

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWBRIDGE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Portsmouth

LEA area: Portsmouth City Council

Unique reference number: 116227

Headteacher: Mrs Jean Maxwell

Reporting inspector: Dr Colin Lee
21854

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th November 2002

Inspection number: 247627

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	New Road Portsmouth Hampshire
Postcode:	PO2 7RW
Telephone number:	023 92829424
Fax number:	023 92872977
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs T Crawford
Date of previous inspection:	19 June 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21854	Dr C Lee	Registered inspector	Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
31754	Mrs C Roberson	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
22856	Mrs K Campbell	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	
21904	Mrs D Gale	Team inspector	Science Geography	
22352	Mrs F Gaywood	Team inspector	History Religious education	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
27240	Mr W Hooper	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design technology English as an additional language	Educational inclusion
20846	Mr A Wilson	Team inspector	English Art and design	Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Newbridge Junior School is larger than most other junior schools. There are 447 pupils on roll between Years 3 and 6, with slightly more girls than boys. Numbers are slightly lower than at the time of the last inspection in June 2000. Most pupils live close to the school and the area is predominantly older, terraced housing. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 is slightly below average. A small percentage of pupils is of minority ethnic group heritage and 10 pupils have English as an additional language. The main first languages of these pupils are Punjabi, Bengali, Tamil and Turkish. Twenty-one per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is about average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also about average, but varies considerably between year groups. The special needs cover a wide spectrum of learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as those related to physical disability. There are, currently, no pupils with a Statement of special educational needs. There is a significant number of pupils who either join or leave the school during a school year. This turnover is typically around 11 per cent. The school has recently experienced a large turnover of teaching staff. Seven teachers have left in the last two years and have been replaced by nine teachers appointed to permanent posts.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides pupils with a standard of education that is satisfactory overall, with some good and very good features. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection that has removed much of the underachievement found at that time. Standards are rising and pupils' attain the national averages in English and science by the end of Year 6. Pupils' work is above the expected standards in art and design and music. Standards are below average in mathematics and pupils do not achieve as well as they could but, in all other subjects, pupils are achieving what can reasonably be expected of them. The school is led well by the headteacher, and several key staff provide very good management in their areas of responsibility. This, together with the good quality of teaching overall, enables the school to provide satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in art and design and music are good and, by the end of Year 6, pupils are exceeding national expectations.
- The headteacher leads the school well and there is very good management of English, information and communication technology, music, special educational needs and financial administration.
- The high quality of the learning support staff makes a very good impact on all the pupils with whom they work.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress and to be fully included in all aspects of school life.
- There is excellent concern for all aspects of pupils' welfare.
- Provision for pupils' moral development is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics are not high enough and the overall strategies for teaching numeracy skills are unsatisfactory.
- The balance of the curriculum and its organisation has weaknesses in geography, history, mathematics and physical education.
- The assessment of pupils' learning in mathematics and science lacks precision, and information from assessment is not used sufficiently to improve the quality of learning in these subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the last inspection in June 2000, the school was judged to be underachieving, with improvement needed in aspects of leadership and management and the quality of teaching. In addition, standards were below expectations in both English and information and communication technology. There has been satisfactory improvement since that inspection due to the determination to succeed of the headteacher, all members of staff, and the governing body. There has also been good support by officers of the local education authority. Despite some lack of continuity in staffing, pupils' standards are gradually rising, due to what has been achieved in rectifying weaknesses. Standards in English and information and communication technology now match national expectations. This is due to improved teaching and subject management. Senior management now has a much stronger focus on raising standards. There is a well-defined management structure that reflects improved staff deployment. The governing body has become more evaluative in its monitoring of the work of the school. More work is still needed in order to raise pupils' standards, and

the quality of teaching in mathematics, and this has been identified by the school's senior management through its own monitoring. However, there is now a good capacity to succeed further, due to the shared commitment to improvement that has developed amongst staff.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

The test results in English, in 2002, exceeded the levels predicted by the school on the evidence of the pupils' progress, but results in mathematics fell short of the school's own target. In both subjects, results were significantly below the targets agreed with the local education authority. The fall, compared with the previous year, was due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, 34 per cent, and the departure from the year group, during the previous year, of a significant number of higher-attaining pupils. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher-than-expected Level 5 still compared, at least satisfactorily, with those in similar schools, being well above average in English, and average in mathematics and science. When the results in English, mathematics and science were combined, the trend was broadly in line with that found nationally, until 2001. The pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving higher standards than were seen in the national tests in 2002. Their work is average in English and science, but below average in mathematics. These pupils were below average overall in English when they started at the school, so they are achieving at least in line with their abilities. However, in mathematics these same pupils were average and current standards reflect some under-achievement. The standards of pupils with special educational needs are below average overall, but the very good support that they receive is enabling them to gradually overcome learning difficulties. These pupils make good progress and they are achieving well throughout the school. Good achievement and progress is also evident in the comparatively few pupils who speak English as an additional language and their standards match those of their classmates.

