

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WOODCOT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bridgemary, Gosport

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116166

Headteacher: Mrs Lynda Smith

Reporting inspector: Mrs Julie Hooper  
15334

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 247620

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Tukes Avenue Bridgemaury Gosport
Postcode:	P013 0SG
Telephone number:	01329 234381
Fax number:	01329 823911
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Morris
Date of previous inspection:	6 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15334	Mrs Julie Hooper	Registered inspector	Science Art and design	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught What the school should do to improve further Educational inclusion
19664	Mr John Bayliss	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
32136	Mrs Lesley Brookes	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage History Religious education	
3586	Mrs Betty Camplin	Team inspector	English Design and technology	How well the school is led and managed English as an additional language.
28882	Mrs Barbara Jones	Team inspector	Geography Music	Special educational needs The work of the special needs unit for pupils with a hearing impairment
20846	Mr Alan Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

The inspection contractor was:

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

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway

London WC2B 6SE

# REPORT CONTENTS

Page

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

6-9

Information about the school  
How good the school is  
What the school does well  
What could be improved  
How the school has improved since its last inspection  
Standards  
Pupils' attitudes and values  
Teaching and learning  
Other aspects of the school  
How well the school is led and managed  
Parents' and carers' views of the school

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

10-13

The school's results and pupils' achievements  
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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

13-14

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

14-16

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

16-18

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

18-19

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

20-22

### **THE UNIT FOR PUPILS WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT**

22-23

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

23-24

## **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

25-28

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

29-43

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Bridgemary just outside Gosport, an area where many families are socially and economically disadvantaged. It is a larger than average primary school catering for boys and girls between the ages of four and eleven. Most of the pupils who attend the school are from the immediate area. Currently there are 286 pupils on roll, which is almost the same as at the last inspection. The pupils are in 11 classes. The school also has a specialist unit for pupils with a hearing impairment; the four pupils currently in the unit are integrated into all areas of school life. Children enter school with varying experiences, but in general their attainment on entry is below that expected for their age. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the normal times is low. Twenty per cent of pupils are on the school's register for pupils with special educational but currently there are no up-to-date statistics to compare these with national figures. However, previous figures show that the school had nearly double the national average of pupils on its register of special educational needs. Ten pupils including those with a hearing impairment, and others with physical, learning and behavioural needs, have a statement of special educational needs; proportionally this is well above the national figure. **Almost all pupils are white and one pupil speaks English as an additional language.** Over 21 per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Woodcot Primary is an effective school. It provides a good education for its pupils in a supportive environment. Most pupils have good attitudes towards their work, which has a positive impact on their learning. The test results of the Year 6 pupils in 2002 showed that standards in English and mathematics were better than those in 2001 and are continuing to improve. The quality of teaching is good overall and some very good teaching was observed during the inspection. The school works hard to be fully inclusive and is effective in promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for taking the school forward and this includes improving standards and providing a programme of work that meets the needs of all pupils. Governors are supportive and appropriately involved. The school provides sound value for money.

#### What the school does well

- The children have a very good start to their education in the reception class.
- The quality of the teaching is good overall, and this is responsible for the improvement in standards in English, mathematics and especially science.
- The headteacher and deputy provide very good leadership so that the whole school community is committed to raising standards.
- The good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development promotes good relationships and behaviour and the positive attitudes pupils have towards their learning.
- The very good provision for pupils with a hearing impairment.
- The school knows and looks after its pupils very well and provides a secure learning environment; this raises pupils' self-esteem enabling most pupils to achieve their best.

#### What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science.\*
- The use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress and to plan appropriate work for individual and groups of pupils with different abilities.\*
- The policies for special educational needs require updating in order to meet legal requirements.\*

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

*\*These issues have been identified in the school's improvement plan.*

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

Since the school's last inspection in October 1997 the picture of the school has varied considerably. For example, when the headteacher took up her appointment in September 2000, she found considerable weaknesses in curricular provision, pupils' progress, and the standards pupils were attaining, especially in English and mathematics. Since then, the school has made good progress in addressing these issues. Most of the areas identified in the last inspection report as strengths are being maintained. The school has addressed the key issues for improvement so that standards in information and communication technology are better, as is the personal and social development of

children in the reception class. The provision for pupils' cultural development is now good, and the school is improving pupils' writing skills by providing additional opportunities to write in other subjects. In addition, despite the high turnover of teachers, the overall quality of teaching has improved, as there was a higher percentage of very good teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching observed during the inspection. The curriculum is better and the school is successfully linking subjects to make learning meaningful for the pupils. Improvements to the building are on-going; currently a new computer suite is being installed. Since the last inspection, and the appointment of the headteacher, the school has made sound improvements and is well placed to develop further.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards in science in 2002 were average showing good improvement. Since 2000, the standards attained by the pupils at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics have been well below the national average, but have steadily improved, with an increase in the number of pupils attaining the expected Level 4; a trend that is continuing into 2003. When these results are compared with those of pupils in similar schools, although well below average in mathematics, they were average in English and above average in science. In the 2002 national tests, pupils at the end of Year 2 attained average standards in reading and below average standards in writing and mathematics. These results were much better when compared with similar schools, especially in reading. Teachers' assessments in science indicated pupils' attainment to be average. The targets set for the pupils, currently in Year 6, to attain in the national tests are challenging but realistic.

The children currently in the reception class are in line to reach the expected standards in all areas of development. In Years 2 and 6, standards attained by pupils in English, mathematics and science remain below average, mainly because of the higher number of pupils with special educational needs in both groups. More pupils are attaining the higher Level 5 than last year in Year 6 in these subjects. In Years 2 and 6, standards in all other subjects are as expected for these age groups, although there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in music in Years 2 and 6 and design and technology in Year 2. Some of the singing in assemblies was better than that normally expected, and there were some examples of better than expected standards in art and design and design and technology. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in either year group.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in spoken and written English. The pupils with a hearing impairment make very good progress in line with their targets in all subjects. Pupils who show exceptional gifts and talents in any area of the curriculum are actively encouraged to develop these. For example, pupils identified by the school to be gifted in science joined pupils from other schools in a scientific challenge activity.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils come to school happily and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in classrooms and around school. They are friendly and polite. It has been necessary occasionally to exclude pupils when their behaviour

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



	does not meet the school's high expectations.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The school is socially inclusive and harmonious relationships exist within it.
Attendance	Satisfactory. A recent trend of falling attendance has been reversed and attendance is now broadly in line with that achieved nationally.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching observed varied from satisfactory to excellent. Most of the good and very good teaching was observed in the reception class, the unit for hearing impaired pupils, and in the classes of the oldest pupils.

The staff in the reception class have a clear understanding of the needs of young children and promote them well, through a wide range of stimulating activities, so the children make good and sometimes very good progress in their learning. The specialist staff in the unit for hearing impaired pupils have a wide knowledge of how to promote pupils' learning through signed language skills in all areas of the curriculum and use this very effectively.

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics lessons is mostly good, and pupils learn effectively because the school has identified and focused upon the need to improve standards in these subjects. Most lessons are planned with a clear focus on what pupils are going to learn and, in the best lessons, teachers use skilful questioning techniques to consolidate pupils' previous learning before introducing new facts and concepts. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually good. Although most teachers plan lessons in detail, there were examples in Years 1 and 2 when planning was brief and, in these cases, opportunities were missed to promote learning. Similarly, planning did not often indicate the range of work to be covered, so the pace of learning was sometimes slow. In the lessons where the quality of teaching is good or better, teachers show great enthusiasm, have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and lessons move at a brisk pace, promoting learning very successfully. Class discipline is usually good and most pupils listen attentively and respond well, which enhances and extends their learning.

Teachers do not always use assessment information to plan appropriate work for individuals and groups of pupils with different abilities. However, teachers provide well for pupils with special educational needs and especially those with a hearing impairment so they are fully included in all activities. The quality of marking, although variable, is satisfactory overall; in the best examples the teachers make comments that help the pupils move on in their learning. Homework is used effectively to support pupils' learning. Learning support assistants make a very valuable contribution to the pupils' education and are briefed well by teachers about what the pupils are learning and how they should make their input.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school works hard and successfully to plan imaginative and stimulating activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, overall. These pupils have access to the full curriculum and the good support they receive enables them to make good and sometimes very good progress in their learning. The provision for pupils with a hearing impairment is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has good procedures in place to enable these pupils to make good progress in their spoken and written English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school provides well for the pupils' personal development through well planned opportunities to develop the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There is a high priority placed on the individual needs of pupils. All members of the school community work together to ensure pupils are looked after well. Child protection arrangements are excellent. Good procedures for assessment are in place.
--	---

The school's partnership with parents is good. They receive good quality information about school activities. The school welcomes the support of parents in its work and parents make a satisfactory contribution to the life of the school. The school has good links with the pre-school group and other partner institutions.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and deputy have a strong vision for improving the school which is shared by other members of the senior staff. Initiatives for developing the curriculum are beginning to raise standards because teachers are concentrating on improving the management of key subjects and aspects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are very supportive in helping the school to improve. They have a good understanding of its needs and manage the turnover of teachers very well. In general, they meet their statutory responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has identified reasons for weaknesses in standards and has used the information to plan teachers' professional development and the right priorities for sustaining improvements in standards. It is developing increasingly effective procedures for checking progress with the school's action plan.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The financial planning process is well organised with a clear cycle of planning and review. Administration arrangements and day-to-day control of finances are very good. The school applies the principles of best value well.

The provision of the teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum is good. Resources are satisfactory, overall. The accommodation is satisfactory and enables all areas of the curriculum to be taught adequately.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good with high expectations.</li> <li>• They feel confident about approaching the school with suggestions and concerns.</li> <li>• The information they receive.</li> <li>• Recent improvements to the school building.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework arrangements.</li> <li>• Closer working with parents.</li> <li>• More opportunities for activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Overall, the inspection team supports the parents' positive comments. However, the team disagrees with the concerns expressed by small number of parents. Homework is used well to support pupils' work in lessons. The school makes every effort to work closely with parents and has an 'open door' approach so parents can make an appointment to see the teacher or headteacher about their child's progress, or discuss problems they may have at any time. The school provides an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities through lunchtime clubs, residential and school visits, and visitors who share their expertise with the pupils.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. Children enter the reception class with a wide range of different experiences. Assessment and inspection evidence shows that the majority of children enter with below average attainment; many with weaknesses in their speaking and listening skills. Due to the good quality of teaching in the reception class, they make good progress in all areas of learning and, by the time they enter Year 1, the majority achieve the early learning goals<sup>2</sup> in all six areas of the Foundation Stage<sup>3</sup> curriculum. This represents a similar judgement to that at the previous inspection with an improvement in children's personal and social development.
2. Standards by the end of Year 2 in English, mathematics and science at the previous inspection were judged to be average and also in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In English standards by the end of Year 6 were below average. Statistics show that in 1999, standards at the end of Year 2 were similar to those at the last inspection, but by the end of Year 6 standards in all three subjects had dropped to well below average. In 2002, standards attained by the pupils at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics were still well below the national average, but the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 was greater. Standards in science in 2002 were average, showing a good improvement. When these results are compared with those of pupils in similar schools, although well below average in mathematics, they were average in English and above average in science. In the 2002 national tests, the pupils at the end of Year 2 attained average standards in reading and below average standards in writing and mathematics. These results were much better when compared with similar schools, especially in reading. Teachers' assessments in science indicated average attainment. In both year groups standards are improving. In Year 6 the improvement is in line with most schools with more pupils overall, especially in science, achieving the expected Level 4 for their age. The 2003 targets set for the pupils currently in Year 6 in the national tests are challenging but realistic.
3. Standards in English, mathematics and science of the pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are below average, mainly because there is a higher proportion than normal of pupils with special educational needs in both groups. However, in both year groups there are pupils who are achieving the higher levels, especially in Year 6, **although there is still room for improvement.** Over time, as they move through the school, most pupils progress and achieve satisfactorily in these subjects, but this varies from year group to year group and is mainly dependent on the quality of teaching and teachers' expectations. At present, there are also inconsistencies in the standards of work between classes containing parallel year groups because lesson planning and methods of assessment are not sufficiently rigorous. **In all year groups, pupils' work in some of their books indicates that teachers' expectations of pupils are sometimes not high enough. Progress in the pupils' recorded work is sometimes inconsistent and could be improved. By the time they reach Years 5 and 6, most pupils make good progress in their learning, achieve well and meet the high expectations of the teachers.**
4. New curriculum developments are also beginning to have an impact on standards especially in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Pupils in these year groups have become increasingly confident in using literacy and numeracy to help them communicate effectively and solve problems. Unvalidated results from this year's national tests indicate that pupils in Year 6 have performed better than was initially expected of them a year ago. The work seen also shows that pupils in Year 5 are already performing at levels that make it likely that they will attain the considerably higher targets set for results in 2004.

