part in litter picks, for example. Pupils regularly and without prompting, hold doors open for each other and adults.
10. Relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils are very good overall. Adults act as very good role models. Teachers value pupils' work and effectively praise effort and good work. For example, pupils in Year 6 spoke positively about the support they get from teachers and the fair way in which they are treated. As a result pupils are comfortable expressing views and asking questions of their teachers; this assists their learning. Very good relationships among pupils, including those with special educational needs, is a positive feature. As a result, pupils become increasingly able to work well in pairs and small groups, supporting each others' learning with explanations, for example.
11. Pupils' personal development is very good overall. The very good provision for pupils' personal development, particularly for their moral and social development, makes a major contribution. Pupils know and calmly carry out the daily routines expected of them. They enjoy talking to visitors. When questioned in groups, Year 6 pupils are comfortable listening to different views expressed by others. They show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. For example, in a Year 6 religious education lesson about 'What and who is God?', pupils came up with very different views, such as, 'God is love', 'God is a total mystery', 'God has control over the entire world', 'God is punishing the world, that's why there is so much suffering', 'There is no God'. These very different views were all listened to with complete respect.

12. Members of the active, well established school council, composed of an elected member from each class, make a significant contribution to school life by ensuring that the views of pupils are heard and some adopted. For example, their ideas have led to the introduction of recycling bins, induction booklets created by pupils to help new Year 3 pupils, and new clubs, such as the chess club. They also run stalls at the parent teacher association's Easter fair and support charitable collections. Nearly all pupils routinely take responsibility for their learning. For example, most pupils regularly complete set homework and update their word journal and ideas book. There is an unusually high level of older pupils taking responsibility for younger ones. For example, Year 3 pupils 'buddy' Year 2 pupils before and after these pupils join the school. Similarly a group of older pupils provide a 'Friendship Patrol', whereby younger pupils are befriended and involved in the games of others.
13. Attendance is very good. It has been consistently in the 95 to 96 per cent range, for a number of years. This is well above the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average. Punctuality is good. Nearly all pupils come to school on time and settle to their work promptly and calmly.

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

14. The overall quality of teaching is very good. During the inspection it was good or better in the vast majority of lessons, and in a large proportion it was very good or excellent; there was no unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a substantial improvement since the last inspection that owes much to the systematic programme of monitoring by the headteacher and his deputy. The teaching of English, including literacy, and mathematics, including numeracy, is very good overall, ranging in the lessons observed from satisfactory to excellent. In all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, the quality of teaching is high; in around nine out of every ten lessons it was good or better, and in two out of every five very good or excellent. There were particularly high proportions of very good or excellent teaching in lessons in art, English, physical education and science. The skills of ICT are taught well although pupils do not have sufficient opportunities for using them to promote their learning in other subjects.
15. Teachers provide suitable activities for pupils with special educational needs and, as a result, all pupils make consistently good progress. The very good relationships between class teachers, learning support assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator enable the school to plan very effectively to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils at the School Action and School Action Plus stage of the Code of Practice and those with statements of special educational needs are set appropriate, challenging but achievable targets for improvement, according to their individual learning needs.
16. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. This constitutes a very good basis for planning interesting lessons that provide appropriately challenging learning opportunities for pupils of all abilities. Very good subject knowledge also enables teachers to use questions skilfully to revise and extend pupils' learning.
17. Most lessons take place in a pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere. Teachers and their assistants have established this through very good management of the pupils and their classrooms. This has included establishing simple routines based on courtesy and common sense and communicating high expectations of the standards of pupils' work and behaviour. Adults set very good examples in terms of the way that they work with each other and the pupils and this has a very positive influence on pupils' behaviour.
18. A strong feature of much of the teaching observed was the way in which pupils were told what they were going to learn in the lesson, for example to get better at throwing and catching a ball. In such cases teachers and pupils were able to assess progress in terms of the intended learning. This helps pupils to have a very good understanding of their own learning and makes them increasingly confident of their ability to learn.

19. Teachers have a very good understanding of how pupils learn and recognise the need to vary the demands they make on them, for example in terms of sitting still and listening, working individually and in groups, writing and engaging in practical work. As a result of this and the

other very good features of much of the teaching, pupils develop very good work habits. They concentrate well, listen and contribute very well to discussions, for example in Year 5 about different beliefs about an almighty being.

20. An excellent mathematics lesson on lines of symmetry with the top set of pupils in Year 3 illustrated the best features of the teaching observed during the inspection. The learning objective was clearly introduced to the class and the practical task of folding a piece of rectangular card helped pupils to explain what symmetry was. The teacher immediately assessed and extended learning by having all pupils draw a square and its lines of symmetry on their individual whiteboards; there was a very high level of success. The use of mirrors both to check for symmetry and also to complete diagrams so that they exhibited line symmetry enabled the teacher to establish the correct use of the terms *axes* and *reflection*. The teacher continually injected extra challenge, for example via equilateral and isosceles triangles, based on her assessment of the progress of the pupils. The pace of the lesson was very brisk but unrushed. More able pupils sorted shapes, treated as two-dimensional for the purpose of the task, according to symmetry, right angles, and whether regular or not. All pupils were absorbed in their work and talked about it with enthusiasm, showing a very secure understanding of the basic ideas. One pupil talked through why he thought that a circle had more than 360 lines of symmetry – *because you could draw another line between the ones that are there and keep going*. One of the most able pupils explored systematically the symmetry of a hexagonal prism, identifying the shapes that would be obtained from different ‘cuts’. Pupils made very good progress because of the quality of the teacher’s planning and her excellent skills at moving pupils on, based on her on-going assessments. (For further details of teaching and learning in the subjects of the National Curriculum, French and religious education, see paragraphs 56 - 130)

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

21. The school provides pupils with a very good broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. The school has improved its provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well since the last inspection. There is a very positive, energetic and hardworking ethos evident throughout the school’s life and work, which provides a firm and strong basis for all aspects of pupils’ development throughout the curriculum.
22. The school fulfils all statutory requirements and fully meets the requirements of all areas of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. In addition, French is now taught in Year 3 and is being extended throughout the school. Most of the curriculum is taught through the use and application of nationally recommended schemes of work, but these are frequently enlivened and enriched by the imaginative planning and the careful choice and revision of topics and units of work provided by the subject co-ordinators. Pupils are therefore presented with good opportunities to make progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. The curriculum is well planned, organised and managed. Both literacy and numeracy are taught very effectively throughout the curriculum. The school recognises the need to provide more planned opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills across the curriculum.
23. All pupils have equality of access to the curriculum. The school has responded effectively to the new legal requirements for pupils with special educational needs. It provides all these pupils with graded work and support both in and out of classrooms which meet their needs well and enable them to make good progress in reaching the targets in their individual education plans. There is a good policy for able children, including those who are gifted or talented in areas such as sport, with good extension provision. The school’s ethos is one in which all pupils are valued and included in all activities. The governors have suitable policies for sex education and drugs awareness, which are taught through the school’s very good personal, health and social education