In other subjects there is no under-achievement by any pupils. By Year 6, standards are exceeding expectations in art and design and music, due to consistently good teaching. In music, the extra-curricular opportunities and teaching by the peripatetic music teacher, also make very strong contributions towards the high standards in the subject. In design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education, and religious education, standards in Year 6 are matching expectations. Across the curriculum, standards now reflect several changes from the judgements at the time of the last inspection. Improvements have occurred in reading, writing, art and design, music, and information and communication technology. The latter is a good improvement from previously standards, which were below expectations. English was well below average and the improvement is, therefore, very good, reflecting the school's determined efforts to raise standards. Standards have fallen in mathematics, which was judged to be average, and religious education, which was previously above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show good levels of interest in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall and often very good in large gatherings, such as assembly, or at lunchtime. Variations in pupils' behaviour in lessons reflect the extent to which learning activities are planned to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities.
Personal development and	Good relationships exist between pupils and between pupils and staff, contributing to

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

relationships	pupils' good overall personal development.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is below national rates although the amount of unauthorised absence is less than in most schools. Holidays taken during term time contribute significantly to the high rate of authorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection with more that is good or better and less that is unsatisfactory. There is consistency between year groups, although the teaching in Years 4 and 6 is of a slightly higher standard. The quality of pupils' learning is significantly higher in Year 6 than in other years, although, like teaching, learning is good overall. One of the main reasons for so much good learning in Year 6 is the good attention that teachers pay to ensuring that the learning activities planned for different groups of pupils are matched carefully to their abilities. This is evident across much of the curriculum, whereas, in other year groups, such planning is evident in English, but is inconsistent in other subjects. The learning achieved by pupils with special educational needs is consistently good, because of the very high quality of the support that they receive. The specialist teacher of pupils with English as an additional language advises class teachers well, and this results in much good learning by these pupils.

The greatest strength in the teaching is the high quality of the management by teachers of pupils' behaviour, which is very good overall. There is total consistency between the expectations of almost all teachers and support staff and this provides pupils with a very clear understanding of what is expected of them. On occasions, where a few pupils have difficulty meeting these expectations, support staff and teachers with high levels of specialist expertise provide very skilled guidance and counselling.

English is taught well and the basic skills of literacy are consolidated well across the whole curriculum. Mathematics is taught satisfactorily, but the teaching of basic numeracy skills in the wider context of using other subjects to consolidate and develop numeracy is unsatisfactory. Good teaching of basic skills in most other subjects prepares pupils well for their future learning. At all stages, pupils show good levels of interest in their work. They maintain good levels of concentration and interest in their work. Pupils regularly carry out a simple form of self-assessment at the end of lessons and this provides them with good knowledge of their own learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is satisfactory overall. Educational visits and visitors to the school contribute well to pupils' learning opportunities. The content of the programmes for mathematics and physical education have weaknesses, and the gaps between the times when geography and history topics are taught are too long.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good overall. There is early identification, good liaison with parents, and regular review of pupils' progress towards the targets that are set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision, which meets the needs of individual pupils very successfully.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, overall, with a strong emphasis and very good provision for pupils' moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good support and guidance. There is excellent attention to all aspects of pupils' welfare, including the procedures for child protection. There is good, detailed assessment of pupils' learning and most information from assessment is

	used satisfactorily to guide curriculum planning and for setting targets for pupils.
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Parents hold good views about the school and the school works hard at developing good home-school links. Very good information is provided for parents, through newsletters, annual reports on pupils and an excellent annual report by the governing body.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and receives good support from staff. Many staff with management responsibilities are new to their roles, but they have models of good practice to follow in current leadership of English, music and special educational needs.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily. Governors provide constructive guidance and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good self-evaluation procedures, and analysis of relevant data, enable the school to identify priorities, set itself targets and pursue effective courses of action for future improvement.
The strategic use of resources	There is good use of physical and human resources, and very good management of finances.

Staffing levels are good, learning resources and the adequacy of accommodation are good overall. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily, challenging itself and securing value for money in the services and resources that it acquires.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The good progress that their children make. • Children's good behaviour. • How the school deals with parents' questions or problems. • The high expectations that the school has of its pupils. • That their children are being helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The type and amount of homework. • The information provided about their children's progress. • The range of activities outside lessons. • Some parents feel that the school could work more closely with them.