---

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

<sup>3</sup> The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

5. The school has also placed a great emphasis recently on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, and teaching in this area has improved so that standards are broadly average in all year groups. However, there are still some pupils who are reluctant to answer questions and make comments in lessons. Reading skills are only just below average. Skills are taught systematically as the pupils move through the school and in Year 6, the pupils read a wide range of texts with understanding. In their writing all pupils are developing and using appropriate techniques to plan and structure their work as they write for a range of audiences and purposes. However, overall, standards in writing are well below average. Most pupils present their work neatly although standards in spelling and grammar are below average. Also, many find it difficult to complete work in a given time usually when the work is not stimulating or meaningful.
6. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of number is improving, and, throughout the school, pupils are generally confident when applying this knowledge to solving problems. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects. In science, most pupils progress steadily in the development of their knowledge and understanding of science facts, and the emphasis put on developing pupils' scientific enquiry has had a positive impact on the improving standards in science.
7. By the end of Years 2 and 6, the standards pupils attain in information and communication technology are now as expected for their age due to the improved provision. By Year 2, most pupils are familiar with the most commonly used keys on a keyboard and use these, as well as the mouse, with reasonable confidence to direct what is happening on the monitor. In Year 6, pupils regularly use computers to edit their writing and are becoming increasingly aware of the wider uses of information and communication technology through the use of equipment, such as sensors and digital cameras.
8. The standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 6 in all other subjects are as expected for their ages although there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in music in Years 2 and 6 and in design and technology in Year 2. Some of the singing in assemblies was better than normally found and there were some examples of better than expected standards in art and design and design and technology.
9. Pupils with a range of special educational needs, which include learning, speech and language, physical, sensory, medical, emotional and behavioural difficulties, show good achievement, in general, against their individual targets; sometimes their progress is very good. Their needs are identified early and very good intervention programs are put into place to help them particularly in literacy. **Attainment for these pupils with special educational needs is below or well below expected levels** in most subjects, although in some practical or creative aspects of the curriculum, for example, physical education and art and design standards **are as expected or better**. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in spoken and written English. Pupils who show exceptional gifts and talents in any area of the curriculum are actively encouraged to develop these. For example, a group of pupils in Year 6, seen by the school as being gifted in science, has been involved recently in developing its scientific skills to an above-average level in an exciting inter-school activity called 'The solar car challenge'.

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

10. At the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and personal development were judged to be strengths of the school. This positive situation has been maintained. Despite having a **significant** number of pupils with emotional and behavioural problems, the school is successful in supporting these so that very few pupils display less than satisfactory attitudes to work and behaviour, with the large majority working hard and behaving well. Attendance has improved recently.
11. In the reception class routines enable children to feel secure, and they are confident in selecting activities, they play together happily for extended periods and take responsibility for organising themselves during a range of activities. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

12. Throughout the rest of the school pupils' attitudes to school are good. These help pupils' learning and, hence, the standards they achieve. The school day begins in an orderly way, with pupils settling quietly to set tasks, whilst teachers mark class registers. There is a positive atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils generally listen well to the teachers' introductions in lessons. The response to instructions from teachers is good, frequently very good in the Years 5 and 6 classes. The very large majority of pupils are courteous and polite being friendly with adults but never in a disrespectful way. Pupils respect the values and beliefs of others and this is apparent in the way the majority relate to each other both in lessons and elsewhere. A particular strength of the school is the successful integration of pupils from the unit for the hearing impaired. They are valued and their talents, particularly their ability to use sign language, are viewed positively by their classmates. The development of consideration for others is strengthened by the effective integration of these pupils. Pupils of all ages and abilities concentrate and apply themselves well even when, occasionally, the lesson is less stimulating than it might be. In Year 6, pupils speak of how much they enjoy lessons, struggling to find anything they do not like.
13. In lessons, although there is some reticence at times, most pupils enjoy taking part in question and answer sessions, during which they are happy to take turns without inappropriate shouting out. They show an interest in what they are doing and get involved readily in whatever activity is presented to them. Though the pupils in the lower part of the school are sometimes slow to initiate conversations with adults, they listen with attention to what is being said. As they move through the school pupils gain in confidence and speak sensibly, for example, when pupils in Year 6 discussed their views of the school with inspectors. Their comments about the school and the part they play in its activities are well considered reflecting mature, positive attitudes to school and learning.
14. Pupils with special educational needs show good attitudes towards their work. Very good relationships are formed across the school and respect given to the efforts of others. The school places strong emphasis on personal development for those with emotional and behavioural problems. Targets are set to raise standards. The school uses a range of personal and general incentives to motivate pupils to make good effort with their learning and behaviour and a high emphasis is put on raising pupils' self esteem. The good policy of inclusion has been greatly beneficial towards personal development for pupils with special educational needs.
15. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Parents, rightly, have few concerns about behaviour. There are some potentially disruptive pupils within the school, with recognised emotional and behavioural problems, but all adults are skilled in managing instances of inappropriate behaviour and as a result very little was observed during the inspection. There is nothing to suggest that when misbehaviour occurs it is the result of sexism or racism. All pupils, whatever their age, sex, or personal circumstances, get on very well with each other and nothing was seen to suggest that when the very occasional incident of inappropriate behaviour occurs it is oppressive. There is no evidence of vindictive bullying or sexism within the school. Incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with sensitively but, when necessary, the school takes action to protect the interests of the majority and it has been necessary to exclude pupils at various times for fixed terms in the past year, although these are generally associated with pupils with recognised behavioural problems. No permanent exclusions have been necessary in recent times. Break and lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions. In the playground there is some occasional boisterous behaviour, but no more than that to be expected when pupils are given the opportunity to let off steam away from the constraints of the classroom. The pupils play well together at all times. School rules are clear. They are understood and accepted as fair by the pupils.
16. Opportunities for pupils to show initiative and display personal responsibility, though largely routine, are readily grasped. The very large majority of pupils of all ages respond appropriately to the school's provision for their personal development that meets with approval from almost all parents. Although somewhat limited in the lower part of the school pupils are provided with opportunities to assume responsibility that steadily increases throughout their school life. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are rarely less than good, and often very good, especially in Years 5 and 6. Pupils co-operate well with each other in lessons; they share materials and help each other when working in pairs and larger groups. Throughout the school the pupils mature as individuals becoming socially aware, developing views and opinions that are soundly based, and being able to express them sensibly. All the pupils readily involve themselves in charitable activities showing recognition of the need to help those less fortunate than themselves.

17. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. A recent trend of falling attendance has been reversed in the past year as a result of improved procedures. The school's absence statistics for 2002/03 show an improvement over the published results for 2001/02, an increase to 94.2 per cent, likely to be broadly in line with that achieved nationally by similar schools. There is little unauthorised absence and no evidence of truancy. Unauthorised absence is the result of a small number of parents having a relaxed attitude to the importance of school attendance, and not complying with the school's expectations and procedures. Absence that can be avoided, for example, parents taking holidays during term time, concerns the school because of the way it reduces the quality of learning for the pupils that are involved. Punctuality in the morning is generally good. When instances of lateness occur, they are of a minor nature and are not disruptive to lessons.

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

18. The quality of teaching is good overall, although it varies from satisfactory to excellent. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, as there was a higher percentage of very good teaching seen, with two-thirds of lessons being good or better, and no unsatisfactory teaching observed. Most of the good and very good teaching was observed in the reception class, the unit for hearing impaired pupils and in the classes of the oldest pupils. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 was satisfactory.
19. In the reception class the quality of teaching is good overall with some very good examples seen. The reception teacher ensures that the planning of children's learning is matched to the national guidance materials. There is a very good understanding of the needs of young children and activities are chosen that offer them appropriate challenge. The strong liaison between the teacher and the learning support assistants ensures that there is a very good understanding of what the children are to learn and the most effective ways to achieve this. Good support for children with special educational needs and with English as an additional language ensures that they make good progress. Resources are generally of good quality and well organised and hold the children's interest well. The management of the children is very good and relationships are warm and purposeful. This ensures that the children settle quickly into the day-to-day routines of the school and become aware of the expectations that the class teacher has of them.
20. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics lessons is mostly good and pupils learn effectively. The school's high priority and strategies to improve standards in these subjects have raised teachers' confidence and improved teaching. Basic skills, such as letter-sound recognition and number facts, are taught well. Most lessons are planned with a clear focus on what pupils are going to learn. Teachers often involve the pupils in their own learning by telling them what they are going to learn at the beginning of the lesson and, at the end, asking them to demonstrate that they have achieved this. In the best lessons teachers use skilful questioning techniques to consolidate pupils' previous learning before introducing new facts and ideas. For example, in an excellent English lesson, a teacher of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 used probing questions to draw on their learning from the previous day, encouraging them to use precise answers and specific vocabulary. She used examples of pupils' writing for them to evaluate, and challenged them to improve phrases before they revised and edited their own work. To ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons, teachers often vary the difficulty of their questions skilfully and sensitively to challenge pupils of different levels of ability.
21. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually good. In a very good science lesson, the teacher of pupils in Year 5 promoted her very good knowledge of plant reproduction well. She used the correct scientific terms when introducing parts of the plants and the processes involved, and encouraged pupils to use them in their descriptions. She also brought her great enthusiasm for the subject to the lesson, encouraging pupils to reflect on the wonders of nature by explaining how the tall poppy plants she was using had grown from minute seeds. This was another feature of the very good teaching.
22. Although most teachers plan lessons in detail, there were examples especially in Years 1 and 2 when planning was brief and so opportunities were missed to promote learning. For example, in a science lesson with pupils in Year 1, the teacher was developing pupils' understanding that darkness is the absence of light. Whilst looking at a book of pictures, one pupil said 'The sun is

shining', but the teacher had not anticipated this and so did not develop pupils' learning by asking, 'How do you know?' Also, lesson planning did not always indicate precisely what the pupils were going to learn or the range of work to be covered, so lessons lacked rigour and the pace of learning was too slow.

23. In the lessons where the quality of teaching is good or better, teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and lessons move at a brisk pace, promoting learning very successfully. Teachers with specialist knowledge often promote learning well and pupils achieve above the expected standards. For example, in a 'singing assembly' with the pupils in Years 3 to 6, the teacher not only promoted pupils' musical knowledge well, she also used her expertise effectively to influence the singing so that pupils sang tunefully, with good diction, and many pupils achieved better than the expected standards.
24. Most teachers manage their pupils well providing a good learning environment in which pupils listen attentively and respond well, enhancing and extending their learning. In the best lessons teachers praise pupils who behave well, giving others an example to follow. Also, in the lessons where teachers have high expectations of good behaviour, a mutual respect and understanding exists so pupils learn effectively.
25. Teachers do not always use assessment information to plan appropriate work for individuals and groups of pupils with different abilities. Although pupils are often grouped according to ability sometimes the work is not sufficiently challenging and pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. The quality of marking although variable is satisfactory overall; in the best examples the teachers make comments that help the pupils move on in their learning. Homework is used effectively to support pupils' learning. Learning support assistants make a very valuable contribution to the pupils' education and are briefed well by teachers about what the pupils are learning and how they should make their input.
26. Teachers provide well for pupils with special educational needs and especially those with a hearing impairment so they are fully included in all activities. The specialist staff in the unit for hearing impaired pupils have a wide knowledge of how to promote pupils' learning through signed language skills in all areas of the curriculum, and use this very effectively. Strong backing by the learning support assistants helps to promote effective learning and good behaviour. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well so they make good progress in the acquisition of spoken and written English.

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

27. There have been good improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection. **The deputy headteacher and curriculum manager have worked hard and successfully to improve the** balance of the different subjects in single age classes and across mixed-age classes in recent years. More significantly, she has enlisted the support and shared commitment of colleagues in devising stimulating and varied activities, which capture the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils and promote their academic and personal development. Considerable emphasis has been placed on the development of imaginative links between the various subjects and to this end, subject co-ordinators have been encouraged to incorporate these into their planning and to resource their subject accordingly. Many good examples of this were seen during the inspection. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were given the task in design and technology of creating a non-alcoholic cocktail drink. This also required them to accurately cost the product, bringing their numeracy skills into use and to create an attractive advertisement using appropriate computer software. In this way, the school successfully develops skills in numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum. Pupils clearly enjoy using their knowledge in one subject for their work in another and spoke enthusiastically about how much they liked 'the units'.
28. The co-ordinator has meticulously calculated the allocation of time for the various learning units and this has been largely successful. There remains some work to be done to ensure that there is sufficient time and opportunity in all subjects, and particularly in science, to enable pupils to produce writing of sufficient quantity and quality to meet National Curriculum requirements. On the other hand, speaking and listening, drama and reading are promoted well through this method of



organisation, which places emphasis on pupils' ability to ask questions and to use research skills to gather information. Literacy skills are therefore developed well. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in most areas, including collective worship. However, the school is aware that the policy for special educational needs has to be updated to be fully in line with the new Code of Practice.