- programme, and there is added input from visitors such as the community policemen and the school nurse. The personal, social and health programme also does much to advance citizenship education, helping pupils to become responsible and thoughtful members of the community. A strength of this provision is the work done in Circle Times, when pupils can quietly discuss and reflect upon their worries and their pleasures. Particularly effective sessions are set up for pupils who have learning or other difficulties.
24. The school provides pupils with an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. These include a wide range of sporting activities, a large and active choir, as well as many other musical activities and a popular environmental club. There is a French club and there are musical and dramatic productions, such as 'Twelfth Night' and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. These, together with an excellent range of visitors, such as the 'Living History' team, provide pupils with a rich and full set of activities outside the curriculum. There are numerous trips organised, to such events as the ballet of 'The Firebird', the opera of 'Carmen', the scientific centre 'Intech' and even a whole school trip to the film of 'Harry Potter'. The teacher in charge of enrichment of the curriculum involves families and staff in arranging visits to, for instance, historical places in London, such as the Globe Theatre, and hosting events such as 'Shakespeare for Kids', among numerous other activities. There is a yearly residential visit to France, as well as a residential team-building exercise. The school uses the local community very well to make a contribution to pupils' learning. Many parents work voluntarily in the school, the local area is used extensively for geography, science and history, and members of the local community serve as good source material for pupils on subjects such as evacuees. The school has very good links with its feeder infant school and the local secondary school, thus easing the transition from school to school for pupils. All pupils in Year 6 are given the opportunity to visit the secondary school and there is much joint planning of the curriculum.
25. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good, sometimes very good, in religious education lessons. Pupils learn to respect and value other people's feelings and beliefs. The school's assemblies follow a weekly theme, to which pupils listen carefully and thoughtfully. However, less attention is paid to enhancing the spiritual element throughout the rest of the curriculum by the planning of specific opportunities or by the seizing of opportunities which present themselves during the course of lessons.
26. The provision for moral development is very good and that for social development is excellent. The school sets clear guidelines about what is right and wrong and pupils' very good behaviour is a result of the school's expectations of them. Rules displayed in classrooms and elsewhere are very much concentrated on the essence of good citizenship, an area enhanced by the school council's regular meetings and suggestions. The weekly celebration assembly reinforces the school's determination to help pupils become responsible and happy members of the community. All staff provide the pupils with excellent role models, and relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, such as monitors in class, 'friendship patrol' and phone monitors, and undertake their duties with thoroughness and care. Pupils eagerly take responsibility for their own learning and show independence of thought and work. Through fundraising and other community projects, pupils are encouraged to think of others and to understand their role and place as citizens in society. The school provides opportunities for pupils to promote teamwork and to experience challenge on their residential visits.
27. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of multicultural experiences through stories and poems from around the world in literacy, aboriginal art and pointillism in art, projects on rivers and water in geography, as well as a knowledge of other countries, such as St. Lucia. In music, they are introduced to dance music from around the world, such as Caribbean songs, and in religious education they study their own and other faiths, such as Judaism and Islam. The school uses visits to local churches and to a synagogue and a mosque to enhance pupils' cultural understanding effectively. However, there is little opportunity for pupils to experience the ethnic diversity of modern Britain. There is also a wide range of other visits to support cultural knowledge, including art museums, the Imperial War Museum and historical outings. These visits make a good contribution to learning beyond the classroom.

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

28. As at the time of the last inspection, the pastoral care arrangements for pupils are very good overall. Assessment procedures have improved significantly since then and are now very effectively used to track pupils' progress, forecast end-of-year standards and identify the next steps in pupils' learning.
29. Procedures to promote and ensure pupils' wellbeing are very good. The headteacher and staff have clearly identified the difficulties experienced by individuals and groups of pupils and work effectively to address these. There are very good arrangements for induction to Year 3. For example, all infant pupils are assigned a Year 3 buddy well in advance of joining the school. Transfer arrangements to secondary school are very good, with additional attention given to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils confirm that they are very well cared for when they are ill or otherwise distressed. There are good links and involvement with outside agencies, such as social and health services. Child protection procedures are good. The procedures to follow and the designated staff member are known by adults in the school. Pupils are made appropriately aware of this issue as part of their personal and social education.
30. The school cares very well for pupils with special educational needs. The school has eight specially trained special educational needs support assistants. Support staff mainly work directly with the pupils with special educational needs to support their learning. However, pupils are given opportunities to work with all pupils in their class, and support assistants monitor their work from a distance. This allows the pupils they support to make very good progress in terms of developing their personal and social skills.
31. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are good overall. Teachers make pupils aware of health and safety issues in lessons, such as in physical education and ICT in relation to e-mails and the use of the Internet. An important emphasis is placed on pupils taking responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. This effectively contributes to the development of a safety-conscious attitude among them. Health and safety form an important part of the governing body's deliberations. Fire alarm testing and the inspection of portable electrical equipment are routinely carried out. Fire drills are carried out regularly. First aid arrangements are well established and appropriate.
32. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and discipline are very good overall. The main emphasis is on recognising good behaviour and nearly all pupils respond positively. In lessons, on-going praise is a consistent feature. Pupils are very effectively involved in the creation of classroom rules. Parents are informed of pupils' good behaviour through the certificates presented to pupils. Measures to create and maintain discipline are appropriate, proportionate and consistently applied by staff.
33. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, including bullying and racism, are very good. The small minority of pupils with significant behaviour difficulties are clearly identified. Behaviour improvement plans are well used to support these pupils. There is a clear and proportionate set of sanctions, in relation to classroom and playground behaviour. Parents are very effectively involved where concerns arise. Pupils confirm that they feel comfortable reporting rare incidents of bullying or other anti-social behaviour. Parents and pupils confirm that the measures taken to resolve such cases are usually effective.
34. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good. There is close weekly monitoring of attendance. The few pupils with significant absence are clearly identified and carefully monitored. Recognition of full termly and annual attendance is not part of the measures to promote good attendance, as full attendance is the expectation for all.
35. The school has very good systems for keeping track of pupils' progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. Assessment is one of the key responsibilities of the deputy headteacher and he has led a thorough review of procedures over the last few years. The guiding principle is that assessment is truly valuable only where it gives unambiguous information about the current performance of children and can be used to inform the next learning stage. There is a particularly well-planned and established programme of assessment in literacy that leads to regular target setting for pupils. This has been very effective in raising standards in writing. In

numeracy, as in literacy, assessment information is used well to form teaching groups and is also effectively used to track progress against numeracy targets. The school uses nationally standardised tests as well as the mid-key-stage tests provided by QCA and analyses the results effectively. Liaison with teachers responsible for assessment in the neighbouring infant school and in the secondary school to which many pupils transfer has led to agreement on common criteria for assessing writing and to common use of appropriate software. The school is developing its procedures in other subject areas and recognises the need to relate assessments to National Curriculum standards of attainment. This already

happens well in geography and history, where focused assessments are made at the start and end of each unit of work. Overall, assessment information is used well in planning subsequent learning.

36. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal development are very good. Pupils and their needs are very well known to staff. Good attitudes and achievements at school, whilst representing school, and outside of school are celebrated in weekly assemblies. This recognition provides pupils with public confirmation of what is good in their lives and helps raise their self-esteem. The personal social and health education programme makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are given a very good range of responsibilities. The very active school council provides very good personal development opportunities for a large number of pupils, as its membership changes every term. The exceptional range of extra-curricular activities, trips and sports teams provide a large number of opportunities for pupils' development outside of lessons. Parents are very positive about the school's part in helping pupils become mature and responsible. They are justifiably very positive about the fully rounded education provided.

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

37. There is a very good partnership with parents, which makes a significant contribution to the quality of education provided and the standards achieved. The partnership works very well, as school and parents operate on the basis that both have key roles in a shared enterprise.
38. Overall parents are positive about what the school provides and achieves. Around three-fifths of parents replied to the questionnaire and 24 attended the pre-inspection meeting. Nearly all confirm that their children like school and make good progress. They consider that school has high expectations and helps pupils become more mature and responsible. They are positive about the teaching and (nearly all) about pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Most feel comfortable approaching the school with suggestions, questions or concerns. They are very positive about its leadership and management and the wide range of opportunities available to pupils outside of lessons. Inspection findings fully support parents' positive views. A small minority express some dissatisfaction about the amount of and arrangements for homework, the information provided on pupils' progress and the extent to which school works closely with parents. Inspectors find that the amount of homework set and associated arrangements are very appropriate and that the information provided on pupils' progress is also very good. The school works very effectively with parents.
39. Links with parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Within the past year, parents have been consulted, using the inspection questionnaire. As a result, the school has restated the purpose of homework and provided opportunities for parents to view pupils' work at times other than the consultation evenings. Parents value the accessibility and approachability of staff. Pupils have effectively used homework planners and reading diaries, which provide a clear outline on set homework and also act as a good routine medium of communication between school and home. Parents are fully involved where there are concerns about their children's progress, behaviour or attendance.
40. The school informs parents at an early stage in the process of identifying pupils with special educational needs. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved with their children's annual review, and details of pupils' Individual Education Plans are also

shared with parents. Parents can make appointments at any time to discuss their children's progress with the class teacher or special educational needs co-ordinator.