Inspectors agree with the aspects that please parents, but do not share their concerns. Homework is set to consolidate pupils' learning in lessons in a way that follows the school's policy. Parents' meetings and the approachability of staff mean that parents have good opportunities to get information about their children's progress. A good range of extra-curricular activities is organised. The school works very hard at working with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils transfer to the school from two neighbouring infant schools. When they enter Year 3, pupils' standards, overall, as shown by their results in the National Curriculum tests, taken in their previous schools at the end of Year 2, are slightly below national averages. There is a clear trend in these results that shows a narrowing gap between what pupils achieve in reading and writing and the national averages. In mathematics, the reverse is occurring and the gap is widening. The progress pupils make, from Year 3 onwards, shows marked fluctuations between years. At the last inspection, pupils' progress was judged unsatisfactory overall, with under-achievement being most noticeable in English and science. Of the current year groups, pupils in Year 6 have made the least progress in the past. In Year 5, pupils have made satisfactory progress overall, but this is due to good progress being made in Year 3, followed by unsatisfactory progress in Year 4. The pupils currently in Year 4 made good progress during their time in Year 3. From these rates of progress it is seen that the school has addressed successfully the weaknesses in teaching in Year 3 that were present at the time of the last inspection and that were having negative impact on standards. However, it is also evident that, until now, weaknesses in the teaching in Year 4 had not been rectified.
2. The results in national tests, taken by pupils at the end of Year 6, showed improvement in English between 1999 and 2001 and then a fall in 2002. In mathematics, results stayed more or less the same, between 1998 and 2000, but have fallen in the following two years. Results in science rose steadily each year until 2000, fell in 2001, but rose again in 2002. The results in 2002 were below national averages in English and science, and well below average in mathematics. Compared with schools that are similar in intake to Newbridge, the results were above average in English, average in science, but below average in mathematics. The percentages of pupils achieving the higher-than-expected Level 5 were in line with the national average in English, but below average in both mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, the proportion achieving Level 5 was well above average in English and average in mathematics and science.
3. There are well-documented reasons for the results in 2002 being lower than the previous year in English and mathematics and not improving in science. First, 24 per cent of the year group had special educational needs, most of which were related to learning difficulties. Despite extra efforts being made to raise the standards of these pupils, too few were able to achieve the expected standard. A second factor, having an adverse effect on the drive to raise standards, was the significant absence of permanent teaching staff during the year and the direct effect that this had on the teaching of Year 6 classes. Records show that significant numbers of pupils with low levels of attainment and self-esteem joined the Year 6 classes between Years 3 and 6. Some of the problems associated with pupils joining and leaving the school during a school year, apply to the current Year 6 classes, but these classes are now benefiting from a stable teaching situation. The quality of teaching is high, with nearly three quarters of teaching being good or better. This has accelerated the progress made by pupils in Year 6. The very good support for the high percentage of pupils in this year group with special educational needs is also raising the school's expectations of these pupils. As a result, standards at this early time of the year are average in English and science and below average in mathematics. .
4. The national test results in 2002 for the pupils in Year 6 fell well below the targets that had been agreed with the local education authority. However, the results were close to the school's predictions, which were based on the pupils' past performance. Targets for 2003 are ambitious and are more likely to be met in English than mathematics. The extensive information that the school gets from the analysis of test data is starting to be used to predict what other year groups should be achieving, although, by being such a new development, the use of the full range of information from assessment is only satisfactory at the present time. Inspection evidence is of pupils generally achieving at least satisfactorily across the curriculum in relation to what they have done in the past. The one exception remains mathematics, where weaknesses in teaching, target setting and monitoring, are hindering progress.

5. The achievements of pupils are reflected in standards, which, by Year 6, are exceeding national expectations in art and design, and music, and meeting the national expectations in all other subjects, apart from mathematics. Physical education lessons in Year 6 did not occur during the inspection and there is, consequently, no judgement on standards. The steady gains that pupils make in learning in much of the curriculum result from good teaching and the positive attitudes that pupils have. Compared with the last inspection, current standards reflect very good improvement in English, good improvement in art and design, music, and information and communication technology. Standards in the latter have improved from below expectations to matching expectations, Standards in religious education have fallen slightly, from above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus to matching expectations, but this is due to the subject having to be a lower priority, while the serious under-achievement in English was being addressed. Where improvements have occurred, they are due to good development of learning opportunities in these subjects, with teachers demonstrating better planning and increased subject knowledge. There are improved resources in information and communication technology, and there is very good subject management, where English is concerned.
6. Amongst particular groups of pupils in the school, there are examples of good achievement. This is clearly evident in many of the pupils with special educational needs, particularly those with complex learning difficulties. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in reading, spelling and writing, because of the very good teaching and support that they receive, in and out of lessons, and also because of the range of support programmes they access. Many pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards when measured against their starting point. The higher-attaining pupils in the school are generally achieving the standards of which they are capable and work planned for them is suitably challenging, although there is insufficient attention to such planning in mathematics. The school identifies those pupils with particular gifts and talents in different subjects and, through extension work, or provision of extra-curricular activities, pupils' needs are met satisfactorily and their achievement also is satisfactory. Pupils who speak English as an additional language progress well and the very good support they receive enables them to make good progress and achieve well by quickly matching the standards attained by their classmates.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Many positive features were identified in the previous inspection, when attitudes, behaviour and relationships were all found to be great strengths of the school. These strengths are being maintained, but not quite at such high levels as at the previous inspection. The very caring staff have continued to enable pupils to feel relaxed, safe and happy and pupils say they enjoy coming to school. There is very little evidence of any boisterous or unruly behaviour and pupils nearly always show that they are developing into very well mannered, considerate and thoughtful youngsters who are keen to learn and participate in all the school offers.
8. Pupils are eager to come to school and are involved in a wide range of activities. They work and play sensibly together and are learning very sound attitudes including those of tolerance and respect. They are rarely late arriving in the mornings, in fact, on three mornings a week many arrive soon after 8.15am for reading club, or for judo. Older pupils in these clubs encourage and support their younger friends and in many of their activities they play together with good humour. Pupils like school, and they flourish in its happy atmosphere. As pupils grow older they take on more responsibility, but there is scope to develop this aspect of personal development, even more, and pupils, themselves, say they would like to be able to use their initiative more. Older girls talked, for example, about their wish to have a tuck shop in the school, where they could buy mid-morning snacks, and their eyes widened with approval when they imagined themselves running it. Teachers often complete routine tasks themselves, such as handing out books or resources, but when pupils are challenged to organise themselves, such as in a Year 6 science lesson, they were quick to take charge with impressive results. A temporary lapse in school council activities has meant that pupils do not, currently, have quite enough say in how their school is run. However, the newly appointed member of staff, overseeing this area, is fully aware of the need to get it up and running again.
9. Pupils are proud of their school and readily engage in conversation with visitors. They like showing them around, especially the playground, which provides variety and space for play, chatter and socialising. A sample of pupils has taken part in an attitudes survey to find out what pupils really