29. Pupils with special educational needs are given access to all subjects of the National Curriculum and to all other activities within the school. All are included with their class on external visits and residential stays. Tuition may be given to pupils on an individual or small-group basis to promote literacy and numeracy skills. Specialist help for those with speech and language or movement problems is good. The school is very well supported by outside agencies. Those pupils whom the school have identified as showing exceptional gifts and talents in any area of the curriculum are actively encouraged to develop these. The school has good procedures in place to support pupils who speak English as an additional language.
30. The arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education are good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when it was judged that insufficient emphasis was placed on this aspect of the curriculum. Social and moral issues, such as bullying and relationships are taught in a context that links them closely with the pupils' daily experiences. The 'Sparkle Group' also makes a positive contribution to the personal development and motivation of those pupils who sometimes have difficulty in conforming to the accepted code of conduct. The careful promotion of drug awareness starts at an early age and older pupils in Year 6 are given opportunities to discuss their own sexual development, with appropriate involvement from community representatives such as nurses and police officers. The local vicar is a regular visitor to school and her participation in assemblies makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. There are satisfactory links, overall with the local community. The school has good liaison with the pre-school group, which is on the same site. There are good links with partner institutions, notably with Bridgemary Community School, whose students regularly carry out work experience courses at Woodcot and there are plans for community school staff to become involved in extra-curricular activities. The school is also a frequent provider of training opportunities for students on nursery nurse and teacher-training courses.
31. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside the classroom. Teachers, parents and governors give their time generously to organise activities such as football, netball, cycling proficiency and recorders on a regular basis. Staff also arrange opportunities beyond the school day to take pupils in Years 3 and 4 on camping trips and those in Years 5 and 6 on week-long residential visits for outdoor pursuits. These additional activities both enhance the curriculum and make a valuable contribution to pupils' personal and social development.
32. The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the provision overall was satisfactory.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual awareness is good. Moments of reflection are built well into assemblies and music engenders interest and thoughtfulness. In one assembly for younger pupils a candle was used as a focus to reflect upon Jesus as the Light of the World, and to 'think of all who love you'. Assemblies for older pupils saw pupils appreciating the peaceful sense of music. Their sweet singing added to the atmosphere and brought with it a strong feeling of meditation. Music and words were very meaningful. Times of reflection seen in Year 2, during the inspection, included thinking deeply about feelings of loneliness on a desert island. Scrutiny of photographs showed many expressions of awareness and emotional feelings with involvement in a variety of activities in science, geography, history, music, dance, drama and work in literacy. These include the response by a pupil in Year 6 to a Polynesian Christian Dance Group, showing joy to be involved, pleasure in achieving success, and appreciation of dance and music. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show realisation and delight to feel water pouring over their hands, and display wonder as a light bulb comes to life. Those in Years 3 and 4 show absorption in their drama production; and written work in Years 5 and 6 shows pupils' reflective nature in their descriptions of heroines, such as Grace Darling and Florence Nightingale. There is thoughtful appreciation of their lives.
34. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils are expected to behave well and are encouraged to help each other. Pupils with a hearing impairment, for example, are supported

strongly in school. A number of mainstream teachers have learnt to sign to enable communication. Themes in assembly, and within 'circle time'<sup>4</sup> or personal, social and health education, often deal with moral development. During 'circle time' with pupils in Years 5 and 6, rules, sanctions and rewards were discussed. The school has made sure that these discussion times are firmly in the timetable. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The pupils have a strong sense of moral duty and regularly raise money for charitable causes, such as boxes for Afghanistan, Blue Peter appeals, Comic Relief and the children of Chernobyl. One child has organised an event to support an animal rescue centre which was due to close. Pupils in general, are very aware of environmental issues in the world.

35. Social development is good. Pupils with low self-esteem and lack of confidence are encouraged to participate in all group activities and given every chance to succeed. Pupils are given opportunities to take responsibility in everyday tasks in the classroom, in assembly and around the school. Pupils engage in signed singing and share experience with those who are hearing impaired. All pupils are involved in school productions and enjoy working together on these occasions. Social awareness is well promoted through the inter-school sporting and other activities, and the residential visits the pupils in Years 3 to 6 take part in each year. The class councils and recently formed school council, whose members are chosen by their classmates, make an important contribution to the spirit of citizenship. The members consider their responsibilities to the school community and have thought about what they can contribute to the school. Socially, pupils with differing needs and outlooks integrate well throughout the school. Inclusion at all levels is good and is particularly helpful for those with a hearing impairment and other special educational needs.
36. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school has made many improvements in this area since the last inspection. Attention is now paid to the inclusion of cultural aspects across the curriculum. Culture is also commented upon in annual reports to parents. The school ensures the content of creative activities, such as music, dance, drama and art contains many links with multi-cultural themes. Connections have included visitors promoting Chinese paintings, songs and calligraphy, Polynesian dancers and musicians, African and Indian music and dance, and a Caribbean steel band. Music includes a good selection of multi-cultural instruments and recorded music. Religious education lessons involve work on other religions, such as Hinduism and Islam, and festivals, such as Diwali are celebrated. Geography lessons compare countries, people and customs across the world and history deals with historical events, traditions and changes. The last inspection indicated a lack of understanding by pupils of their cultural heritage and of other cultures in their own country. Plenty of the work in school now shows attention to British heritage and there is a better sense of understanding of ethnic minorities. The school has involved pupils in all aspects of national interest, such as the Queen's Golden Jubilee, the Queen Mother's funeral and Remembrance Day for the British Legion. Events such as The World Cup were given appropriate attention. Many aspects of literacy and history reflect interest in cultural changes past and present, for instance, when a local television programme showed the school a film of life in the locality 40 years ago, compared with life now, the pupils were fascinated and their written work reflected their interest.
37. The school includes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well in the curriculum, although a more comprehensive policy for these areas is under review, with the involvement of all staff.

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

38. At the previous inspection, the school's climate for learning was judged to be good. The pupils were well looked after and given good support. The school has improved the situation and now meets its obligations for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare very well. Child protection arrangements are excellent with all members of staff understanding their duty to be aware of the need to be attentive and undertaking this responsibility very conscientiously. The very effective welfare support enhances the quality of education enjoyed by the pupils by ensuring that they can

---

<sup>4</sup> 'Circle time' is a session provided for pupils to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

work in a secure and happy environment. Parents are happy with the attitudes and values promoted by the school, and the support given to their children.

39. Everyone works together to provide a very caring environment, in which the pupils feel well looked after and secure. All staff have very good knowledge of the pupils as individuals and they respond positively to the needs of the pupils in their care. In general, pupils are sensitive to the needs of each other. They embrace those pupils less able than themselves in a mutually rewarding partnership that is often a joy to see. The resulting supportive atmosphere within the school encourages learning very well. There is very effective care for all so that the pupils are treated equally, and given proper support appropriate to individual need, whatever their background or personal circumstances. Arrangements for pupils new to the school are very good. A pupil in Year 6 spoke about being worried when he joined the school in Year 4 but how he very quickly made friends thanks to his nominated 'buddy' who gave him a lot of help. The school is successful in promoting social integration and harmonious and caring relationships exist both in and out of the classroom. There are well organised arrangements for playground supervision with teachers and lunchtime supervisory staff, who relate well to the pupils, ensuring that pupils are properly looked after during periods of outdoor activity. This has a positive effect on behaviour and safety.
40. School staff and governors, who undertake regular risk assessments, have proper regard for the health and safety of the school community. They try hard to ensure that the school provides a safe and caring setting that supports learning effectively. Good attention has been paid to ensuring the safety of the school community whilst building work is taking place. Provision for pupils with physical disabilities presents some problems as a result of the school design incorporating upper storey classrooms. Fire safety arrangements are of high quality. Those for dealing with sickness or the very occasional accident are very well organised with very caring support provided by qualified first-aiders and other members of staff. Appropriate records are maintained. There are good procedures for liaison with parents when necessary.
41. The school works very hard to promote good attendance with good strategies including close links with parents. Its procedures, including liaison with the school's education welfare officer, are very good. The importance of attendance is regularly stressed to parents. Records of attendance are properly maintained and comply with statutory requirements. Registration is efficient making good use of the time. Procedures for recording unauthorised absence are rigorous. There are very good procedures for contacting parents to deal effectively with any unexpected absence.
42. Arrangements for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. At their heart, is the recognition of the importance of being responsive to the needs of the pupils as individuals. The school's policies are well organised and there is good definition of rewards and sanctions. These are well understood and accepted by the great majority of the pupils whose positive attitudes to learning contribute significantly to the ethos of good behaviour that is found within the school. A range of strategies promotes positive behaviour, including 'Golden Time' that the pupils value greatly. Teachers and support staff, who have a very good relationship with the pupils within their classes, work together ensuring a consistent approach in dealing with the very occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour. Anti-bullying strategies work very well. The procedures are effective and allow the pupils to take advantage of the opportunities for learning presented to them in an environment in which there is an absence of oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism.
43. Provision for pupils that the school has identified as having special educational needs is good, overall. The school greatly values support from the educational psychologists, behaviour support service, speech and language therapists, occupational and physiotherapists; and works closely with social services and the family support worker. Class teachers, the co-ordinator for special educational needs and learning support assistants are involved in writing individual education or behaviour plans; with input from the pupils themselves or their parents at times. They are, in general, carefully constructed and appropriate to the individual. Group targets may be set for pupils who need early intervention to overcome initial difficulties. Targets set are appropriate and assessment is used in planning. All staff are aware of aims and objectives in targets. Assessment is ongoing so that daily recording and regular reporting of each pupil's progress is effective. Pupils' individual education plans are reviewed each term or earlier if necessary. Arrangements for annual reviews are in place.

44. The tracking of pupils' personal development and its promotion, both formal and informal, is satisfactory overall. Formal records of achievement are not maintained but teacher records and summaries in the pupils' annual reports, are generally satisfactory with some good elements such as the objective reporting of non-academic progress included in pupils' annual reports. The formal records are complemented by informal arrangements that benefit from teachers' knowledge of pupils as individuals. There is regular discussion amongst staff about the personal needs of individual pupils that is very helpful in ensuring that they are met. Assemblies focus on positive attitudes with constant reinforcement of the positive ethos of the school. Pupils are involved in a range of duties including helping with assemblies and other school activities. A school council has recently been put in place that will build on the work already done by class councils and offer further opportunities for pupils to play a part in the running of the school.
45. In the reception class the teachers make good use of the regular assessments they make on the children as they move through their first year at the school. Those made following their first few weeks at the school are used well to group pupils and to plan their learning. The day-to-day assessments are effective and the information is evaluated carefully to gauge what skills the children have mastered and what modifications to teaching are necessary in order for the children to progress.
46. Throughout the rest of the school, a good range of formal assessment procedures is used which provides useful information relating to the overall performance of the school and the progress made by individuals in English, mathematics and science. Although there are useful systems in place for other subjects, such as information and communication technology, these are not widely in place across the whole curriculum. Teachers make satisfactory use of this information, overall, in the planning of work for pupils of all abilities. The best feature of this aspect is the way in which teachers, particularly in Years 3 to 6, use this information to set key objectives in English and mathematics, which they regularly share with pupils as a means of presentation them what they need to do to improve. However, the school could make better use of the assessment information available for monitoring pupils' progress from term to term and year to year, across key subjects, and planning work at the right level of difficulty for individuals and groups of different abilities.
47. Teachers' use of ongoing assessment is also satisfactory, overall. The co-ordinator has introduced some promising strategies in recent years, which are creating a strong platform for improvement in this area. For example, although not all teachers are skilled in assessing the learning styles of their pupils, many are using this well as a means of judging pupils' strengths and weaknesses over time or during a lessons to 'fine tune' their planning of work for individuals and groups of different abilities. On the other hand, better use could be made of day-to-day marking for this purpose.

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

48. The very large majority of parents responding to the parents' questionnaire and those that attended the pre-inspection meeting have positive views about most aspects of the school's provision for their children, though not as positive as when the school was last inspected. They think the school is a good one. Particular strengths of the school are seen to be that their children like school, the school promotes positive attitudes and values, teaching is good with high expectations, they are comfortable approaching the school, they like the information the school provides for them and they are pleased with recent improvement to the school building. The school is seen as a happy place that their children enjoy. Inspection findings confirm much of what parents like.
49. A few parents have concerns about some aspects of the school's provision for their children including homework, the way in which the school works with them and the need for more activities outside lessons. Nothing was seen during the inspection to support these views as reflecting how the school provides for its pupils overall. There is no reason for any parent to feel distanced from the school, if they take advantage of the opportunities provided to them. The homework policy is well explained so that parents can understand what is being done and how they can help. The range of non-class based activities is appropriate.