41. The quality of information to support pupils' progress is very good. The recently introduced evenings to view pupils' work and the termly parents' evenings create regular opportunities for updates on progress or concerns. The quality of pupils' written annual reports is very good overall. Reports convey a clear sense of what and how well pupils are doing and give a clear indication of the progress they are making. Areas for improvement are systematically identified, together with areas for improvement in attitudes, if appropriate. Reports are also innovatively issued towards the end of the spring term.. As a result, school and parents have a clear

understanding of the key areas for development, while there is still time to influence progress. Termly curriculum information, issued by each year group, provides parents with an effective advance outline of pupils' school work

42. School-related information is of very good quality. Regular newsletters, supplemented with many other letters and notes, keep parents very well informed about school life. The prospectus gives a very clear outline of the school's expectations and character. The governors' annual report clearly informs parents about the work of governors.
43. Parents' involvement with the work of the school makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning and the life of the school. Parents are keen for their children to do well and ensure that they attend school at well above average levels. Nearly all respond to individual requests to discuss issues, such as progress, behaviour and attendance. Discussions with pupils indicate that nearly all have somebody at home who checks that set homework is done. Most pupils are represented at parents' consultation evenings.. Many parents attend and enjoy Christmas performances, class assemblies, sports days and sporting fixtures during the year. Adult helpers support in art and design technology lessons, in the library, by listening to readers, and on trips and visits. The parent-teacher association provides very good support by organising a range of social and fundraising events, such as bonfire displays, fairs and pupils' discos. These activities also help to establish and maintain good informal links among staff, parents and pupils, as all parties are involved in many of the events. The events, therefore, also contribute to pupils' wider social and personal development and the positive sense of community that prevails.

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

44. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, clearly focused on raising standards of achievement through providing a high quality education for all pupils. He has very good management skills and has created an organisational structure that matches very well the needs of a large school. He has a very visible presence in the school and through this he continually monitors the quality of teaching, learning and behaviour.
45. The deputy headteacher provides first-class support and has responsibility for major aspects of the day-to-day running of the school and its further development, including the very important aspects of staff training, the assessment of pupils' learning and subsequent target setting. The latter area is an example of the very good use that the school makes of ICT to facilitate effective data handling. The headteacher and his deputy undertake the majority of the formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning through classroom observations. Members of the senior management team and other year group leaders also contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school and to planning for its development. Year group leaders make an important contribution to consistency within year groups and to continuity between them.
46. Subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and very capable. Most have time every week to devote to developing their subjects and because of this are very effective in helping to raise standards, particularly through developing schemes of work and providing support for colleagues. They rightly see the potential for extending their role into directly observing teaching and learning in other classes.

47. Throughout the staff there is a strong commitment to improvement and the school's very well managed programme of performance management and professional development contributes very substantially to continuing to move the school forward. The school is an extremely effective provider of teacher training and has very good procedures for inducting new members of staff, including those who are newly qualified. Several members of staff who now hold significant responsibility within the school started their teaching careers at Poulner Junior; there is a growing list of teachers who have moved to substantial promotions in other schools.
48. Governors provide excellent support and discharge their statutory responsibilities in an exemplary manner. This represents a great improvement since the last inspection. The governing body and the school benefit from the strong and informed leadership of a very experienced chairman. He ensures that the governing body works very effectively through an appropriate committee structure and contributes fully to planning the future development of the school. Overall financial control is excellent, both in terms of the planning and monitoring by the headteacher and the governing body and also in the day-to-day management of the finances. Governors, with the headteacher and his deputy, evaluate carefully the consequences of their decisions. In addition to carrying responsibility for the school finances, the governors are also responsible for managing the substantial amount of income and expenditure related to the use of facilities by the community. In order to manage this joint use effectively the governors prudently maintain a carry forward contingency figure that is in excess of what would be required for the school alone.
49. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides very good leadership. There is a detailed policy and the governor with responsibility for this aspect of the school's work provides an excellent level of support. The co-ordinator ensures that all pupils have been accurately assessed, using outside agencies when necessary. She effectively monitors and evaluates the work of colleagues and the use made of Individual Education Plans. She works closely with the neighbouring infant school and the local secondary school to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are provided with adequate support when they move schools. The speech therapist and other outside agencies provide enhanced support and advice for pupils as required. The school is similarly active and successful in promoting the learning of pupils identified as having well above average ability in areas of the curriculum, including literacy, mathematics and physical education.
50. The school improvement plan is a key working document, drawn up by staff and governors. It provides a very clear sense of direction and a framework for financial decision-making and for staff performance management targets. The allocation of finances closely follows the priorities that have been identified. Funds allocated for specific purposes, for example for staff development or for pupils with special educational needs, are spent well. The school very actively and successfully seeks to obtain best value from its financial resources.
51. Current, and entirely appropriate, priorities include further development of opportunities to use ICT in the curriculum, formally identifying opportunities for speaking and listening throughout the curriculum, and raising pupils' confidence and attainment in mathematics. The overwhelming majority of parents who returned completed questionnaires considered that the school was well led and managed; inspection evidence strongly supports that view. This was also the judgement of the last inspection team and since that time the school has been led and managed to substantial further improvements.
52. There is a very good match of teaching and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The deployment of learning support assistants in lower sets primarily means that a significant amount of additional support is available to address the needs of those pupils with learning or behaviour difficulties. The efficient and dedicated contributions made by administrative and other staff are highly valued by the headteacher and his teaching staff.
53. Accommodation is very good overall, positively supporting learning. The main accommodation provides a pleasant, bright, clean and spacious learning environment. Displays in classrooms and corridors are of very good quality. Whilst the playground area is adequate in size, the very large grassed area provides additional playtime opportunities in periods of fine weather.

54. The range, quality and accessibility of learning resources are very good in most subjects and good in ICT, design and technology and religious education. A wider range of ICT software and of equipment to support design technology are important areas for development, which the school has already identified and acted on.

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

### **55. The governing body with the headteacher and staff should**

**Develop and extend the planned use of ICT resources for supporting pupils' learning across the curriculum, by:**

- providing more frequent and immediate access for pupils in each class;
- identifying opportunities for using ICT in all subject areas;
- obtaining appropriate software and, where necessary, arranging staff training in its use;
- monitoring the ICT opportunities that pupils have.

*See paragraphs 14, 22, 51, 72, 79, 89, 97, 103, 105, 111 and 130*

This area for improvement is included in the school's current development planning.