think about their school, and the headteacher reports that staff were surprised with some of the results. While presenting as positive in all areas, this survey confirmed that there is still room to enable boys as well as girls to increase their confidence and to benefit even more from school life. Pupils are courteous and friendly and, as they mature, they offer increasing levels of support and care for each other. Relationships across the school are good. Pupils who join the school in Years 4, 5 and 6, including the few who come from other countries and cultures, settle quickly and make new friends. Pupils' personal development is fostered, not only through the wide range of good quality extra-curricular activities provided, but also during residential visits for older pupils who choose to go. They all, without exception, speak very keenly of these experiences.

10. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and understand the consequences of their actions. Pupils behave well and standards are good, overall, with some examples of very good behaviour, for example, during assemblies and lunchtimes. This is particularly commendable in view of the lack of opportunities for outdoor recreation during the inspection due to bad weather. Pupils know about rules and, every September, they are reminded of the home school agreement and their part in it. Pupils are appreciative of the fact that they are able to work and play in an environment that is generally free from oppressive behaviour such as bullying, sexism and racism. Exclusions are very rare. During the last year, there were two pupils involved in two very short-term exclusions. In a very small minority of less successful lessons pupils inevitably grow bored, can appear tired, and behaviour can then begin to deteriorate but, even then, it is never too unruly.
11. During the previous inspection attendance was judged to be satisfactory but, because of a falling trend, and because the rate for last year was below similar schools and national averages, it is now judged as unsatisfactory. There are however no issues with punctuality.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. The qualities of teaching and learning are good. Compared with the last inspection, teaching and learning have improved, with more teaching being good or better and less being unsatisfactory. The recent past has seen some disruption to staffing arrangements that has affected continuity for pupils in some classes. This is no longer the case and all classes, except one, benefit from having permanent teachers. The impact of this has been seen, after only half a term, in rising standards and increased rates of progress in many pupils' learning.
13. Throughout the school, the relationships between pupils and teachers, and other adults in the classroom, are good and all teachers make good use of support staff to provide additional instruction and guidance for pupils. Support staff are thoroughly briefed and the quality of their guidance to pupils is very good. These staff and volunteers have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and to the progress that they make in lessons. On their own initiative, several support staff have increased their expertise through training. The early morning reading club, on two days a week, is making a very good contribution to the overall development of pupils' reading skills, particularly those of pupils in Year 3. Pupils of various ages are also benefiting from the good expertise, shown by support staff, in the areas of behaviour management and special educational needs.
14. The teaching of basic literacy skills is good overall. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy Strategy well by providing a range of activities that are matched carefully and successfully to the needs of groups of pupils of different abilities. Teachers are successful at using lessons in subjects other than English to develop pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented satisfactorily. However, there is less planning of different tasks for different ability levels than in literacy. As a result, lower-attaining pupils sometimes struggle to complete tasks when there are no support staff to assist them and higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by their work. Teachers have a sound, overall knowledge of information and communication technology. They use this knowledge satisfactorily to plan appropriate learning opportunities to support pupils' learning in some subjects, but this is under-developed in science, design and technology, and geography. A strength of the teaching is the breadth of teachers' subject knowledge, which is good overall. This knowledge is used well to teach the basic skills in most subjects and this provides a firm foundation for pupils' future learning. The qualities of teaching and learning are very good overall in music, good in English, science, art and design, history, physical education, and religious education, and satisfactory in mathematics,

geography, and information and communication technology. The teaching of design and technology was not observed, but planning and use of resources are satisfactory.