50. The school recognises the importance of good relationships with parents and is working to promote its partnership with them. There is an 'open door' policy that encourages parents to communicate with the school. In the reception class the staff have developed good links with parents, who give good support to their children's learning at home. Parents, and grandparents, are welcomed into the classroom and this gives them a good opportunity to share with the teacher and support staff any concerns they may have. The headteacher makes herself available at any time to meet with parents, and teachers are very happy to meet with them informally before or after school, or by appointment to ensure availability due to teaching commitments. The Family Support Worker, appointed in September part-funded as part of a local regeneration initiative, is undertaking her role conscientiously and well, providing a pastoral support service for parents and their children which complements the efforts of the headteacher and other staff very well.
51. Parents are provided with good information, including regular newsletters, about what is happening in school and how their children are getting on. Parents are invited into school to view their child's work and to discuss progress. Teachers frequently contact parents, not only when there are concerns, but more usually when there is good news to be relayed. Curriculum information is provided and parents have an annual written report. Targets for improvement are discussed with them. There is good use of the general comments' section of the annual reports, as well as indications of areas for development, both academically and personally. Teachers take time and trouble to make the reports individual especially for the youngest children in the school. However, the reporting of subjects other than English, mathematics and science is often brief, with little information given to parents about how attainment matches that expected. Sometimes the language used is not user friendly; for example, a target of 'to interpret the effect of authorial language on the reader' would not be helpful to most parents. Overall, the reports are satisfactory with some good features. They meet statutory requirements and are liked by parents.
52. The school has good contact with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are invited to school on a regular basis and they attend annual reviews. Informal discussion and contact by letter regularly occur. Parents in general are concerned about their child's welfare and progress, and work with the school on improvements to learning and behaviour. The school places great value on this contact.
53. The governors' annual report to parents, though somewhat brief, is a well focused, attractive, easy to read document. The weaknesses identified during the last inspection have been overcome. The school prospectus, although providing very comprehensive information on what the school provides, fails to properly report attendance statistics as it should to meet statutory requirements and the results of statutory assessment testing are incomplete. The assessment results are provided without commentary so the presentation might be difficult for some parents to understand. Overall, however, taken together the documents provide parents with everything they need to understand what the school is doing and providing for their children and expects of them.
54. The school encourages parents and other helpers to participate in its work. They do so in a satisfactory way. Home-school links are supported by a home-school agreement that provides for commitment by all to the improvement of standards. Many parents, particularly of the youngest children, take advantage of the school's 'settling time' to work with their children before school begins formally. Though limited in numbers, those that are able to help directly in school on a regular basis, in the classroom, with swimming and elsewhere, make a significant contribution to its work. The lack of parental support for the organisation of social and fund-raising events, which led to the cancellation of the Summer Fair and the Christmas Bazaar, is a matter of regret for the school. However, it recognises that the personal circumstances of many parents make such an involvement difficult. Parent governors are helping to ensure that parents are able to contribute more fully to their children's learning at home and school.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The headteacher is a determined leader with her sights set firmly on raising standards. She and the deputy headteacher form a very effective partnership. Both have worked hard with staff and governors to ensure that everyone in the school community shares the same purpose. They are well supported by other senior members of staff and curriculum teams. These colleagues are steadily developing their management skills, benefiting from pursuing performance management targets carefully matched to improvements in the school's development plan. The school is justifiably proud of what has been achieved since the change of headteacher in 2000. Standards are rising because there is collective commitment to the school's core aims and values and the drive to bring about improvement.
56. The context in which the school works has not been easy. There has been a high turnover of teachers in recent years. This situation was a potential barrier to improvement, but the headteacher is skilled at recognising potential leadership and management qualities in others. She has managed the situation well by developing a staffing structure that enables people to work effectively in teams. When a team member leaves there are always other colleagues with experience to continue with important initiatives, and induct new colleagues successfully. Governors have backed the headteacher in promoting the professional development of longer serving members of staff and in devising rigorous recruitment procedures. Consequently, the high turnover of teachers has opened up opportunities as new and talented teachers have been recruited. For example, the deputy headteacher has worked well with existing staff to develop innovative ideas that are improving the quality of planning of what and how pupils learn.
57. The deputy head with other teachers in junior classes has trialled the new approach to curriculum planning. Although all classes are now using the new planning systems, teachers are at different stages of confidence in making them work for them. The impact of recent curriculum development is improving, as pupils move through the school, and this is especially noticeable in Years 5 and 6 where pupils are becoming increasingly confident in using their literacy and numeracy skills effectively to help them communicate and solve problems.
58. The school development plan is not only a good strategic plan that takes account of pending changes in the teaching staff, but also a practical working document. It reflects the fact that the school knows that there is still hard work ahead to maintain the momentum of change and raise standards further, especially in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4. These are the year groups in which planning to extend all pupils to their capacity is in need of further improvement. The school development plan communicates how, over the next couple of years, procedures for ensuring consistency and checking the quality of pupils' learning will be strengthened. It sets out proposals, for example, for teachers with management responsibilities to observe and support colleagues in their classrooms. It identifies further training opportunities and includes better opportunities for pupils to participate in discussions about what they can do to improve.
59. Governors play an important role in helping the school to improve. Personnel management procedures work very well and responsibilities are shared in ways that make good use of governors' time and skills. The chair of governors has a good working relationship with the headteacher and they liaise regularly. The termly reports that governors receive keep them well informed of what is happening in school. Governors are constructively critical of the way the school performs compared with schools that operate in similar circumstances. They have set appropriate targets for the headteacher and key staff to improve the standards pupils attain. They have a rolling programme for the review of school policies. They are aware that those for special educational needs and racial equality need to be brought up-to-date and reflect all that is best in school practice. They are taking steps to complete both in the near future.
60. The management of the programme for special educational needs is good. The new co-ordinator has worked hard to build up resources and make contact with relevant personnel, attend varied and appropriate courses and conduct in-service training for staff. She has the full support of the headteacher and governors. Funds are well used to support staffing levels. Provision for pupils with a statement of special education needs is fully in place. Further improvements are planned, such as the development of assessment in relation to dyslexia; further improvement in the practice of inclusion, and performance management for learning support assistants. However, the existing

policy has not yet been updated to reflect the current Code of Practice for special education needs. Although priority had been given to this in the school's improvement plan, the unforeseen and unfortunate absence of the co-ordinator for special educational needs meant there was a delay in the update. The school is also in the process of revising the format of pupils' individual education plans. The practical application of the Code of Practice is being implemented and the school is aware of the Code's close connection with the Disability Act, 2001. Improvements in access and provision of a toilet for the disabled have been made so far and the school is looking at future needs. The good support given by well-trained and very hard working learning support assistants greatly enhances the education of these pupils and adds to the ethos of the school. Close staff co-operation ensures all pupils with a variety of special educational needs can take part in all areas of school life.

61. The school's strategic use of its financial resources is good, much as it was at the last inspection when there was high quality provision. The governing body works closely with the headteacher to plan the school's financial strategy and monitor its budget. The financial planning process is well organised with a clear cycle of planning and review that is linked directly to the school improvement plan. Financial resources are used effectively to meet the needs of the school as defined in its improvement plan and longer-term strategy. Governors are aware of the risk of fluctuating roll numbers and their decisions are taken against this background. The headteacher and governors are very aware of the need to provide as high a standard of educational provision as possible and their planning is solidly based on ensuring that the school's educational provision is sustainable and that its educational targets are met.
62. There is good liaison between governors, the headteacher and staff in formulating the budget. Governors take an active part and feel ownership of the budget and the strategies behind it. The school benefits greatly from the support it receives from the school's administrative officer whose expertise makes a significant contribution to the school's financial monitoring and strategic financial planning. With her help the headteacher and governors manage the budget effectively. They fully explore all options open to them and take decisions with confidence because of the objective information to which they have access. There is effective corporate decision making that ensures that the financial resources available to the school are properly targeted to improving standards throughout the school. Historically these have been well above the national average for schools of similar type, even allowing for the very high costs involved in providing the specialist unit for pupils with a hearing impairment.
63. Financial reserves, which is the amount of money that the school carries forward from one year to the next, have varied in recent years by being both above and below the levels recommended by best practice. At the end of 2002/03 they had increased to some 6.1 per cent of expenditure, having risen during the year from quite a low figure. However, they are forecast to fall again during the current year as the school releases them to support its strategic objectives in the face of a recent trend of the falling roll. The decisions made about the use of reserves are consistent with the school's prudent contingency planning to ensure that it will be able to respond to changing circumstances with minimal disruption to its planned strategies. They ensure that the school's educational provision is sustainable and that, as far as is possible, funding is available to support its educational targets. There is a proper focus on raising pupils' attainment and progress, by giving attention to maintaining staffing levels, improving provision for learning resources, and raising the quality of the physical environment.
64. The specific funds element of the school's finances, and other additional funding, is well targeted. The school contributes from its own funds to supplement the specific grants it receives to provide additional support for pupils with special needs and by contributing to the cost of a family support worker. The way in which the school uses these funds has a positive impact on the quality of learning provision for the pupils who have extra support; for example, those in the hearing impaired unit, those with special needs in mainstream school, or those benefiting from the directed use of learning support assistants in the classroom.
65. The school's overall administration arrangements, and the day-to-day control of its finances, are very good. Clerical staff undertake their duties in a quietly efficient manner. They make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the daily life of the school community. Work flows through the school office works smoothly and effectively. Appropriate use is made of the

information available from the school's computerised systems, both here and elsewhere throughout the school, and very effective financial and administrative procedures are in place. The school's most recent financial audit found 'no significant opportunities for improvement in the performance of the systems'. Its few relatively minor recommendations have been addressed properly.

66. In judging the school's performance members of the governing body, supported by the headteacher, use the four principles of compare, challenge, consult, and compete, well to plan and implement the work of the school. Governors are aware of trends in performance as a result of progress reports prepared by the headteacher. They make effective comparisons with how school standards compare with those achieved elsewhere, both locally and nationally. They have a good appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, as a result of the objective reports that they receive from the headteacher, together with their own knowledge as parents or regular visitors to the school. They are aware of the need to challenge what is going on in the school and do so sensitively, but with rigour. There are some good consultation procedures with governors making use of a variety of information from parents, staff and pupils, and good procedures are in place for ensuring that best financial value is obtained when purchasing products or services. Taking into account the school's expenditure and the quality of education provided, including provision for the personal and non-academic needs of the pupils, the school gives satisfactory value for money.
67. The generous staffing structure means that there is a good match of staff to the demands of the curriculum. Newly-qualified teachers, as well as those on temporary contracts, are very well supported. The school welcomes students from local teacher training colleges on their practice placements. There is a generous number of learning support assistants who are generally used well to support learning, particularly that of lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. They make a strong, efficient and positive contribution to the ethos of the school and the care of the pupils.
68. The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall, with some good features. The school has its own outdoor heated swimming pool, which is in frequent use in the summer months. A new computer suite is under development and will shortly be in use. Scrutiny of purchased equipment awaiting installation shows that it should be well-resourced. Current building work includes the refurbishment of classrooms and parts of the roof. There is disabled access throughout the ground floor of the site. The school benefits from good sized outdoor areas.

#### **THE UNIT FOR PUPILS WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT (now known as Class 14)**

69. The quality of provision for hearing impaired pupils in the unit is very good. The commitment within the unit to improve language is impressive and the skills used in this field are excellent. The many good features referred to in the last inspection report have continued to develop.
70. There are four pupils in the six-place unit at present in Years 4, 5 and 6. All have profound hearing loss. Additional problems relate to emotional and behavioural difficulties, social development and co-ordination, apart from speech and language delay. Pupils come to school in taxis and two pupils are from a neighbouring authority.
71. Staffing includes the teacher-in-charge, who is a specialist teacher of the deaf, a teacher of the deaf for two days, a part-time deaf instructor and two special educational support assistants. All are effectively trained and work as a very strong team. Pupils in the unit have access to all areas of the curriculum. Most of the time they are with their own age groups, but remain in the unit base for literacy and speech and language input. Unit staff support pupils in mainstream classes during the day. An important part of the timetable is used to develop Deaf Studies, which links with the deaf in the community and extends awareness of deaf culture. A visiting speech and language therapist works each week on receptive and expressive themes. Accommodation in the unit room is very pleasant, resources are very good and the unit is fully equipped for pupils' needs.
72. Currently, standards of attainment are below or well below national levels in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, although, in some aspects, pupils' achievement shows a satisfactory level of learning, such as pupils in Year 5 understanding the properties of a rectangle and the meaning of reflective symmetry in mathematics. In some curriculum areas the results are similar to those of the rest of the class, such as in design and technology, physical education and



art. Most pupils in the unit show good coordination, and learn to play as part of a team. A study of pupils' work showed that good care is taken with written work and pupils take a pride in presentation. Topic booklets show interest and learning in geography, food technology, art and science, with visits in the locality and further afield. Pupils in the unit regularly use information and communication technology skills to produce work, some independently. All work toward their own targets within their individual education plans, with a strong emphasis on language and communication. Pupils in the unit make good, sometimes very good progress against their targets.