**In addition, the following points for improvement should be included in the governors' action plan:**

**Increasing the opportunities that pupils have for learning about life in more ethnically diverse parts of Britain**

*See paragraph 27*

**Developing the role of the subject co-ordinators in directly monitoring teaching and learning**

*See paragraphs 46, 79 and 111*

**Progressing the linking of assessments to National Curriculum targets in the remaining subject areas where this has not yet been done.**

*See paragraphs 85, 91 and 124*

**Building more planned opportunities for pupils' spiritual development into lessons**

*See paragraphs 25 and 129*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	20	27	7	0	0	0
Percentage	5	35	47	12	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. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	340
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	35

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	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	47	41	88

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	42	39	45
	Girls	35	30	37
	Total	77	69	82
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (80)	78 (67)	93 (97)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	36	40	44
	Girls	28	30	36
	Total	64	70	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (82)	80 (73)	91 (94)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
255	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

No ethnic group recorded
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79
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0
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0
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The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	132

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	676858
Total expenditure	684171
Expenditure per pupil	2048
Balance brought forward from previous year	75149
Balance carried forward to next year	67836

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

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

61%

Number of questionnaires sent out

340

Number of questionnaires returned

208

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	46	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	50	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	59	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	52	12	4	1
The teaching is good.	46	49	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	53	17	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	31	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	30	53	14	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	57	40	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	45	4	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	40	3	1	2

Some rows do not add up to 100 because of rounding

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents referred to the high level of staff morale and leadership and the good team feeling. They valued the strong links with the neighbouring infant school and secondary school to which many pupils transfer.

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

### **ENGLISH**

56. Standards in English are very good. In 2002, the results of the national tests in Year 6 were well above the national average at both the expected level, Level 4, and the higher level, Level 5. They were also well above average for similar schools. Boys did as well as girls, in contrast to the national trend. These results represent a significant improvement on the previous year, when they were in line with the national average. Whilst pupils enter the school with above average standards in the subject, achievement is good overall, sometimes very good, with individual pupils making rapid progress during the course of the school year. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress during their time in the school. They are well supported by staff and allocated learning support assistants and clearly benefit from the additional help provided.
57. Inspection evidence shows that speaking and listening skills are developed in discussion with the whole class, in paired and small group work and in presentations made to the class or in assemblies. Teachers insist that pupils listen carefully and take turns to make contributions, so that discussions are orderly and sensible. As a result, pupils listen particularly well, with close attention to teachers and their peers. Standards of speaking are good, though not fully consistent between classes. In some cases, teachers could require greater clarity and development of speech. However, most pupils speak fluently and well when answering teachers' questions. They are usually keen to contribute to discussions and express sensible and logical views on a range of topics. Video and audio tapes of speaking and listening activities provided good evidence of confident speech in dramatic performances by Year 3 pupils during the annual Arts Week, and imaginative presentations of performance poetry by Year 5 pupils.
58. Reading skills are very good throughout the school. Teachers read aloud expressively to their classes from a range of texts, including well-established children's fiction and poetry. Pupils are also able to choose their own reading books regularly from the well-managed school library. Detailed reading diaries are kept, providing very good evidence of progress made in reading both at school and at home. All pupils are good, independent readers by the end of Year 4. By the end of Year 6, the majority read aloud fluently and expressively. Work to develop analytical reading skills, in line with expectations in the National Literacy Strategy, is very effective. During the inspection, shared reading of a range of texts, including examples of both fiction and non-fiction writing, was seen in a number of lessons. Year 6 pupils in particular responded well and were able to refer to the text and discuss key aspects of the use of language with understanding.
59. Standards in writing are also very good. Pupils across the school produce a range of written work, such as stories, descriptions, diaries, factual accounts and poems. All are attempted from an early stage. There are regular opportunities to produce more extended, creative writing. Imaginative and original expression is encouraged, but there is also an appropriate emphasis on technical aspects of punctuation, spelling and sentence structure. Very good examples of shared writing activities were seen in literacy hours. Work on descriptive writing and the importance of variety in sentence structure was particularly impressive in Year 4 lessons on stories set in other cultures. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a good understanding of the characteristics and organisation of writing for a range of different purposes. The school rightly recognises this as a key factor in the higher standards achieved in the 2002 tests. Higher ability pupils write adventurously and achieve high standards. Pupils in the middle ability range could often improve technical accuracy, particularly in the command of more complex sentence structures and the correct use of punctuation within sentences. Spelling is also a weakness for some middle and lower ability pupils. By Year 6, most pupils make very good progress in developing clear handwriting and presentation skills. Word-processing and desktop publishing are also used to good effect in all classes, to develop effective presentation of pupils' work and to improve accuracy through the use of spell checks.
60. Teaching is very good overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives for what pupils will learn, matched to their different levels of attainment. There is an effective, detailed scheme of work. Expectations for achievement are

high. Pupils are managed very well, with positive use of praise to support high levels of discipline. Teachers also use a good range of teaching methods to create pace and variety in lessons. In some more extended lessons, the timing of activities and pace of work could have been better judged, however. Occasionally, explanations were not fully clear. Homework is set and work is marked regularly; in the most effective examples detailed written comments highlight pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Best practice could apply more consistently in this respect, however. However, overall assessment of pupils' progress in the subject is very good. Careful analysis of test results is used to set group targets for improvement and to help in the future planning of work.

61. Pupils' attitudes in English lessons are very good. They concentrate very well and are clearly interested and engaged by tasks set. This makes an important contribution to learning in the subject. They acquire skills and knowledge well, throughout the school, and there is a good emphasis on independent thinking and research. In some classes, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own, or a partner's, work and to identify areas for improvement. This practice does not yet apply consistently in all classes. Further development could help pupils to play a more active part in setting and understanding their own individual targets for further progress.
62. Leadership and management of English in the school are very good. The co-ordinator brings considerable subject expertise and has made an important contribution through revising and developing policies and subject planning. She is able to monitor and support the work of colleagues actively, and has led regular training sessions for the staff. She has identified new focuses for teaching in the light of analysis of pupils' performance in tests and class work. Teachers as a whole show a strong commitment to further improving standards, not least through giving generously of their time to organise a good range of extra-curricular activities. Special events for each year group are arranged, including theatre trips and visiting theatre groups. Amongst others, older pupils took part in a trip to Shakespeare's Globe theatre in London last summer. Christmas and Arts Week productions provide good opportunities for drama work and performances before an audience. Book fairs and talks by visiting authors encourage interest in reading. A school newspaper is published each term.
63. The school is working very well to implement the National Literacy Strategy in the teaching of English. There are also good links with other areas of the curriculum to promote work on literacy, in particular geography, history and religious education, with some good examples of extended writing both in factual reports and more imaginative accounts of topics studied. In design and technology, pupils are encouraged to use language sensitively and precisely in their evaluation of topics and work undertaken. In mathematics and science lessons, there is an appropriate emphasis on the correct use and spelling of technical vocabulary. Overall, teaching across the curriculum promotes very good standards of literacy throughout the school.
64. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Teaching and learning are both improved. Academic standards are higher, particularly in the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in the national tests in Year 6. Resources are good, and planning for the subject is thorough and up to date.

## **MATHEMATICS**

65. Standards seen in mathematics are above national expectations in Year 6 and this matches the results that the school achieved in last year's National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils; the school has maintained the standards reported at the last inspection. Standards in some other junior years are even higher as the benefits of improved planning and teaching, based on the National Numeracy Strategy, work through the school. Pupils of all levels of ability make good progress and achieve well across the mathematics curriculum. This is largely because pupils with special educational needs are often supported well in lessons and more advanced work is set for pupils of higher ability. There has been variation over the years in the performance of boys and girls but no significant differences were observed during the inspection. Nevertheless, the school monitors this aspect closely and is taking appropriate action.