15. The majority of teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well. They make their expectations clear and provide much positive comment whenever good behaviour occurs. These clear guidelines are a particular help to those pupils who have behavioural difficulties and who, at times, can present a severe challenge to teachers' authority. Pupils' understanding of the school's expectations of their behaviour is further consolidated by the fact that support staff are equally consistent in managing pupils' behaviour as teachers. This common approach by all is a notable strength of staff.
16. Most teachers plan and discuss with the class what it is intended that they all should learn by the end of a lesson, but this is sometimes vague and is rarely refined to a level of communicating different learning targets for different groups or individuals. A common feature of the best teaching seen was the teachers' very specific learning targets that were clearly displayed and referred to constantly. Additionally, the activities in these lessons were ambitious but, due to the teachers' very good awareness of what pupils could achieve with hard work, were achievable. Pupils rose to the challenge and, in two Year 6 lessons, given by the same teacher, the excellent teaching helped pupils to gain a tremendous sense of achievement from their work. Through often inspiring teaching, these pupils developed a very good understanding of how characters could be created and developed in their writing. A very different form of writing was asked of the same pupils in an equally excellent science lesson. Here, pupils recorded the results of an investigation that they had planned themselves. The main points to be learned by different groups of pupils had been established by the teacher's previous assessment of gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils were then guided skilfully towards combining writing, graphs, and tables, in a way that developed their knowledge and understanding in the previously weak aspects of their learning.
17. Teachers of classes in the same year group plan lessons together, but the thoroughness of this planning is variable. Where it is detailed, as in Year 6, thought is given to the needs of different groups of pupils, and a range of activities is planned to provide just the right amount of challenge for groups of different abilities. The variation that exists in other years is most evident in the planning of mathematics. The arrangement of grouping pupils by ability is too often regarded as sufficient for all pupils in a set to be given the same work. This results in some pupils marking time in lessons, waiting for others to finish. Alternatively, higher-attaining pupils within an ability group are given additional tasks, such as a further worksheet that simply provides the same sort of learning activity as the ones already completed, rather than activities that will extend their knowledge and understanding. Where learning activities were not matched carefully enough to different pupils needs, as in three mathematics lessons, a science and a geography lesson, both learning and teaching were unsatisfactory.
18. There has been good improvement in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection. Through training, and with very good support from the special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers have become skilled in identifying pupils who have special educational needs and are fully involved in drawing up individual educational plans for them. These plans are detailed and helpful and ensure that pupils achieve well. Teachers and support staff work closely and successfully together to this end. Pupils identified as gifted and talented are directed satisfactorily by the school towards seeking new challenges and extending their learning, both in lessons and through extra-curricular activities.
19. A teacher from the local authority ethnic minority achievement service visits the school each week and provides some direct support in class for one or two of the pupils for whom English is an additional language. However, much of her role is to enable class teachers and learning support assistants to give effective help. She provides informal training and learning materials, as appropriate. There is also a bilingual Turkish speaker who helps to translate technical vocabulary for those pupils who need this type of support. The pupils concerned are making good progress in their learning as a result of this carefully targeted support, and the good attention paid by class teachers to their needs.
20. All pupils in the school are well motivated in their learning. They make a good effort to acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding that the learning activities planned for them are designed to achieve. They are also responding well to the simple but effective form of self-assessment that teachers encourage at the end of lessons. This forms the basis for pupils gaining a good

understanding of the extent of their own learning. The targets set for individual pupils in literacy and numeracy are not used sufficiently by teachers, for there is rarely a reference to these targets in lessons. Opportunities to focus a pupil on specific things to be practised and learned are, therefore, not followed up by teachers.

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

21. The school provides a broad curriculum of satisfactory quality, which meets the needs of the National Curriculum as well as the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The range of learning opportunities is generally wide enough to support pupils' academic and personal development. Work is relevant, and good tasks are devised to interest pupils. However, notable exceptions to this are to be found in mathematics, and physical education. The quality of planning in mathematics is too inflexible and is insufficiently adapted to the needs of different abilities. In physical education, there are several weaknesses relating to the allocation of time for some aspects of the subject, particularly dance and swimming. Art and design, and music, are particular strengths, and contribute well to pupils' development. In geography and history, learning is not a consistently continuous process as the gaps in time between the teaching of units of work are sometimes too long.
22. The school has successfully developed the National Literacy Strategy and basic skills are taught well. However, this is not the case in mathematics, where some aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy are less well developed and this has a direct, negative impact on standards. The present status of information and communication technology has improved from the time of the last report, when skills and equipment were generally below expected standards. Recently, more emphasis has been placed on what pupils will learn in each lesson, rather than the task set. This has ensured that pupils make progress more systematically, as they, and their teachers check this at the end of each session. Timetables have been revised since the last inspection, but some sessions are still too long. This is particularly true in mathematics, when an already long session for pupils in ability groups is often followed by yet more mathematics in a class lesson. If such sessions were shortened, especially in the upper school, it might be possible to organise an extra session for a non-core² subject, such as history or geography, to broaden pupils' skills.
23. Good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they have the same opportunities to experience the full curriculum as any other pupils. Where needs are specifically related to physical disability, the school has designated personnel or specific resources that ensure pupils' full involvement in all lessons. Pupils who are withdrawn from class lessons, either individually or in small groups, for work with specialist staff, do so mostly at times when the subject that they are studying is the same as that in the class lesson. If this is not possible, class teachers ensure that these pupils are present for key parts of a lesson and do not miss essential learning. Teachers and learning support assistants work hard and successfully to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in class lessons and extra-curricular activities. The school identifies pupils who are considered to be 'more able' and directs them towards activities, both in school, and beyond, which might extend their particular talent.