73. The unit's Total Communication policy uses British Sign Language and Signed English, combined with other methods, such as lip-reading, gesture and speech. All unit staff are trained in signing; other members of staff and pupils have some knowledge. Classes are held to this end, together with a signed choir club. Signing is used in assembly. Pupils who have learnt to sign at an early age are more advanced in language concepts than those who have come later. Intensive practice is used in order that late arrivals can acquire the language. The concentration for these sessions is deep and learning is accelerated. Pupils are assessed on entry to the school to establish their level of attainment. Pupils are encouraged to develop or use any residual hearing. Regular hearing tests and hearing aid checks take place. Signing is the first language of pupils in the unit and English is the second. The school realises the importance of developing the first language in order to access the second. The school liaises closely with health and education authorities and has very good support from all relative agencies.
74. The quality of teaching in the unit base is very good. Staff know pupils' individual needs and pupils respond very well, as a rule, by making concentrated efforts. Any behavioural problems are dealt with effectively as they occur. Mainstream staff have established good strategies, such as correct positioning and clear visual clues. Teachers readily acknowledge the good work or effort of the hearing impaired in class and there is a very good sense of integration. Specialist unit support in lessons is of a very high calibre. Assessment is ongoing and thorough. Progress is carefully monitored in class and pupils know their targets for improvement and try hard to achieve them, though emotional problems sometimes interfere with learning.
75. Daily recording and reporting take place in the unit and information is used in planning procedures. Daily meetings occur between unit staff and frequent connections with mainstream staff are arranged. Pupils' individual education plans are of a high quality and targets are used constructively. Plans are reviewed at least once a term. Annual reviews involve parents and their views are seriously considered. All needs concerning the pupil are addressed. There is very close contact with parents, home visits when necessary and a very good exchange using the home-school diary. Parents greatly value the work of the unit. Relationships between staff, parents and pupils are very good.
76. The teacher in charge of the unit has worked hard to maintain high standards. She has an accomplished team who display exceptional skills in dealing with pupils who have a hearing impairment. The head teacher and governors value the work of the unit and give full co-operation. The unit's policy is under review, though the essence of it is entirely appropriate. A handbook for parents offers useful advice. Personal development is given a high priority in the unit. Educational and social involvement is very good. The work of the unit for hearing impaired pupils is a credit to the school.

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

77. In order to build on the current improvement of the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should take the following actions:
- \*Raise standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school, by continually reviewing the curriculum and lesson planning to ensure that challenging work is provided for all pupils. (*Paragraphs 3, 86, 88, 89, 98 and 107*)
  - \*Use and develop existing assessment procedures and the information gained to monitor pupils' progress, and plan appropriate work for individual and groups of pupils with different abilities, in

order to raise standards of attainment in all subjects. (*Paragraphs 46, 47,93, 98, 108, 113, 117, 122, 128, 133 and 146*)

- \*Update policies for special educational needs in order to meet legal requirements. (*Paragraphs 59 and 60*)

\* These issues have been identified in the school's improvement plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	17	17	21	0	0	0
Percentage	2	30	30	38	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	286
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	60

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	57

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.2	School data	0.3
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.6

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	19	20	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	19
	Girls	17	18	17
	Total	34	35	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (78)	90 (80)	92 (88)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	16
	Girls	17	15	16
	Total	32	32	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (73)	82 (80)	82 (78)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	22	27	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	13	20
	Girls	21	14	24
	Total	32	27	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (61)	55 (57)	90 (80)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	17
	Girls	23	16	23
	Total	34	30	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (61)	61 (61)	82 (82)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	275	4	
White – Irish			
White – any other White background	5		
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	1		
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded	3		

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

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

### ***Financial information***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.1
Average class size	23.8

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

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	344

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	879,785
Total expenditure	855,346
Expenditure per pupil	3,012
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,821
Balance carried forward to next year	52,260

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
--	---

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	275
Number of questionnaires returned	82
Percentage of questionnaires returned	30

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	49	4	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	35	5	7	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	60	12	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	48	20	9	1
The teaching is good.	57	34	4	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	28	11	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	26	9	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	33	7	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	44	40	15	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	49	34	9	5	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	40	9	4	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	33	21	18	10

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

### AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

78. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and gives the children an effective start to their school life. **There were 28 children in the reception class**, eight of whom were still under five at the time of the inspection. Children start at the school in the academic year they become five, initially attending part-time during their first term. Nearly all of the children have had some experience of pre-school education before they enter the school. Although children have a wide range of different abilities, taken overall, their attainment is below that expected for children of their age with particular weaknesses in their speaking and listening skills. They make good progress in the reception class in all areas of their learning and by the time they are five years old, the majority achieve the early learning goals<sup>5</sup> in all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Overall, standards are as expected, which is similar to the situation at the last inspection.

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

79. Teaching and learning are good. With their patient and positive reminders, staff have a good rapport with the children, who are responsive and behave well. Regular routines enable children to feel secure, and they are confident in selecting activities, aided by the written and pictorial reminders displayed for each group. Children play together happily for extended periods, for example during role-play in the 'Vet's Clinic'. These, and similar opportunities, have much improved since the previous inspection, when the provision of such opportunities was a key issue for development. With sensitive encouragement, most are confident to speak in front of others. This is promoted well during circle times and specifically during personal and social education sessions. For example, all children contributed to a discussion on "I would like a pet because ...". Independence is promoted well and children are encouraged to take responsibility for organising themselves during a range of activities. Virtually all children can change into their everyday clothes after physical education, with little adult support needed. Currently, some of the children's independence is affected by the lack of access to their dedicated outdoor area because of the building work taking place. They have learnt about other cultures and religions, for example by creating a Hindu shrine and dancing to Indian music. Relationships with older children are promoted through shared reading and by making items, such as Santa mobiles, together.

#### *Communication, language and literacy*

80. Teaching and learning are very good and children make steady progress in this area, with daily priority given to promoting speaking and listening skills. In general, such skills are well below the expected standard when children enter the school and it, therefore, receives appropriate emphasis. Structured literacy sessions take place daily. Children are keen to talk offering generally relevant comments about stories, and talking to each other in their play. Staff give clear instructions and seek to extend the children's vocabulary, introducing such words as 'estimate' and 'browse'. They provide good access to writing materials and children write freely in their play, for example booking appointments and writing prescriptions in the 'Vet's Clinic'. There are plenty of focused adult-led activities to promote early writing each week. Nearly all the children can write their names accurately. A love of books is fostered through story-telling and reading. The children sit with rapt attention, joining in with repetitive parts. They handle books with care and have weekly sessions in the school library where they have opportunities to choose books. Some children are progressing well with the early stages of learning to read and have suitable books to support their learning. Children who have special educational needs make good progress in their learning as do children who speak English as an additional language.

#### *Mathematical development*

81. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff make suitable use of routines for counting, for example during registration. They use number rhymes to good effect and the children have

---

<sup>5</sup> The early learning goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.



become familiar with many such rhymes. Older children count to ten, and above, with support. They recognise numerals and more able children make good attempts at writing them. Children are becoming familiar with basic shapes such as squares and triangles, and also with more complex shapes through the names for their different mathematical work groups. They are becoming familiar with simple number calculations, for example during whole class sessions with numbers concealed in a 'feely bag' and the children asked 'how much one more' than the selected number would be.

### *Knowledge and understanding of the world*

82. Teaching and learning are good, aided by the range of resources and facilities available to the children. Children benefit from good access to computers and, as a result, they approach computers with confidence. They practise and improve their skills in using the mouse and, although some need support, they are beginning to click and drag to move images about the screen. They are gaining an appropriate sense of place through regular visits to the locality such as, for example, expeditions within the school grounds to explore living things. They use magnifying glasses to support their observations and relevant books for reference are included in displays. In photographs of a 'Health Day', children can be seen making 'healthy' sandwiches and trying out hearing aids. They have held a 'Baby Clinic' and learnt how to correctly bath a life-sized baby doll. Staff provide a good range of construction activities and children enjoy building, putting interlocking bricks together, cutting and sticking.

### *Physical development*

83. Teaching is good and learning is generally satisfactory. The children's learning does not match the teaching, mainly because the provision made for children to exploit their physical skills in the adjacent, enclosed area is currently out of use due to building works. However, the area is not resourced well and inhibits children's development in this area. This was a key issue at the last inspection. Staff are making strenuous efforts to compensate, by taking children in groups, and as a class, to other outdoor areas of the school. Children enjoy running in the large open space, and using the limited wheeled toys and equipment. The class teacher has identified a range of inexpensive equipment which could be bought to enhance outdoor play. The children climb, slide and balance with confidence on the large physical education apparatus in the school hall, and a very good session was observed. These sessions provide further opportunities for children to be active and explore different ways of moving. Regular use is made of the school's swimming pool and children go there in groups of five for short sessions to improve water confidence. There is particularly good support of these sessions by adult helpers, with each child having individual support. Adults are also there to help children dry and dress afterwards. Provision for children to encourage strong hand and finger muscles is good, with a wide variety of activities regularly available. Children open small jars, thread laces, and press, twist and roll play dough. Most hold pencils, paintbrushes and crayons properly and are beginning to cut successfully with scissors.

### *Creative development*

84. Children build on a wide repertoire of rhymes, including finger and number rhymes, and experiment with a range of musical instruments to make different sounds. There are plenty of good opportunities for children to participate in creative activities and role-play in imaginative situations, such as the current 'Vet's Clinic', as well as more familiar settings such as a home corner. In role-play, children benefit from staff joining in to suggest ideas and extend their play. Teaching in this aspect is good, with frequent positive interventions and staff entering the play in role. In art, when painting or using crayons, children enjoy applying colour, and most paintings or pictures are representational. Some attractive paintings on display show the children's interpretations of their pets, including a smiley tortoise with pink legs! They have used the computers to create pictures, for example of fireworks. Appropriate activities support different themes: for example, the children have made African animal masks, salt dough Christmas decorations and cooked shortbread snowmen.

## ENGLISH

85. Standards in English by the end of Years 2 and 6 are similar to those at the previous inspection. After the last inspection standards dropped considerably and in 1999 they were well below average by the time pupils left the school. They have improved steadily over the past three years, as a result of a sustained emphasis on more effective teaching. Good leadership and management are ensuring that the school is addressing key areas of weakness. Between 2000 and 2002, for example, the performance of boys in Year 2 steadily improved in reading. This is because teachers have improved the range of reading materials that appeal to boys, have concentrated more on talking to them about what they enjoy and diagnosing where they need extra help. Currently, there is no significant difference in the attainment or progress of boys and girls, or those with special educational needs, in any age group.
86. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 this year are below the national average. Fewer pupils are working at the expected level than last year because of the high number of pupils with special educational needs, but a higher percentage is achieving above the expected standard. Overall, from low levels of attainment in literacy when they start school pupils of all levels of capability make satisfactory progress by Year 2 as a result of sound teaching. They make good progress by Year 6 where pupils are currently achieving well and better than was expected of them when compulsory targets were set two years ago. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 respond very positively to their teachers' high expectations of them to do their best. They thrive on lively, demanding dialogue, and challenging learning opportunities, such as to compose their own poems linked to a theme such as the natural world. Overall, throughout the school, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behave responsibly in lessons because the atmosphere created by teachers is good. Pupils' principal difficulty is working at speed and this disadvantages them in timed tests.
87. Standards are currently as expected in both key stages<sup>6</sup> in speaking and listening. Most pupils achieve well though there are some pupils, mainly but not exclusively those with special educational needs, who are reluctant to communicate effectively. The school is working hard to help them by introducing more worthwhile opportunities for pupils to develop speech in a non-competitive, relaxed setting. Drama lessons, such as in Year 2, where pupils were pretending to be seafarers on board a pirate ship, are paying dividends. In these lessons all pupils try hard to succeed though they lack sufficient guidance about how to make their voices more audible. In good lessons there is a judicious balance of time spent on teacher's talking and on pupils being encouraged to form well constructed and expressed sentences. Teachers challenge pupils to increase the quality and range of their vocabulary. In Year 2, for example, when the teacher asked the class if they could remember and explain the meaning of the word 'spurt', a pupil explained it by using the example 'when you press a milk bottle top the milk might spurt out.' Though talk is sometimes grammatically incorrect and colloquial, most pupils share ideas well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 responded well to invitations to address the whole class. They performed their verses creditably, some with particularly good expression. Pupils' efforts to explain their thoughts clearly, and to talk succinctly about what they have learnt, are having a positive impact on their learning throughout the curriculum.
88. Standards are only just below average in reading throughout the school. Progress is good because teachers read to and with pupils regularly, from a good range of texts. Many pupils clearly enjoy reading, enthused by their experience of reading in small groups with their teachers or with learning support assistants. When invited to read to an inspector, pupils from Years 2 and 6 were happy to show off their skills. The younger pupils used their sound knowledge of letter sounds to try to work out simple words. One pupil of average ability worked out 'awhile' and almost managed 'swamp', by blending the first four letters to make the word 'swam'. The more confident amongst them attempted more complex words, such as 'typically,' knew the meaning of 'amazingly sharp scales', and deduced the hidden meaning of 'I want to touch its smile' in a poem about the moon. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to use non-fiction books. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, explained the terms 'index', 'contents' and 'glossary' well but said they are not so accustomed to using

---

<sup>6</sup> Key Stages

Key Stage 2, sometimes referred to as the juniors, caters for pupils aged between 7 and 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

Key Stage 1, sometimes referred to as the infants, caters for pupils aged between 5 and 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

dictionaries and did not know what a thesaurus was. Pupils in Year 6 make good use of the library and the Internet to search for information. Teachers foster interest in new technology by teaching pupils in the juniors to access websites and save useful addresses in 'favourites'. This practice supports learning well in subjects other than English. Pupils throughout the school regularly take books home to read. Some teachers and parents write good evaluative comments about pupils' reading which help assess and promote their reading skills. However, such records could be more consistent in quality.