66. Pupils in Year 3 have made good progress from the overall average test results that many achieved last year. The substantial number of pupils who exceeded the national expectation have also made good progress. Their books show that they have covered a lot of work thoroughly, not only on number but also on, for example, the properties of shape, measuring angles and working with metric measures. During the inspection pupils showed good understanding of the concept of capacity and benefited from a well-taught practical lesson in which they learned to use calibrated measuring containers. Pupils of higher ability made very good progress in exploring symmetry of both two- and three-dimensional shapes from a practical point of view.
67. Pupils in Year 4 improved their problem solving skills by making up word problems for each other; many showed above average facility in mental arithmetic. They used the terms *factor* and *multiple* correctly and with understanding, promptly giving the factors of 24 and testing for leap years by dividing by 4. Earlier work from pupils in Year 4 shows overall attainment that is around national expectations, with many examples of above average work in the top set. Pupils' progress is often promoted well through regular corrective marking.
68. A strong feature of much of the work seen in lessons with Year 5 pupils was the emphasis on thinking and explaining. Pupils of average ability, for example, described several different methods by which they worked out 17 divided by 4. In the final part of the lesson, pupils' knowledge and understanding were extended when the teacher built well on their previous experience by taking them from  $27 \div 2 = 13 \frac{1}{2} = 13.5$ .
69. The work of the Year 6 pupils was focused on revision for the national tests that were due to be taken the following week. In each lesson the work was focused well on what the pupils needed to do to consolidate and improve their knowledge, skills and understanding and it was pitched at appropriate levels of challenge for the different abilities. Pupils in the top set, for example, made good progress in solving problems related to ratio and proportion after a good mental session where they responded well to the teacher's insistence that they explain their methods rather than just give answers. Pupils of average ability made very good gains in their skills of interpreting information presented in graphical form as a result of their teacher's very good preparation, organisation and questioning skills. Very good planning and organisation also enabled pupils who find mathematics more difficult to make good progress in developing their strategies for solving problems and consolidating their knowledge of the different ways that data may be represented.
70. Examination of the earlier work of pupils in Year 6 indicates that the majority of pupils are achieving the nationally expected standard with around one-third exceeding it. There were some very good examples of written feedback to pupils, including corrections and further questions to promote understanding. This has a very good impact on pupils' learning and progress.
71. Based on the lessons observed and examination of pupils' books, the overall quality of teaching is judged to be very good. There is scope for further development of the planned use of mathematical skills in other subject areas. Pupils' attitudes to learning mathematics are very good; they benefit from the provision of work that is appropriate to their differing abilities, and their confidence grows. Pupils are encouraged to work in pairs and to support each other's learning; this also helps to promote enjoyment and confidence.
72. The co-ordinator has undertaken a small but useful amount of monitoring of pupils' learning in other year groups and sets and has carried out a good analysis of pupils' performance in previous national tests. He is very focused on improving standards and sees the importance of using the school's very good ICT resources more to support and extend learning. He also recognises the importance of developing the planned use of mathematical skills in other subject areas. Resources are good and teachers are able to organise whole class practical sessions, for example on capacity. Individual whiteboards are used successfully; their use encourages pupils to work quickly and enables teachers to assess correctness and understanding around the class.

## SCIENCE

73. Standards in science exceed national expectations in most year groups, including Year 6, and this matches the judgement made in the last inspection and the results of national tests for Year 6 in 2002. All pupils make good progress as they move through the school and achieve well relative to their differing abilities in all areas of the science curriculum. They develop a good body of knowledge as well as a good understanding of the scientific method. No significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls were observed, although a lower proportion of girls than boys achieved the higher than expected Level 5 in last year's national tests. The school is continuing to monitor this aspect.
74. The vast majority of pupils in Year 3 had achieved the nationally expected standard in their assessments in Year 2. During the inspection, these pupils were investigating common light sources. The introductory task was very productive because of its problem-solving nature as pupils sorted cards into those that named light sources and those that did not. Higher attaining pupils very soon discovered that a diamond and a piece of mirror reflected light rather than emitting it. Pupils of all abilities were very well challenged and had opportunities for explaining their decisions and recording them. They included a firefly, an electric eel and an explosion as light sources and recognised that the moon reflected light from the sun. Pupils' knowledge and understanding were greatly extended as a result of well-planned and challenging teaching.
75. Pupils in Year 4 enjoyed experimenting with magnets, finding out about forces and using the terms *attraction* and *repulsion* correctly when explaining what forces were at work. They were supported well in this by the teacher's own correct use and by the good display of key vocabulary on the wall. Higher attaining pupils found completing the task relatively easy and there was insufficient subsequent challenge to extend their learning further.
76. Pupils of all abilities in Year 5 were very well challenged in a very good lesson on filtration and on separating a soluble solid from a liquid. Pupils explained well the use of filters in every day situations, for example teabags, making coffee, wearing a facemask when sanding wood. Higher attaining pupils rose well to the extra challenge of giving explanations in terms of particle size. The teacher had provided a very good structure to support pupils in recording their findings. The final challenge was to prove which of three identical pots was the one that contained a salt solution rather than just water (tasting forbidden!). Pupils made very good gains not only in their knowledge of dissolving, boiling, evaporating and other processes but also in terms of their understanding of proof. Very focused assessment based directly on what pupils had been intended to learn in the lesson enabled both them and the teacher to know how successful they had been.
77. The focus of work with pupils in Year 6 was revision on interpreting data from charts and graphs. Most pupils were able to explain what a particular graph, for example about the amount of sugar that dissolves in a volume of warm water showed, but they varied quite a lot in terms of their ability to write about it. The vast majority of the class were operating at least in line with national expectations for their age, with a substantial minority performing above this level. Higher attaining pupils, for example, made accurate interpretations of graphs and used the vocabulary of *variable*, *control* and *continuous* correctly. Another Year 6 class developed their ICT skills through visiting an educational website in order to work through revision tests. Extra scientific challenge was provided well for more able pupils, who had to find out why your heart is so important to you, how to keep your heart healthy and ways it can be damaged. This was very good use of ICT to support and extend learning in science.
78. Based on the lessons observed and examination of pupils' books, the overall quality of teaching is very good. During the inspection teaching was almost always of at least good standard and was never unsatisfactory; teaching in half of lessons was very good or excellent. Pupils have very good attitudes towards learning science; they clearly enjoy the investigative practical work and the challenge of attempting to find explanations.
79. The co-ordinator is effectively leading the development of a scheme of work that will provide very good guidance to all teachers, although the focus on learning objectives rather than learning activities is not yet sharp enough. High on her agenda for improvement is the development of



more use of ICT and trying to make sure that a higher proportion of girls achieve standards above the national expectation. She has ensured that the resources for the subject are good and that they are organised well; this makes an important contribution to raising standards. She recognises the need to monitor regularly the quality of pupils' work as well as teachers' planning and looks forward to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning directly through classroom observations.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

80. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 is good and above the expectations for their age. The school has maintained the standards seen at the last inspection.
81. The wide range of attractively displayed artwork on the classroom walls, in the hall and in the corridors shows how pupils have used a wide range of media, such as paints, pastels, and clay, to create wonderful pieces of art. The range of displays also reveals very good links between art and other subjects. In Year 4, for example, pupils' portraits of Tudor characters are linked to their work in history. There are very good links to literacy, numeracy and ICT. In a Year 3 lesson focused on developing the pupils' drawing techniques pupils spoke confidently about the line, tone and texture of their drawings, using adjectives to describe the marks they made on paper with their pencils. Pupils in Year 4 used a computer programme to help them design repeating wallpaper patterns. Throughout the school pupils use sketchbooks to record their ideas and designs for future work. Work leading on from pupils' sketchbooks is good.
82. Pupils in Year 5 worked in clay, making imaginative minibeasts, using different techniques to produce pleasing results. Pupils were keen to share their work and were genuinely interested in and impressed by other pupils' work. The teacher's good use of questioning encouraged pupils to comment constructively on other pupils' work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
83. Art is used to develop pupils' understanding of their own culture and that of others. In Year 3, pupils successfully made interesting and vibrant Aboriginal-style paintings. Art forms an important part of the school's work. The care with which it is displayed reflects the importance that teachers place on celebrating pupils' creative ability.
84. Teaching is very good overall. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of art as a subject. This was evident from the way they explained and demonstrated tasks to pupils. Good questioning also helped pupils to focus on the techniques they needed to use. Whilst work was progressing teachers also provided feedback and demonstrations to assist pupils with areas where they were experiencing difficulties. Pupils were absorbed by the tasks they were given. This was evident from their conversations about the work and their very good behaviour. Teachers' planning and preparation was detailed and thorough and this meant that pupils knew what they had to do and could settle to their work quickly.
85. The subject is very effectively managed. The long-term planning for art and design reflects national guidance for the subject. This helps to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study are covered. The co-ordinator is new to the role and very enthusiastic to continue to raise the profile of the subject in the school. She is well supported by the senior management team, local education authority and school governors. Pupils' work is assessed; however, the co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop assessment procedures further, relating assessments more closely to National Curriculum expectations. She is developing a portfolio of pupils' work so that she can effectively monitor progress from year group to year group. Resources for art and design are good and there is a detailed plan for developing the subject further.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