Personal, social and health education

24. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The manager for this aspect and the scheme of work are new. There is no policy at present, but the scheme of work follows that provided by the local education authority. Satisfactory links with citizenship are being made. The governing body has approved an appropriate policy for sex education, and a nurse makes visits to help pupils with their learning. A local policeman also visits to talk to each year group about being safe, and raises awareness about drugs misuse. Some time ago, the school incorporated 'circle'³ time in order to develop pupils' personal skills, but its use has lapsed. A systematic exploration of moral and social themes such as courage, tolerance and friendship would extend the opportunities for pupils' personal development. At present, some teachers offer

² The non-core subjects are those subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

³ '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.

pupils a good level of pastoral support, using individual targets for personal development, and there are plans to make this more consistent throughout the school.

25. Because the manager is new, no formal assessment has been carried out to check how consistent the teaching is in this area. The school's plan indicates monitoring will take place next year. The manager wants to invite more visitors into the school, and realises more resources are needed. A once thriving school council is to be reconstituted in order to consider pupils' views. However, none of this formal development takes place at present. Teachers know their pupils well and good relationships ensure good support.
26. The school offers all pupils a good range of extra-curricular activities, which are enjoyed by many pupils. Many, but not all, teaching staff are fully involved in, and committed to, the delivery of these good quality activities. Some clubs are run after school, some during the dinner break, and twice a week a reading club is held, before school. This reading club is very well organised and managed by learning support assistants. Pupils speak very enthusiastically of all these clubs, especially the school orchestra and choir, and they clearly benefit in many ways from participating in them. There is equal access to all, provided parental consent is given, and some pupils attend as many as four extra activities every week. All are free of charge, apart from Judo, which is run by a local judo club. The school is mindful that a thorough audit is necessary and the newly appointed 'Out of School Hours' Manager is undertaking this so that the impact of all activities can be more consistently evaluated. But in terms of pupil enjoyment the benefits are very clear.
27. There are many positive features relating to community involvement, and links overall are good and many are well established, for example, with the church. This is a similar picture to that reported in 2000. Recent initiatives have involved members of the local Scout group, who have worked hard on an environmental project in the school grounds based around the pond. Displays in the school also show the impact of their hard work. Many members of the community are on the governing body and, together with the headteacher, they are committed to ensuring the pupils get involved in the community whenever they can. Pupils sing to senior citizens at Christmas time, and the whole school visits the nearby church for special occasions. Pupils are actively encouraged to join local sporting associations. The school has some satisfactory and growing liaison with partner institutions and has begun to share ideas and policies more effectively with infant schools locally. There are inevitable difficulties in maintaining secure and fruitful relationships with all secondary schools to which pupils move at the age of 11. Students are welcomed for work experience placements, but there have been few in recent months. Overall, partnership arrangements with other schools and institutions are satisfactory.

Provision for pupils' personal development

28. Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The school is a very caring community, and every effort is made to ensure there are good relationships, where pupils can grow in self-esteem and confidence. The school's motto 'to do our best', is displayed prominently around the school, and, overall, permeates most activities, promoting a good ethos within the school community. All staff contribute to this aspect of pupils' development. Pupils have confidence in teachers and other staff, and feel that they could turn to any one for advice and support. The views of older pupils in the school show that they have been given the opportunity to understand the importance of mutual respect for each others beliefs and culture, and that everyone is the same underneath no matter what their colour. Within the area of personal development, however, there are variations in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since the previous inspection. The policy seen at the last inspection continues to provide a thoughtful philosophy, although curriculum planning does not succinctly identify opportunities for the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils. The subject policies do not clearly identify how pupils' personal development can be positively influenced. There are useful plans for the monitoring of provision by the manager for this area of pupils' development, and all staff have met together with governors to determine the quality of provision.
29. The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection it was judged to be good. There are many examples of good provision, but also examples of missed opportunities. There is a strong awareness among some members of staff, who actively foster opportunities for reflection and wonder at the natural world, and the

consideration of deeper issues. In the best examples, there are good links with moral issues. In literacy, for example, pupils carefully considered the feelings and emotions captured by the poet Wilfred Owen during the First World War. Pupils learn to appreciate the spiritual nature of subjects such as art and design, music, and some aspects of science. In Year 4, pupils write thoughtful prayers of thanks and forgiveness. Prayers are written individually, in accordance with the different faiths represented by pupils in each class. However, such opportunities are not consistently fostered across the school. Most staff value pupils' input, but there are occasions when pupils' thoughtful and spontaneous contributions are lost in the determined adherence to the timing of a lesson. Religious education and assemblies make a satisfactory contribution to helping pupils to develop insights into the beliefs and values of others, and provide appropriate opportunities for reflection. The previous, effective use of the school grounds to heighten pupils' spiritual awareness has not been possible recently, although there are good plans to re-establish this beneficial provision. The sessions for personal, social and health education also give further good opportunities for pupils to consider deeper issues.

30. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong, through personal and social education, specific lessons, religious education and assemblies. Class rules are consistently implemented, and there is a useful behaviour policy, which is followed throughout the school. The school's systems for rewards and sanctions are well understood by pupils, who consider that staff treat them with fairness. They like the way that staff talk to them about any incidents of rule breaking or unacceptable behaviour, and how staff show them reasoned points of view in a kindly way. This reflects the opportunities for the development of the good level of relationships pupils have with the staff. Their views on important issues of the world show that they are given very good opportunities for debate and discussion. This was obvious from the views of older pupils on such diverse subjects, such as racism and local environmental issues, and in classroom discussions on the morality of war. In lessons, such as those in religious education, pupils consider the rules by which school and society should function, and, through such themes, develop a good idea of the rules of other faiths.
31. Provision for pupils' social development is interlinked with that for their spiritual and moral development, with provision being good in this area of their development. The previous inspection judged this to be very good. There are many planned opportunities for pupils' social development, which are very good, but also opportunities which allow for only satisfactory provision. In the very good lessons, pupils are consistently encouraged to work together in pairs or groups, to support each other and to share and respect equipment. This they do well, with no dissension, and with respect for the views of others. They regularly support charities and play a part in contributing to life in the local community. Their social awareness is extended further by visitors to the school, and by the many range of visits undertaken, including a residential visit for older pupils. Many subject areas contribute to pupils' social development, where pupils perform together and compete as teams. Musical activities make a particularly significant contribution, with pupils performing at the local music festival and through links with a local church. Pupils are regularly given opportunities for responsibility around the school. Older pupils help the younger pupils to settle when they first start in the school, and the system of House Captains and teams contributes to feelings of responsibility and loyalty. These opportunities make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social development. The school council was a good feature of the previous inspection, and contributed to pupils' understanding of citizenship. However, due to staff secondment, it lapsed and has only recently begun to function once more and is at an early stage of seeking pupils' views. There are limited opportunities for pupils to consider and use their own initiative in their development of social awareness, and to develop further a sense of responsibility, for instance, although pupils provide good support for a range of charities, they have not had the opportunity to pursue their own initiative in undertaking thoughtful support for causes that may interest them.
32. The cultural development of pupils is good. The school is aware of the need to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society, and endeavours to provide opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of different world cultures. Assemblies provide good opportunities to make pupils aware of the celebrations of others, such as recognition of the significance of the Hindu festival of Diwali. Assemblies also provide opportunities for the recognition of Christian festivals, such as at harvest time. The cultures of pupils within the school are recognised and respected, and positively contributes to the understanding of all pupils. Pupils' cultural awareness is also heightened through activities, such as exploring African techniques in art and design, and considering the work of non-European artists. They examine different breads from other parts of the world in design and

technology. Music contributes positively to pupils' cultural development, with opportunities, for example, to appreciate South Asian music. In religious education, pupils learn about other faiths, and geography makes a satisfactory contribution when pupils learn about other countries of the world. Pupils learn about their own culture in subjects such as history, geography, art and design, and music. This knowledge is well supported by many purposeful visits, which support what pupils learn in the classroom. Interesting and carefully labelled displays around the school help to develop pupils' cultural awareness and respect for the beliefs of others.

33. The teacher from the ethnic minority achievement service also supports the school well in its work in valuing the contribution made by cultures other than the one experienced by most pupils. She arranges the loan of artefacts, and is helping the school to update its stock of posters and books that celebrate the range of languages represented in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The excellent features identified in the previous inspection report are now very firmly established, because everyone involved with the care and welfare of all pupils is very secure in their role, follows procedures closely, and always considers first what is best for the child. The school goes that extra step to ensure that health, safety, welfare and care are given top priority. Individuals are treated kindly, fairly and consistently; resources and people are allocated imaginatively, thus ensuring that standards of welfare are excellent. Staff are proactive in ensuring pupils are listened to and well cared for and they work together to enable all pupils in the school to feel happy and secure and, therefore, enabling them to progress and achieve. The school promotes equal opportunities very successfully. Its policy and practice for promoting race equality are promoted well. The school is a warm and welcoming place, where strong moral values are encouraged and where expectations are high for pupils' behaviour. Arrangements to support and advise pupils are good and used flexibly to best advantage.
35. The school is successful in promoting good behaviour. Pupils say that when they misbehave they are treated fairly. They know and try hard to conform to the rules, routines and expectations. They understand fully what appears to outsiders as a rather complicated reward system. Teachers generally follow procedures consistently. Friday is a special day not only for rewarding pupils with merit certificates, house points and for example the cup for the tidiest class which is awarded jointly by the cleaning staff, but it is also a day when pupils can enjoy a special golden hour. This is an opportunity to end the week engaged in a free choice of activities, as a reward for good behaviour during the week. The school is fully aware of its obligations for recording and reporting any racial incidents and is seeking parental views in reviewing its policy. However, a strong feature is an absence of oppressive behaviour including racial tensions. Proper procedures were followed for the two temporary exclusions last year. Procedures for monitoring and promoting positive behaviour are, therefore, very good.
36. Behaviour across the school is monitored particularly closely for those pupils who find it less easy to behave appropriately all day. There are very good extra support arrangements in place, which are properly shared with individual pupils and their families. A part-time teacher works very effectively and assesses these pupils carefully, keeping good records, and weekly, monthly and termly tracking sheets, which demonstrate progress they make. Her sensitivity and good listening skills, which are so vital in enabling pupils to feel secure, are used well, and flexibly, to support a number of pupils every week. This very good monitoring of pupils' personal development is effective. Pupils with special needs have plans in place, which are followed closely by teachers and learning support assistants; these address academic as well as personal targets. For the majority of pupils, much informal discussion takes place among staff to help share and promote the next step. Most teachers use their mark books to record pupils' progress in the development of social skills and other personal details. The school's policy to remind pupils that they must take ever-increasing responsibility for their own development is sensible. Pupils own work folders include many of their achievement certificates and special work, which moves with them as they progress onto the next class. Arrangements to support pupils' personal development are good overall.
37. Procedures and the policy for child protection are excellent. The named person and two other experienced adults have been fully trained in child protection. Staff understand the importance of acting properly, when, and if, any concerns are raised, and the school reports that it is getting