89. Writing is improving by the end of each key stage and pupils' handwriting meets expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. Nonetheless, standards in writing are still well below average, overall, as pupils do not spell well and they take extended periods of time to write at length. Pupils write in a sufficient variety of styles in English and other subjects. The quality is good when the task is meaningful to pupils and the ideas for links between literacy and other areas of learning, set out in the new learning units, are often good. In Year 1, for example, some of the best work from higher-attaining pupils was an interesting account of a visit by Polynesian dancers. The weakest work, where spelling errors occurred most and presentation was untidy, resulted from exercises with insufficient stimulus to motivate pupils. There were examples of pupils throughout the school using their word processing skills effectively to produce final copies of their work.
90. In Year 2, most pupils wrote clear instructions for making a packed lunch and some slower learners produced some thoughtful descriptions of a friend. They made good use of information and communication technology skills to record information stemming from research about Grace Darling. They produced class anthologies of their favourite poetry, having clearly enjoyed choosing them. Most copy writing was neatly done. They also completed simple evaluations of the verse and stories, written by different poets, answering questions from a commercially produced worksheet. However, a substantial number did not complete these. This was symptomatic of other work seen and shows that some pupils, particularly the more able, could achieve more. Marking comments are sometimes over generous and lack adequate guidance for improvement. For example, instructions for getting ready for bed were marked 'excellent', with no explanation, yet there was room for improvement in the sequence of the actions described as cleaning teeth came before having a final bedtime snack!
91. In Years 3 and 4, there is similar variation in the quality of pupils' writing and, clearly, the standards achieved are directly related to the rigour and challenge of the teaching. Sometimes expectations are high. Big books entitled 'Fruit Cocktails', 'Woodcot News', and 'Water, Water', contain some impressive, well-presented work. For example, they include descriptions of recipes from around the world, advice about how to clean water, and implications of a shortage of water in some countries. Pupils communicate a good understanding of how drinking dirty water results in disease. Such opportunities do much to support pupils' personal development and understanding of human rights. Work in exercise books is less well done and sometimes unsatisfactory. This is because teachers do not consistently expect pupils to head their work with a title, or make the main learning intention of each task clear. They overlook work that is incomplete.
92. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Effort and achievement is most consistently good in Years 5 and 6 where teaching has some very impressive features. Appropriate emphasis is put on the development of grammar and the conventions of different writing styles, such as setting out a formal letter or evaluating a commercially produced rucksack for the value for money it provides. Every pupil is expected to produce their best and, as a result, they rise to expectations. One lower-attaining pupil, for example, produced a precise and well-argued case for improving the backpack from a supermarket chain. Biographies displayed on a stairwell reflect the care and thought all pupils put into writing biographies about many different famous people from the past. They wrote with flair, using well-punctuated sentences.
93. Priorities for future development of the subject are the right ones. Initiatives have had most impact, where teachers have studied samples of work together to compare how well pupils perform, and then set achievable targets for improvement. Those pupils who were aware of specific goals, such as to correctly use 'ed' instead of 't' at the end of words, were quick to realise when they had met their objective. Regular support from teaching assistants and learning in ability sets evidently helps pupils to focus on spelling patterns and better punctuation. Other pupils are vague about their targets, reflecting a lack of attention to checking how well lesson objectives are communicated.

Some initiatives are at an early stage of development and must be continued. At present, for example, information about what pupils of different levels of prior attainment are to learn during individual learning times lacks clarity, especially in Year 2. The last part of lessons do not always provide adequate opportunities for pupils to review how well they made progress or hear about what they are ready for next. Better monitoring is one of the school's most astute objectives for future improvement.

## MATHEMATICS

94. At the last inspection the standards pupils attained at the end of Years 2 and 6 were judged to be average, although only just in Year 6. Standards attained by pupils dipped in 1999, 2000 and 2001 and were generally well below average. However, over the last three years standards have been gradually improving, with a higher number of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 when they leave the school, due to the improved teaching especially in Years 5 and 6. There has been no significant difference in the performance of girls and boys over the last three years.
95. The standards attained by pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are below average overall, mainly because there is a higher number of pupils than usual in both year groups with special educational needs. However, in Year 2 a small group of more able pupils are achieving above-average levels and, in Year 6, more pupils than in previous years are achieving the higher Level 5. Furthermore, there is clear evidence to suggest that pupils in the current Year 5 classes are on track to achieve the expected standards for their age by the end of Year 6. This is because the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good, overall and is often very good. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress and this accurately reflects the overall quality of teaching in these two year groups. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in reaching the targets in their individual education plans due to the additional support they receive. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well by the time they leave the school.
96. In Year 2, average- and higher-attaining pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of numbers to 100. This enables them, for example, to count accurately in twos to 20, and in tens up to 100. In the mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of numeracy lessons, they demonstrate a firm grasp of the value of 10, when adding numbers, and talk confidently about the strategies they use to get their answers. Lower-attaining pupils have some difficulty in using and applying this ability when working independently. They need carefully focused support from adults to enable them to complete tasks such as subtracting numbers from 10.
97. In Year 6, many pupils have clear strategies for solving word problems and apply a variety of methods to arrive at answers, reflecting standards typical for their age. For example, they mentally calculate simple percentages, or quickly convert minutes to express them as hours and minutes. The higher-attaining pupils quickly recognise relationships and patterns in mathematics, for example when 'reflecting' quadrilaterals on a co-ordinate grid. Lower-attaining pupils, on the other hand, need support from a classmate, or an adult, to accurately produce mirror images of regular shapes.
98. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and it is good, and often very good in Years 3 to 6. A significant strength of the best teaching is the very good quality of teachers' planning using the National Numeracy Strategy and their knowledge and understanding of pupils' learning styles to ensure that all are fully engaged in the lesson. As a result, pupils successfully rise to the challenge of the work which is set for them and try hard to improve. Another feature of the best practice is the teachers' knowledge of their pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses and their ability to provide challenging and interesting work at the right level of difficulty for them. This was clearly illustrated in two very good Year 6 lessons on co-ordinates, where the teachers used imaginative, whole-class teaching strategies, intervening at suitable intervals to assess how well pupils were doing, before moving them on to a more challenging task within clearly defined time limits. Conversely, the teaching is less successful when the teachers do not make the best use, either of the assessment information available, or of their day-to-day marking of pupils' work, to guide their planning for the next day's work. Consequently, teachers' expectations about what pupils can achieve are uncertain and they sometimes provide work which is either too easy or too difficult for the different ability groups, within their class. This slows down the pace of teaching and learning and sometimes leads to pupils

spending too much time on repetitive worksheet tasks instead of moving on to the next level of difficulty. Teachers throughout the school work very closely with support staff to make sure that pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with impaired hearing, are fully included in mathematics lessons

99. Support for pupils' learning in mathematics is evident in other areas of the curriculum, such as geography where, for example they are asked to measure and compare positive and negative temperatures in countries such as Siberia and Belgium. Teachers throughout the school include in their planning opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology, for example to rotate shapes or make calculations easier by using calculators or spreadsheets. During the week of the inspection, good use was being made of classroom computers and, in the vast majority of cases, the software being used was directly related to the theme of the lesson. Similarly, good use was made of overhead projectors in a number of lessons seen.
100. A strong school improvement team manages the subject, very ably led by the curriculum co-ordinator, and provides clear educational direction in mathematics. The team, comprising representatives from the governors, teaching and support staff, is committed to raising standards through careful research into learning styles and this is having a positive impact, particularly on pupils' attitudes to learning and enjoyment of mathematics. The co-ordinator is fully aware that in order to raise standards, there is a need to support this good work with more sharply focused attention on the use of assessment information to accurately monitor and accelerate pupils' progress from year to year. The other main area for development is to ensure that the best features of the very good teaching in many classrooms are shared throughout the school.

## **SCIENCE**

101. Although standards were judged at the last inspection to be average by the end of Years 2 and 6, the standards attained by pupils in 1999, 2000 and 2001 dipped and were well below average. Over the last two years, standards have steadily improved such that, in 2002, a higher than average number of pupils in Year 6 gained the expected Level 4 in the tests, although the number that reached the higher Level 5 was lower than average.
102. Currently, standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are below average, mainly because there are higher numbers than usual of pupils with special educational needs in both groups. Overall, most pupils make satisfactory progress, as the move through the school, and achieve in line with their potential. However, in Years 5 and 6, due to the good and often very good teaching, pupils' progress is good and they achieve well so that more pupils are attaining the higher Level 5 in Year 6. Over time, there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well and often make good progress. Pupils with a hearing impairment frequently make very good progress, due to the very good support they receive.
103. The pupils cover a systematic programme, which includes all the necessary elements of the National Curriculum. In a lesson observed, the teacher of pupils in Year 1 used good questioning techniques to draw out pupils' thoughts and learning, so that most of pupils began to understand what causes day and night, and that darkness is the absence of light. However, although the quality of teaching in this lesson was satisfactory, the teacher did miss some important opportunities, when discussing pictures in a book, to develop pupils' learning further. A study of the work of pupils in Year 2 showed that they had gathered information about what plants need to grow and recorded the growth of a seed. They had set up an experiment with a balloon rocket and in another lesson accurately identified what constitutes healthy eating. When pupils record their work, they do so in a variety of formats, which include annotated drawings, charts, and diagrams.
104. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are developing a sound knowledge of scientific facts. In one lesson seen, the pupils in Year 5 were dissecting flowers to identify the different parts and gaining knowledge of their functions. In the follow-up lesson, it was clear, through the skilled questioning techniques of the teacher, that the pupils had begun to understand plant reproduction. By the end of the lesson, after examining and discussing the various stages of the reproduction of the poppy plant most understood the difference between pollination and fertilisation. Similarly, in a lesson in Year 6, the teacher was following up on a lesson taken the previous week by the nurse on human reproduction. Through a very sensitively led lesson, where pupils felt at ease to discuss the subject, most pupils

were gaining a clear knowledge of the stages of human development and the processes of change between each.