86. By the end of Year 6, standards of work in design and technology are above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in the subject throughout the school. This is consistent with the main findings of the last inspection. Because of timetabling arrangements, it was possible to sample Year 4 lessons only. Inspection judgements therefore also take into account planning for the subject, a portfolio of pupils' work and photographic evidence of completed products. Discussions were held with the subject co-ordinator and with Year 6 pupils.
87. Pupils gain good experience of different aspects of the design and technology curriculum, and their skills develop well as they move through the school. From Year 3 onwards, pupils are introduced systematically to different stages in the design process. They are able to investigate products, generate ideas, plan, make and evaluate. They draw and label appropriate diagrams; list relevant tools and materials and develop step-by-step detailed plans. In lessons observed during the inspection, Year 4 pupils began work to make a storybook with pop-up shapes and moving parts. They experimented with paper tabs and split pins to make lever mechanisms and succeeded in creating a variety of movements. Higher attaining pupils showed good understanding and could, for example, explain how to make legs of animals move in different directions by varying the place of fixed pivots above and below the lever. All took care to fold and cut out prototype shapes neatly. They began to write short but relevant evaluations of the work, identifying what had worked well and where they had found difficulties. The end products were clearly kept in mind, and pupils were able to suggest a good range of ideas for the final content of the storybook.
88. Year 6 pupils created model fairground rides during the autumn term, using an electric motor to generate movement. They had clearly understood the importance of precision in designing and making the models. Photographic evidence showed that they were detailed and finished to a good standard. A second topic involved creating shelters. This allowed more creative freedom over the design, and pupils valued the opportunity to experiment with different materials and shapes to meet the success criteria for a weatherproof shelter. All pupils review their work to identify what needs to be done to modify and improve upon first attempts. Some written evaluations in Years 5 and 6 are detailed and developed to a high standard.
89. There are good links to other subjects in the curriculum. Year 4 pupils design and make Tudor pouches, in the context of their work on the period in history, testing and choosing appropriate fabrics and decorative techniques. Work in science is supported by designs for torches, which require pupils to understand how a simple battery-operated circuit works. Written evaluations contribute well to the development of literacy skills. Sound use is made of ICT, with software programs to demonstrate control procedures and to produce artwork. However, the school recognises that this is an area for further development, particularly in the use of computer-aided design.
90. Teaching is good. The pace and timing of activities could be controlled more effectively in some extended afternoon sessions, but lessons are well planned in carefully structured steps. Teachers demonstrate skills and techniques clearly. They use questioning well to challenge pupils and develop their thinking. Examples of work produced by older pupils show that teachers have good expectations of what pupils can do. Work is displayed well in classrooms, and this encourages pupils to take pride in their achievements. As a result, learning is also good. The great majority of pupils have good attitudes to the subject. They listen carefully to teachers and follow instructions well. They co-operate in sharing equipment and support each other as the need arises. Year 6 pupils showed real enthusiasm for the practical and creative aspects of the work.
91. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has specialist qualifications and updates her skills by regular attendance at training meetings. She provides effective support for colleagues in developing the planning and delivery of the work. A clear policy and up-to-date schemes of work are in place. A portfolio of pupils' work helpfully demonstrates expected standards, though best practice in assessment could be developed more consistently. Resources for the subject are good. They are well organised, with an eye to safety, to enable easy retrieval by teachers.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

92. The school makes very good provision for geography. Overall, standards at the end of Year 6 are well above the standards expected nationally. Progress is also very good, as has been improvement in the subject since the last inspection.
93. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject are very good. They are confident in the use of geographical skills, which they use imaginatively and creatively in the often excellently planned tasks and units of work. They undertake much extended work, which is carefully tailored to cover map work, local studies, comparisons of different areas at home and abroad, and physical and social geography. This was evident throughout the school, from some very good work on Ringwood in Year 3, in which pupils had both drawn up a plan for a similar place, 'The Downend Town Plan', and also carefully considered the social needs of the area, 'What Ringwood Needs', to Year 5 work on pollution in a local stream and some most impressive project work in Year 6 on woodland conservation and the island of St. Lucia. Pupils are able to use books and computer programs for research. They become adept at using maps, models and aerial photographs to analyse the effects of human activity on the environment. This was apparent in a Year 4 lesson, in which pupils were identifying and classifying human activities in the New Forest, as part of their research into woodland conservation. This good knowledge leads to a care for the world environment, emphasised by the recent success of two Year 5 pupils in winning the first and second prizes in a competition promoting access to clear water for developing countries.
94. It was possible to see only one lesson during the inspection, in Year 4, but it is clear from this and from a detailed analysis of pupils' work that teachers have a very secure subject knowledge and stimulate pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. Overall planning and planning for individual lessons are excellent, containing very many planned links with other curriculum areas, well interwoven with geographical skills. Science and numeracy are both used well in aiding pupils to understand the physical side of geography; citizenship is an integral part of the course, making geography a valuable source of information about responsible living and behaviour in our world. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce literacy skills. Vocabulary is carefully introduced to present new concepts, many opportunities for improving speaking and listening are given in discussion and debate in topic work and writing is wide in range, with much extended writing in the form of individual project work, such as Year 6 pupils' booklets on woodland conservation. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' development are also well emphasised, as was seen in the very thoughtful and empathetic work done on the island of St. Lucia, helping to raise pupils' multicultural awareness. The clarity of planning ensures a very good level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the higher attaining, who learn very well as a result. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and make good progress.
95. Pupils show a very positive attitude towards the subject, in lessons and in discussions and so they behave very well and learn very well. Pupils were seen to work well together in groups in the lesson seen, sharing brochures of New Forest attractions as they discussed their categorisation. In discussion, pupils showed obvious enjoyment in expounding their knowledge about both the local environment and the principles of world stewardship.
96. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is extremely committed to inspiring pupils to a high level of interest in and enthusiasm for the subject and uses both planning and assessment of pupils' progress to great effect to guide future work and continue to raise standards. Much inspired project work is undertaken, so that the subject is clearly identified as one of enquiry. The curriculum is enriched by trips and visits, such as to the stream at Linford Bottom, areas of the New Forest and the yearly residential trip to France. Such visits inform their studies and help pupils to appreciate the links between what they learn at school and their understanding of the world around them.
97. Although several instances of the good use of ICT were seen and pupils are eager to use computer resources, this is an area for further development in the subject.

## **HISTORY**

98. The school makes very good provision for history. Standards of attainment are well above average by the end of Year 6, so that achievement is also very good. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.
99. Although it was not possible to observe any lessons in history during the inspection, since the subject alternates with geography, it is clear from a detailed analysis of work that pupils have a mature understanding of the subject and are developing to a high level the skills of historical study. Their written work shows a strong sense of chronology, aided by the many timelines around the school, very good use of investigation techniques, good use of both primary and secondary sources of information about the past and good empathy with and understanding of other times. Some excellent work was to be seen in Year 3 on the effects of World War 2 on Ringwood, in Year 4 on the Tudors, in Year 5 on the Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings and in Year 6 on Ancient Greece. Most impressive were inspired units of project work on the Ancient Egyptians, culminating in very good displays and written project work, as well as a display of pupils' models of mummified cats.
100. Lessons are clearly well planned, organised and resourced. Long-term and short-term planning is excellent, covering specific individuals, life for the rich and the poor, trading, entertainment, education, health and religion in other periods of history. Planning also ensures a high level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the higher attaining, while catering well for those with special educational needs. There are very good cross-curricular links in the teaching of the subject, through the emphasis on the skills of literacy in writing for many different purposes, ranging from the purely factual to the empathetic and creative, as well as on oral skills of debate and discussion. Numeracy is used well in the area of chronology; a sense of citizenship is well developed through the concentration on the social implications of life in other times. When ICT is used, it is used to good advantage.
101. Pupils are clearly very involved with their work and find it challenging and enjoyable. As a result, they learn very well and make very good progress. Much of their work is imaginative and thoughtful, showing much development in social, moral and cultural areas, as they pursue ways of life and motivation in other times.
102. At present, the headteacher is caretaking the co-ordination of the subject. However, the existing work programmes are very good, assessment is thorough and used to inform teachers on pupils' progress, and resources and artefacts are plentiful and well used. The subject is greatly enriched by the many visits arranged by the school, such as those to the Globe Theatre, the Tate Gallery, St. Paul's Cathedral, and the Imperial War Museum. A regular highlight in the provision is provided by 'Living History' days, when a visitor to the school provides an active experience in such areas as Ancient Egypt, Anglo-Saxon life or being an evacuee in World War 2. Activities are demanding and inspiring, ensuring an interest in the past and what can be learned from it.
103. An area for development is the further use of ICT in historical research, as the school acquires more programs and resources in this area.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

104. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in information communication technology (ICT) is above national expectations. At the time of the last inspection attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations and so there has been good improvement since then.
105. Pupils make good progress in developing their ICT skills throughout the school. Overall, skill-based lessons are appropriately challenging, purposeful and motivating. All classes are timetabled to use the computer suite for one hour each week to develop pupils' ICT skills. Teachers' planning for these sessions is good. However, teachers do not consistently plan to use ICT to support learning in other subjects. Opportunities are missed for using pupils' skills and the resources available to support and extend learning in other subjects, including mathematics, science and design and technology; there are good examples of its use in literacy. During the inspection week little use was made of the three networked computers available in each year

group to support teaching and learning. There is too little routine use of computers in the classroom.

106. Pupils are encouraged to share and exchange ideas and to present, explain and evaluate their ICT-based work. This was evident from the lessons observed, from discussions with pupils and from scrutiny of pupils' work. In the computer room pupils use the skills they have learned to carry out research on the Internet. In Year 5, pupils downloaded images from the Internet about the Egyptians and presented their findings using a word processing programme. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils confidently searched the Internet to find factual data to consolidate and extend their scientific understanding. Higher attaining pupils refined their searches to look for more specific information. Pupils in Year 4 wrote a series of instructions to operate an on-screen programmable device. Pupils responded positively to the challenge and enjoy experimenting

with different procedures to make the machine work. Pupils worked well together to reflect, modify and discuss the procedures they needed to operate the machine. Many pupils use their computers at home constructively to look for information that is linked to their schoolwork.

107. ICT makes an important contribution to pupils' social development because it provides opportunities for them to share work collaboratively and comment constructively on one another's work. Most teachers make good use of this opportunity to extend pupils' language skills. Pupils enjoy their ICT skills-based lessons and have very positive attitudes to learning. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school and their range of skills steadily improves as their confidence grows.
108. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have become increasingly confident, following national training, in their ability to teach pupils about new programs in the computer room. Learning intentions are well defined and shared with pupils so that they know what they need to do to raise their standards of achievement. Teachers' skilled questioning helps develop pupils' understanding and use of technical language.
109. All aspects of ICT have been improved since the school's last inspection. The scheme of work has been updated to reflect national initiatives and new developments in the subject. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to update and refine the ICT policy. The subject has been identified as an area for development in the school improvement plan. There are well-considered plans to purchase more resources and use these effectively to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. The recently modernised staffroom with networked computers will enable teachers to use information communication technology to manage their own administrative workload more effectively and provides them with better access to electronic information to support teaching and learning. The range and quality of resources available for teaching the subject have been improved. Hardware and software provision is now good. There are plans to purchase a digital projector and a computer for each classroom to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.
110. The computer suite is used well at lunchtimes when pupils use it to follow up work. For example, pupils from Year 6 used national test revision programs while a pupil from Year 5 composed lyrics for a song she was writing.
111. The subject is very well led and managed and the co-ordinator is committed to improving the use of ICT across the school. The system that the school presently uses for assessing pupils' work does not clearly define what pupils know and understand against National Curriculum levels of attainment. However, there are plans to develop and improve the assessment and recording of pupils' ICT skills and to focus on raising standards of attainment through further improving the quality of teaching and learning and the use of ICT. The co-ordinator does not at present have the opportunity to observe ICT lessons to monitor the quality of teaching or to see lessons in which ICT is used to support teaching and learning in other subjects.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

112. The school has recently introduced the teaching of French in Year 3. In the next three years, it is intended to extend this provision throughout the school. The course is taught by an experienced language teacher from the local secondary school as part of a local initiative to meet the eventual national aim for the teaching of a modern foreign language in junior schools.
113. In the Year 3 lesson observed during the week of the inspection, pupils showed a high level of interested response and enjoyment as they sang the French alphabet to tunes of their own choice, adding to the excitement and suspense as the rest of the class guessed the tunes. Owing to the very good knowledge, energy and management of the teacher, the lesson flew past and ended too soon for the pupils, who expressed disappointment at having to stop their activities. Most impressive was the exclusive use of the target language; already pupils were able to understand, follow commands and give brief answers of their own.
114. The course is indubitably adding much to the school's curriculum in terms of breadth, enrichment and cultural value, as well as being a measure which will ease the pupils' transition to secondary school.

## **MUSIC**

115. Pupils throughout the school reach the standards expected for their age and enjoy their music-making activities. Achievement is satisfactory for the majority, including those with special educational needs. Good numbers of pupils also receive specialist tuition in a range of different instruments, and the school's recorder ensemble and singing club are very popular weekly activities. Many of the pupils who opt to take part achieve well as a result of this good extra provision. The judgements made are similar to those in the last inspection, except that standards of singing have improved significantly. Regular opportunities to sing are created in lesson time. Weekly singing assemblies are also held, led by a specialist music teacher. During the inspection, pupils sang tunefully and with enthusiasm, accompanied by a piano. Part-singing was sustained with gusto in the latter half of the assembly.
116. In two Year 3 lessons observed, pupils improvised rhythmic patterns using voice and different parts of the body. In developing the exercise, they were able to interpret simple graphic notation imaginatively and began to record their own improvisations visually. Pupils in both classes knew the meaning of a range of technical vocabulary, including 'dynamics', 'pitch' and 'tempo'. They were able to explore the practical meaning of these terms in their work.
117. In lessons for each year group, there was a clear progression in the development of musical skills and understanding. Year 4 pupils improvised more regular rhythmical patterns, using percussion instruments and drums to underscore the beat of performance poems, which they had jointly composed on the theme of the rainforest. In Year 5, pupils explored and recorded more complex rhythms through their knowledge of nursery rhymes, to support their musical appreciation of Bizet's work 'Carillon' from his 'L'Arlesienne' suite. In Year 6 lessons observed, pupils responded thoughtfully to an appreciation of a blues song, and demonstrated that they were able to use pitched and unpitched instruments in small group and ensemble work to perform simple chord progressions, which are typical of this music. They felt a real sense of achievement when they were able to perform the progression successfully, after a number of rehearsals. Teachers make good use of tape recorders and video equipment during lessons, so that pupils can review their work and decide how it could be improved.
118. Teaching is good overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Examples of very good teaching were observed in Year 6 and Year 3. Lessons are well planned and teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils' involvement. The basic skills of music are taught systematically. Some teachers are less confident in teaching the subject, however. In these cases, there was a relative weakness in the pace of activities and clarity of explanation. Preparation for the lesson was sometimes not sufficiently thorough. But pupils in all classes show interest in practical music-making. They respond well and work co-operatively in pairs and small groups when asked to do so. As a result, learning is good.
119. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She is a knowledgeable musician and provides helpful support to colleagues. Policy and planning have been revised and updated in the light of new