105. The emphasis on scientific investigation is evident in all year groups. The oldest pupils have a good understanding of the process of carrying out an investigation. For instance, they made an in-depth investigation of plant growth under different conditions. This included making predictions and recording results. In this process, the pupils learnt how to carry out a fair test, how to look for patterns in results and how to evaluate their work for future reference. For example, recorded work showed that one pupil saw the need to repeat one element of the experiment as it was considered that, during the experiment, the plant may have been damaged. However, more opportunities are needed for the younger pupils to design and manage their own investigations, especially those pupils capable of attaining the higher levels. Pupils sometimes use their information and communication technology skills to support science; for example, pupils in Year 5 had confidently merged text and graphics to produce an information sheet on amphibians. However, there was very little evidence of pupils using their skills, for example, to produce graphs to show results of tests or spreadsheets to collate information.
106. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, although the lessons observed and the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the quality of teaching is variable. Although the progress pupils make is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4, greater progress is achieved in Years 5 and 6. In the two lessons observed, one in Year 6 and one in Year 5, the teachers planned the lessons well so that they knew exactly what they wanted the pupils to learn. They introduced the lessons well, and asked focused questions to promote discussion and extend thinking. The pupils were given time to respond, so that they could consider their answers and give reasons for their decisions. The teachers displayed very good knowledge of the subject, used correct scientific vocabulary and expected the pupils to do the same. The pupils, therefore, become engrossed in their work and maintained a high level of concentration. The pace of these lessons was rigorous and the pupils worked hard throughout. The teachers had a very good level of management and control and the mutual respect between the teachers and pupils supported this. The teacher of the pupils in Year 5 had been meticulous in selecting resources, for example, of flowers at different stages of reproduction, for her lessons. She also brought in a moment of spirituality when marvelling on how the very small poppy seeds she had planted in her garden had grown into the beautiful waist high plants.
107. The teaching and learning are less successful when teachers do not provide challenging practical activities to develop pupils' understanding and knowledge and follow-up activities are no more than drawing and colouring. Too often, the pace of learning is slow as was seen by looking at pupils' work; for example, in some cases very little work was recorded and in others there was too much unfinished work. This lack of written work means that pupils in many classes do not use and develop their writing skills consistently in this subject. The teachers' marking varies in quality and purpose. At its best, it focuses on the learning outcomes of the lesson and suggests how pupils can improve their work. Also, teachers could make better use of assessment information to plan future work for the differing ages and abilities of pupils in their classes. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class and a very good example was observed in the Year 6 lesson of a pupil with a hearing impairment being fully included in all activities.
108. The co-ordinator has been absent for some time and two other teachers are overseeing the subject. As a result, the progress made in the development of the subject has been slow compared with the other core subjects of English and mathematics. The school has made an appointment for next September of a new co-ordinator for science and the school hopes to see more rapid developments in the subject. Although science is sometimes taught as a discrete subject, through recommended schemes of work, where possible it is linked with other subjects in 'units' making the work more meaningful for pupils. Formal assessment procedures are used and provide useful information relating to the overall performance of the school and the progress made by individuals in science. However, there are no whole-school procedures to use the assessment information to monitor pupils' progress, from term to term and year to year, or for planning work at the right level of difficulty for individuals and groups of different abilities. Resources for the subject are adequate and most of the budget this year has been used to buy equipment to resource the 'units'. Pupils occasionally go to museums to enhance their learning, and a group of pupils in Year 6, seen by the school as being gifted in science, has been involved recently in an exciting inter-school activity called 'The solar car challenge'.

## ART AND DESIGN

109. Standards for the pupils in Years 2 and 6 are as expected for pupils of their age and some art work of above the standards expected was observed in displays. This is a similar judgement to that made at the last inspection. Very few art lessons were observed during the inspection so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. However, it is clear that art is an important aspect of the curriculum and used effectively to support other subjects.
110. Work on display shows that pupils develop and use their skills appropriately as they move through the school. They experiment with colours mixing them and matching them, using colour to show different textures and to produce different tones of colour. They use a good range of materials effectively in their work, such as pencil, paint, chalk, pastel and wax crayons, polystyrene for printing blocks, and paper and fabric for collage work. For example, as part of the design and technology work unit on 'Fruit Cocktails', pupils in Years 3 and 4 had drawn fruits from direct observation, and coloured and decorated them using oil pastels and various materials. Much of this work was above average in quality and was enhanced by the careful and imaginative way the teachers had displayed the work, showing that they valued the pupils' efforts. In one lesson observed, the pupils, in support of their history unit 'The Terrific Tudors', were examining patterns and designs on fabrics of the day. They made viewfinders to focus on a small area of pattern which they drew carefully and accurately. The quality of teaching in this lesson was good. The teacher had a wide range of resources to stimulate pupils' thoughts and imagination and, through skilful questioning, promoted and developed pupils' descriptive language well. She demonstrated techniques effectively so pupils could use and develop these in their own work.
111. Pupils also study the work of different cultures and artists which contributes well to their cultural development. Work on display in a Year 5 and 6 class showed that pupils had studied Bargee designs and reproduced some attractive ones of their own. In one lesson pupils in Year 2 were using the work of Turner as inspiration for printing patterns for a background of a display. Most were mixing colours effectively and using cardboard combs, string, cotton reels and coloured water with bubbles to print a wide range of sea effects. The quality of teaching in this lesson was satisfactory. The teacher explained the processes well and gave clear instructions for the work leaving pupils scope to develop their own ideas. However, the examples the teacher used of Turner's seascape paintings were postcard size and not larger enough for pupils to appreciate the quality of his work. Also, the teacher had not planned the lesson in great detail; for example time was wasted while pupils folded their paper in half because it was too big and they had to wait for the painting rack to be cleared before they could put finished work to dry.
112. Other work on display, and in photographs, show that pupils produce a wide range of work in three-dimensions. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 had made attractively decorated clay figures to represent characters in their stories. They had also designed, made and decorated picture frames very effectively. Photographs of work displayed in the local library illustrated work using a wide range of fabrics including dying fabrics and decorating it with embroidery. The pupils often use computers to produce eye-catching pictures. For example, the pupils in Year 1 had created colourful pictures and patterns using shapes.
113. The two co-ordinators, one of whom is a part-time member of staff and an artist, are relatively new to the role. However, they are keen to develop the subject further. Although satisfactory, the policy has not been reviewed recently and part of the co-ordinators' plan is to fit this firmly in line with the units of work. The current scheme of work is secure in developing pupils' skills systematically as they move through the school, but the co-ordinators see the need to develop this to develop pupils' skills within the units of work. Currently, there are no formal procedures for assessing the pupils' work or progress or for monitoring the curriculum and teaching. However, teachers and co-ordinators make informal assessments and pupils evaluate their own work verbally and in writing. Resources are adequate, with basic needs kept in classrooms and specialist needs, centrally. When appropriate, the pupils make visits to art galleries to extend their knowledge of art and, occasionally, artists visit school to share their expertise with the pupils.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils achieved good standards of work in this subject. The quality of provision has been sustained so that, by the end of Year 6, pupils still achieve well. This is despite a reduction in the share of curriculum time due to extra time for literacy and numeracy. Attainment is well within the range expected. From Years 3 to 6 most pupils make good progress. Pupils take care when drawing and labelling their initial ideas and think hard about how to achieve a desired effect. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 show sound joining skills, as they work on prototypes for a pair of slippers, and take appropriate account of safety, comfort, strength, durability and cost, as well as aesthetic appeal. They are observant, and constructively critical when asked to review the quality of their work or evaluate commercial products, such as different brands of cheese grater. They work with a wide range of tools and equipment. Colourful solar powered cars were impressive outcomes of the past year's efforts. The cars were rigorously tested and worked well when pupils entered a borough-wide competition. Photographs show how well pupils achieved their original design ideas.
115. There insufficient evidence to judge standards by the end of Year 2. Nonetheless, it was evident from discussions with several pupils that they also have a good knowledge of designing and making. They were quick to provide examples of their experience of using a variety of materials. They talked about how they made pencil cases, and moving puppets. They explained that they enjoyed recycling old shoes by decorating them in different ways. They were particularly keen to describe how they made and tested fruit salad. All of them successfully recalled the names of the fruit they had used, the countries of origin, the way the salad was prepared, and the importance of hygiene. They know more than their written work suggests. They label drawings satisfactorily but they all could achieve more in the way they record instructions, especially those pupils whose writing skills are well established.
116. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2, as no lessons were observed and very little work was seen. The quality of teaching is good in Years 3 to 6. In Years 5 and 6 teachers plan the content of lessons thoroughly. They use technical language very competently and ensure that pupils use the appropriate vocabulary when they share ideas or write about their work. There are good links made with numeracy and literacy. In one very good lesson, for example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were intent on improving their ability to sew in a straight line and achieve a neat seam allowance of 1.5 centimetres. The teacher's explanation of how to make a template for the sole of a shoe was very clear and her expectations for care and effort were high. Pupils responded with good levels of co-operation as they measured round the edge of the foot shape to achieve an even seam. Those who joined the class from the unit for the hearing impaired were very well supported and achieved as well as their friends.
117. The teacher in charge of the subject does an effective job. She ensures that the subject has sufficient time and resources to sustain a well-balanced curriculum. She is aware of what needs to be done to help pupils to progress at a faster rate. Plans are apt for further improvements in the way the subject is organised and taught through the study units. Rigour in assessing progress, for example, through marking, is, rightly, a priority for development. For example, comments, such as 'well-done', are positive, but do not explain why, or what pupils could do next time to improve their work. The co-ordinator is justifiably pleased that teachers encourage pupils to practise literacy. Nonetheless, she aims to raise teachers' expectations of pupils so that they develop the habit of checking the quality of their writing. Able pupils, for example, write logical instructions for making things but are sometimes careless when they make errors in the spelling of key words, such as 'photograph frame'.



## GEOGRAPHY

118. Geography was not taught during the inspection. The subject is included within a two-year cycle of project-based learning units. Judgements are based on scrutiny of planning and pupils' work and talks with teachers and pupils. Provision is satisfactory and is developing well.
119. As at the previous inspection attainment is in line with expectations overall. Pupils with special educational needs are included carefully into all activities. Classroom displays reveal photographic and written evidence of involvement in environmental projects. In Year 2 'I spy folders' show understanding of where buildings are located in the town centre. Pupils are aware of signs, such as 'no smoking' and can choose a favourite place to describe. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have plotted 'landmarks' such as recycling centres and rivers, with the use of simple keys and flow charts. Some good work was seen by pupils in Year 6 on India, though worksheets were often not completed. In the better work, interest was shown in the topic. Drawings and diagrams were neat, locations clearly shown and knowledge of Indian customs displayed. Written work in books varies considerably, with some remaining unfinished and unmarked. Progress in learning is satisfactory overall.
120. Pupils respond well to topic work and are interested in environmental issues. They enjoy the field trips with 'hands on' experiences very much. The contribution of geography to pupils' personal development is good. Photographs show an awakening of knowledge and awareness in their work on the environment.
121. **The management of the subject is satisfactory.** Planning shows a comprehensive range of themes and activities and ensures consistent use of mapping and location skills in the immediate area for young pupils and then wider afield. Strong emphasis on the environment encompasses interesting projects, such as a study of park or woodland life, linking with science, for instance, work involving recycled rubbish and pollution, where data handling is linked with mathematics. Internet research is used to investigate recycling. Links with dance, art, music and religion are fed into topics such as India and the Orissa State in Years 5 and 6. The school now makes use of CD ROM software which is an improvement since the last inspection. Recently such software was used by pupils in Years 3 and 4 to investigate water supplies in the area.
122. The balance of geography in the curriculum is better than that reported at the last inspection. Informal assessments are satisfactory and built into study units and the information is used for planning. However, the marking of pupils' work is not sufficiently thorough.

## HISTORY

123. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations. Since the school's assessments show that pupils start school with skills and knowledge that are below average, this represents good achievement. The history curriculum has generally been implemented imaginatively, particularly with regard to the development of the skills of historical inquiry. The time allocated for teaching the subject, although lower than is normal, has been used well, and blended effectively with both visits and visitors, and work in other subjects such as music, physical education and art.
124. The subject is taught in learning 'units' and, as a result, only lessons in the lower junior classes were observed. Development and progress by the end of Year 2 has been assessed by a study of planning and of pupils' work. Strengths in Year 2 are the pupils' developing understanding of chronology through sequencing historical events and producing written and pictorial timelines. Younger pupils develop personal time lines as an introduction to chronology. They study particular historical characters and heroes and have recently studied the story of Grace Darling. Pupils of higher ability record their work in simple original writing and, sometimes, pupils work collaboratively to produce posters and displays.
125. From Year 3, the pupils' achievement in the use of historical sources and interpretation is sharpened by visits to local museums in Fareham and Gosport, and by occasional visits further afield. For example, in Year 6, pupils spoke about a class visit to the 'Mary Rose' in Portsmouth when they were younger, and of trips with their parents to other sites such as the 'Victory'. These

visits help pupils' attainment by bringing the past to life, but staff speak of increasingly prohibitive transport and entrance costs, which mean that such visits are rare. However, good use is made of the school's historical resources and these are supplemented by costumes, artefacts and other resources borrowed from the Hampshire Historical Trust.