Hampshire guidelines. At the time of the inspection, she was absent on maternity leave. The acting co-ordinator provided effective continuity, with the support of a part-time music specialist, who took responsibility for the recorder ensemble and singing club. Participation in extra-curricular activities is very good, and pupils have a range of opportunities to develop performance skills at special events throughout the year, including Christmas productions and Arts week presentations. A number of pupils at the school also took part in a recorder workshop led by the LEA music adviser, just before Easter. A video of the event showed that the final performance was very successful and their achievement was much appreciated by an audience of parents.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is well above the national expectation. Physical education is a strength of the school. During the last inspection, standards were judged to be in line with national expectations; there has been a high level of improvement. The school is very committed to promoting and involving all pupils and the local community in all aspects of

physical education. The school has recently been awarded the Sportsmark Gold Achievement Award, which recognises the commitment to physical education and sports provision both during curriculum time and for extra-curricular activities. This is an outstanding achievement.

121. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in lessons and the school provides opportunities for the more able athletes to participate in specialist classes to develop their skills further. An example of this was seen during the inspection week when a session for able gymnasts was observed. The teacher's very good subject knowledge enabled her to extend pupils' understanding and provide work of sufficient variety to challenge all pupils. As a result pupils enjoyed their learning experience and acquired new skills as well as refining existing ones. The school teaches all the elements of the National Curriculum, as well as providing an excellent range of extra-curricular activities for pupils, ranging from competitive sport to fun team games, including swimming in its own pool. Every year almost all pupils achieve the national expectation of swimming 25 metres unaided; many greatly exceed this. The school actively encourages pupils to participate in competitive sport and its sports teams are very successful in local competitions. The physical education curriculum is enhanced by visiting professionals who inspire and motivate pupils. Over the past year a dance specialist and a national team long jump athlete have worked with pupils.
122. During the inspection week pupils were observed in dance, gymnastics and games lessons. Teachers' very good planning ensures that all pupils are provided with activities that build effectively on their existing levels of skill and understanding. This leads to improvement in their attainment; the degree of pupils' achievement is consistently very good. For example, in a Year 6 dance lesson focusing on dance and music from other cultures pupils confidently developed a sequence of movements using a style of dance from India. The teacher's detailed planning, use of resources and very good subject knowledge enabled her to break down the movements and demonstrate to pupils how to move their bodies in a particular way to form the movements. The pupils were totally immersed in dancing and thoroughly enjoyed performing. Pupils were given the opportunity to observe the performance of others and to provide constructive comments to help their friends improve their performance. By doing this, pupils' attention was drawn to new and more effective ways of improving their own performance.
123. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and this enables them to help all pupils develop skills, knowledge and techniques effectively. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and use the scheme of work and their own knowledge of the subject to provide activities which support pupils' continual improvement. Literacy and numeracy are effectively promoted in lessons; for example in a Year 4 gymnastics lesson the teacher regularly encouraged pupils to use the correct technical vocabulary to describe what they were doing with their bodies to create tension and control their movements. The digital video recorder and the digital camera are used by teachers to record pupils' achievements. Pupils in Year 6 watch their own performance recorded on video to help them improve and refine their techniques in dance and games lessons; this is good use of ICT resources

124. The co-ordinator leads the subject very effectively and has excellent subject knowledge. The scheme of work is a secure framework and ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Assessment procedures record what pupils have learnt in lessons but teachers do not categorise what pupils know, understand and can do against the National Curriculum levels of attainment. The co-ordinator recognises that this is an area for further development. There is a very good range of high quality resources that help teachers to provide a very broad range of activities to support pupils' learning. The school makes good use of the swimming pool and extensive accommodation outside the school buildings, including a floodlit netball court and a floodlit football pitch.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. The school's provision for religious education is good. Standards in religious education are above those required by the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6. Pupils make good progress and standards have improved well since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
126. There is a good focus on a broad curriculum that helps pupils make good progress. In Years 3 and 4, pupils study Judaism, looking at celebrations such as Rosh Hashanah and symbolic events, such as the Seder meal. They discover the stories of the Old Testament and learn about important people such as Moses and Abraham and become conversant with the New Testament, through the story of the Nativity, Palm Sunday and the Last Supper. Emphasis is laid on stimulating pupils' imaginations by, for instance, a range of Creation stories. In Years 5 and 6, pupils study Islam in some detail, looking at the Qu'ran and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Their study of Christianity is extended through the lives of famous people, such as Mother Theresa, through thoughtful examination of parables such as the Good Samaritan and through an examination of Christian symbolism. A very good example of creative and imaginative work in this area was seen in a Year 5 exploration of the comparison between the Easter story and C.S. Lewis's 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'. In Year 6, pupils are carefully introduced to the concept of God and a consideration of the characteristics of a god.
127. Teaching is at least good, sometimes very good, with a strong emphasis on developing pupils' natural curiosity. In a successful Year 3 lesson examining how and why lifetime events are 'special' and exploring the ingredients of a celebration of these events, lively and informed teaching encouraged pupils to discuss the special events in their own lives and to recognise their significance in the lives of others. The teacher ensured that all pupils had opportunities to contribute their own ideas, helping to raise awareness of celebrations such as births, christenings and weddings. The teacher's good use of photographs of her own special events enabled pupils to see their significance and to respond with enthusiasm and interest. Time is well used in lessons, with pupils learning to research for themselves, as in a Year 5 lesson on the mosque, where pupils used video clips and Internet programs to find out more about the subject.
128. Assemblies, working on weekly objectives, help to emphasise religious themes. During the week of the inspection, the theme of 'helping others' was brought to a good culmination by the headteacher's account of the helpfulness and sense of community he had found in a recent trip to Barbados. The school makes effective use of resources through visits to mosques, synagogues and churches in the local area and further afield, in order to increase pupils' understanding of the variety of cultures and beliefs that co-exist in this country. The subject knowledge and understanding gained is used well to improve the quality of learning in classrooms. Pupils are eager to ask and enquire about various aspects of belief, as seen in the Year 6 lesson on the meaning and nature of God. The good management of the subject has ensured that standards have improved and that all staff are effectively supported.
129. An area for development in the subject is the implementation of a policy for ensuring that a sense of the spiritual is communicated to pupils throughout the curriculum, rather than just in religious education lessons. The subject caters well for all areas of literacy, such as debate and discussion, reading and varied styles of writing. Moral and social ideas are firmly built in to the planning and the teaching and there is a strong emphasis on good citizenship.



130. A further area for development is the greater use of ICT to help research projects. Staff are seeking effective ways of incorporating this into their planning.