126. During the inspection pupils in Years 3 and 4 were able to dress up as Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon in child-sized costumes. Much enjoyed was a visit from 'Henry VIII' (a local teacher) who maintained the character impersonation well, and permitted the 'young ladies and gentlemen' to ask him questions about his life, kingship and marriages. Pupils responded to the play-acting well, maintaining the atmosphere by bowing and curtsying to the king, and leaving his presence by walking backwards. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 spoke about research they had carried out individually, or in pairs, on historical heroes and villains, and the work displayed shows the good variety of characters chosen.
127. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. In two of the lessons observed in Year 3 and 4 the quality of teaching was good, as teachers brought history to life with great enthusiasm. This work is built on well, as pupils move through the school; in particular, their ability to use sources of information to answer questions about the past and to remember and present information in a variety of ways using specialist terms.
128. Overall, the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to literacy development as teachers give pupils opportunities to enhance their writing. This is more evident in class work than in work presented for scrutiny, although there were some good examples of work from pupils in Years 5 and 6 which gave concise explanatory accounts of why the Spanish Armada failed. There was little evidence of developmental marking. Pupils' work has some variety of different types of writing from the narrative, through diaries, to explanatory pieces. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily with graphs and the display of other data. As a result of the confident use, by staff and pupils, of some appropriate software, history makes good use of information and communication technology, for example in the use of the Internet and CD-ROMs for research. The subject also makes a good contribution to the spiritual and cultural life of the school. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and capable, although, as she has been in post for less than a year, there has been limited opportunity for her to make an impact on the subject. She offers satisfactory leadership and is helping colleagues to improve the scheme or work and its assessment. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained and there is a good capacity for further development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

129. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are typical for pupils in the age group. This represents good improvement since the time of the last inspection when standards were below expectations throughout the school and progress was unsatisfactory. All pupils are now achieving well, including those with special educational needs, who benefit from the additional support and equipment which is provided for them. The school has successfully addressed the key issue from the last inspection, which was to ensure greater use of computers in the wider curriculum.
130. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are familiar with the most commonly used keys on a keyboard and use these, as well as the mouse, with reasonable confidence, to direct what is happening on the monitor. They load a compact disk, without help, and follow the instructions given on the screen to begin working on the program they are using. Some more able pupils have better than expected skills for their age. This was clearly seen in a Year 2 lesson, where the teacher made good use of two higher-attaining pupils to explain to their classmates how to load and operate a piece of software. A small minority, whilst they enjoy using computers, are hesitant, for example, when searching for letters on the keyboard, and need regular support from adults or a more able partner, which indicate that in these instances standards are just below expectations for their age.
131. By the end of Year 6, all pupils have had opportunities to gain access to the Internet and the vast majority are confident enough to do so without help. In lessons across the curriculum, they are regularly expected to use computers as an integral part of their work. In Year 5 science work, for example, they confidently merge text and graphics to produce an information sheet on amphibians. In Year 6, pupils regularly use computers to edit their writing, for example, when publishing their own myths and legends and modify the font or add borders to enhance the appearance of their

work. They are becoming increasingly aware of the wider uses of information and communication technology, through the use of equipment such as sensors and digital cameras. Whilst some higher-attaining pupils, particularly those who use computers at home, are more competent than most pupils of this age, a small number of pupils in Year 6 still rely on help from classmates for most tasks. This is because, in spite of the best efforts of their teachers, they have had limited access to up to date equipment on a regular basis. Nevertheless, the vast majority are confident, use equipment safely and sensibly and make the best use of the opportunities to improve their skills when they arise.

132. The quality of teaching is good, overall. This is because, in the absence of a suitably equipped computer suite in recent years, teachers have made good use of the somewhat mixed quality of hardware available in classrooms to ensure that pupils have reasonable opportunities to develop the skills required by the National Curriculum. In order to achieve this, they have begun to carefully include these opportunities in their planning for subjects across the curriculum. Consequently, in the majority of lessons seen, where computers were in use, the software being used was appropriate to the theme of the lesson, so that pupils were treating computers as a natural tool for learning. In addition, all teaching and non-teaching staff have received good training in the use of information and communication technology in recent years, and this is having a significant impact on their confidence in planning the use of computer technology, either by pupils, or themselves, in the course of their day-to-day teaching. There has been significant improvement, therefore, in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
133. The subject co-ordinator, who led the subject at the time of the last inspection, is providing good leadership and has worked hard and successfully to raise standards. In addition to the improvement in teachers' planning and subject knowledge, she has also been responsible for the introduction of an uncomplicated, but effective, system for assessing pupils' progress. This is being used to good effect in Years 3 to 6, but not in Years 1 and 2 and this is an area for future development. The last computer suite was too small for a whole class to use, so a new computer suite is due to be ready for use in the very near future.

## **MUSIC**

134. The emphasis during the inspection was on singing and developing musical appreciation skills, so it is not possible to give an overall judgement on standards and progress in the subject as a whole. The subject meets statutory requirements and shows satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. A study of teachers' planning shows that music is being given more focus within the learning unit projects.
135. Pupils in Year 2 express their feelings about a piece of music, showing good development in listening skills. Signed singing in assembly involves mainstream pupils, together with the hearing impaired. In general, pupils sing in tune and know a wide range of songs and hymns.
136. Older pupils sing clearly and tunefully with an awareness of timing and pitch, able to modulate the voice to show contrasts in the music, understanding melody and phrasing. Pupils by Year 6 can identify changes of instrument in music, identifying accurately the piano, cello and trumpet, with knowledge of how a harp is played. In Year 4 most pupils can clap and maintain a four-beat rhythm and identify simple rhythm patterns. They can identify instruments in a piece of music, such as drums, strings and woodwind.
137. There is insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching of music throughout the school. However, some very good teaching was seen during a hymn practice where learning was accelerated because of the stimulating and skilful approach of the teacher. Attention is given to posture whilst singing; preliminary exercises prepare pupils for the task. In the lessons observed teachers challenged and encouraged pupils to succeed and pupils did their best to fulfil expectations.
138. Pupils enjoy music very much. They look forward to times when they can perform music in assembly and in school productions to a wider audience. Pupils become reflective when listening to pieces of music and are willing to express feelings about the piece. In most lessons seen pupils' attitudes were very good and pupils generally behaved well and maintained their interest.

139. The school uses a range of skills-based activities involving tuned and untuned percussion instruments. An improvement on the last inspection is in the use of music to listen to and appreciate. Music is used in this way in assemblies and during classroom lessons, or as a background to other activities. Personal development is strong in this area, as pupils reflect upon the music and express inner emotions. Pupils compose their own music and record their performance. They appraise their own and others' composition. Instrumental tuition is offered to pupils, for example, instruction in woodwind instruments, and a few pupils play brass instruments. Recorder groups take place. Varied musical experiences are arranged on a regular basis, with visiting bands and music groups to enhance opportunities for the pupils. The choice of music now includes a good range of traditional and multi-cultural examples. Music is often linked with dance in this respect. The school has not yet fully included graphic notation in the timetable.
140. There is no co-ordinator in place at present for music, so the management of the subject is unsatisfactory. A new teacher will take over the role next term and is very enthusiastic about leading music in the school. However, there is good interest within the school in musical activities, and combined efforts to include music as an integral part of the curriculum are in evidence. The prospective co-ordinator has already planned to revise the music policy and introduce more varied schemes of work. Plans include a choir for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and one for those in Years 3 to 6, extended recorder practice, a percussion group, and the introduction of the ocarina. A new collection of compact disks has already been ordered. Resources for music are good, with a pleasing selection of multi-cultural instruments and music. Classes keep a supply of percussion instruments and recordings in their rooms; larger instruments are available from a central store.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

141. Standards in physical education overall are similar to those found in most schools by the end of Years 2 and 6, and the school has maintained the standards reported in the last inspection. The scheme of work provides an appropriate range of activities and this ensures that all pupils make adequate progress, step by step, as they grow older. Those pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress because they are given appropriate support from teaching assistants and are encouraged to participate fully in all activities. The school has its own swimming pool and teachers use this to good effect to provide regular tuition for pupils from an early age. Consequently, pupils throughout the school make good progress in swimming and standards are better than in most schools by the end of Years 2 and 6. In Year 2, many pupils swim independently at this stage, reflecting above average standards for their age and the vast majority of the remainder are confident in the water using arm bands, only very few needing support from adults. By the end of Year 6 almost all pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres and the more able swimmers swim distances of up to a mile, if they wish to, which is well above expectations for pupils of this age.
142. The curriculum provides opportunities for all pupils to build a sequence of gymnastic movements on floor and apparatus, to respond to music through dance and to learn games skills. By Year 2, pupils are beginning to learn the importance of warm-up activities before undertaking vigorous exercise. During games lessons, they improve their running techniques satisfactorily through drills which encourage them to work hard as a member of a team and to improve their basic speed.
143. In Year 6, pupils have sufficient skills to enable them to compete with reasonable success, either against each other, or to improve their own previous best performance in events such as standing long jump, or sprinting. The vast majority are aware of the need for teamwork, tactics and playing to accepted rules. In bat and ball games, they strike a tennis ball with reasonable consistency and field and throw back accurately, a small minority showing an awareness of space beyond the level expected for their age. Some less confident pupils, on the other hand, lack coordination, particularly in throwing a ball accurately over longer distances, which is below expectations for their age.
144. Teachers, parents and governors give their time generously to provide an adequate range of extra-curricular sports clubs and activities to enrich the curriculum, through games such as basketball, netball and football and by taking part in adventurous outdoor activities on residential trips. These

activities are well attended and make a positive contribution to pupils' overall ability, as well as to their personal and social development.

145. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the school, and is good in swimming. The good teaching in swimming occurs because teachers provide regular tuition in small groups, so that pupils become confident and learn to swim in safety. This is achieved through very good cooperation and relationships between teachers, support staff and also parents, who make a very positive contribution to their children's progress by their involvement. Lessons are carefully planned to enable good links between physical education and other subjects. For example, the 'Ten Step' athletics programme involves pupils in timing their running using a stopwatch and accurately measuring the distance they can jump or throw a ball and these activities make a good contribution to the development of numeracy skills. Similarly, in Year 6, pupils use their computer skills to record, compare and analyse their own performance and that of others. Teachers also expect pupils to take responsibility for organising their own games and activities and this makes a positive contribution, both to pupils' attitudes to physical education and to their personal development. This strategy is sometimes less successful when the activities are too spread out and this limits opportunities for the teacher to monitor the quality of pupils' performance. It also leads to occasional lack of co-operation and concentration from a small minority. On the whole, however, relationships and teachers' management of pupils are good, so that the vast majority look forward to games lessons and take part enthusiastically.
146. The subject co-ordinator is providing satisfactory leadership for the subject. She is personally responsible for leading some of the sporting extra-curricular activities, which pupils enjoy, and ensures that they are given opportunities to compete against other local schools. A useful system for assessing pupils' progress is in place, although it is not used consistently throughout the school. An area for development is to implement the system more widely, supported by suitable opportunities for colleagues to gain greater expertise in judging the quality of the pupils' performance against standards achieved locally and nationally.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

147. Due to timetable restrictions, and the subject being taught in blocked units, only one lesson was observed during the inspection and so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Evidence on the progress pupils make was gained from an analysis of pupils' work, discussions with pupils in Year 6 and a study of teachers' planning. Pupils' achievement, as they move through the school, is satisfactory because of the interesting curriculum. The standards of attainment at the end of each key stage are in line with the expectations in the locally Agreed Syllabus, as was found at the last inspection. The range of assembly themes enhances pupils' learning and achievement and makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are satisfactory opportunities for all to learn new knowledge, but older pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to extend their writing. However, pupils say that they enjoy being able to present the results of their research in different ways, such as through posters, overhead projector acetates, and by reading out key facts to the class.
148. At the end of Year 2 pupils know about the Christian faith with stories of the birth and life of Jesus. They study symbols from other religions and other forms of religious expression such as Holi. In Year 2 pupils' knowledge is developed appropriately, enhanced by external visits to churches, although there are no other local centres of worship for other faiths. In the lesson observed, pupils in Year 2 were identifying and explaining the key features of 'special things'. By the end of Year 6, pupils have built on these early foundations well and their written and illustrative work, although rather sparse, currently includes coverage of ideas of death and the after-life from contrasting religions and cultures. For example, posters show examples from the Vikings and the Sikh religion, and pupils spoke about their study of the Ancient Egyptians, the Romans, Islam and Hinduism, observing that there were many similarities amongst the different religions. Such studies make good links with history, art, mathematics and information and communication technology.
149. Teachers' planning demonstrates coverage of the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. In general, work is well planned and most pupils are able to achieve satisfactorily. Assessment, currently informal, is satisfactory and takes place at the end of each module and the results are fed into the scheme of work. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included. The co-

ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Pupils' interest and knowledge is enhanced through the use of the range of resources, which include artefacts, videos and tapes. There is a broad selection of relevant books in the school library, with books about religions, other than Christianity, a particular strength. The co-ordinator has developed useful resource packs for each learning unit.