improved advice and more timely support from outside professionals. The practice of involving and informing parents fully is very good. The school has several first-aiders who are also fully qualified. Impressive systems, some of which are overseen by the full-time welfare assistant, are operating in the school to ensure that any child who feels unwell during the school day is cared for very well. This is very much appreciated by parents and carers. As was reported at the previous inspection, the administration of medicines is very good and record keeping very thorough. A nurse is a regular visitor to the school and makes home visits for some families. In addition, a number of visiting specialist support staff visit the school and individual pupils. The governors properly review the health and safety policy, one of whom has just completed a week's course, which included advice on risk assessments.

38. A named person oversees the few pupils who are in public care and who have individual care plans. Currently, although staff have been involved in formulating these plans, and attend relevant review meetings, copies are not held in school. The school has a policy in place covering the safe use of the Internet, which has involved parents. The environment is cared for well, and standards of cleanliness are very good. Pupils are very well supervised at play, and before and after school. They have ready access to fresh drinking water. Meals are of good quality and enjoyed by pupils and visitors.
39. Procedures to record and monitor attendance are very good. Office staff, as well as the headteacher, monitor attendance very thoroughly. They have a very good understanding of data and the computer program they use. Phone contact is made the first day of any unexpected or unexplained absence and usually by 10.00am. This is helpful in keeping unauthorised absences down, and well below national averages. Last year, however, the overall rate of attendance dropped to 93 per cent, which is below the national average. This was partly because of sickness, but, more significantly, 1,115 days in total were missed because of holidays taken during term time. The school constantly urges parents to take holidays out of term time if they can, and is fully aware of the difficulties this sometimes causes. However, already, in just the first half term of the year, 33 families had requested a total of 303 days absence. Regular support from the education welfare service is received, but there are still some families who, for a variety of reasons, apart from holidays, also fail to send their children to school quite as often as they should. Punctuality is also carefully monitored, but very few arrive late in the mornings.
40. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are generally good, but there is a lack of precision in how pupils' learning is assessed in mathematics and science. The school collects a great deal of information in various different forms, and strategies are now in place to ensure consistency and continuity of work. The assessment manager is at pains to record results in printed tables and graphs, and these are distributed to members of staff. However, the main instigators of the process are the year group leaders, who meet regularly, produce documents, reach conclusions and feed back their information. The data collected is analysed well, for instance, the optional test results are used to amend level predictions and to identify target groups. This works well in English, but is much less effective in mathematics and science. Assessment is also carried out in most non-core subjects, and good recording allows teachers to write focused reports for parents. The quality and amount of marking, in order to help pupils improve their work, is variable. Teachers across a year group present and mark work in an individual style. This arrangement means that pupils' work is marked differently, depending on which class they are in. Generally, the assessment manager and subject managers do not work closely enough, and there is insufficient liaison with year group leaders, as this part of the system is quite new.
41. The use the school derives from its assessment procedures is satisfactory in most subjects at present. However, in the case of the data arising from pupils' performance in annual tests in English and mathematics, large amounts of information are collected, but insufficient, consistent use is made of it, especially in mathematics. Systems are now in place and are beginning to have a positive impact, especially in English. However, there is some way to go on putting all the data and materials collected to positive, practical use, to inform planning for the next cycle. The use is variable, according to the teacher who plans and delivers the work. This is where inconsistencies arise, resulting in pupils' needs not being met effectively, particularly in mathematics and, to a lesser extent, in science. Teachers monitor and support pupils' progress well, because of the tracking systems now in place. Groups are targeted, and modification takes place of long-term targets. At an individual level, the school has not yet come to terms with the practical steps needed to boost these long-term targets, in order to translate them into higher standards, overall. However,

tracking of pupils' personal development is good, because clear strategies are now in place to record various information about pupils' health, ability, set level or strength within a group. Teachers also note which pupils work best in which groups. This enables them to choose groups wisely. A good example of this was seen in a history lesson for pupils in Year 5, when the teacher skilfully reassessed a grouping, and changed it, in order to maintain greater harmony in relationships within the class. The support teacher, teachers, and support staff, keep careful records of the progress made by pupils who speak English as an additional language.

42. A feature of assessment that is working very well is pupils' self-assessment. Teachers share the very specific learning intentions with the pupils, at an appropriate time in a lesson. They then offer the pupils opportunities to decide how confident they feel about the learning. A simple, very effective system, denotes whether a pupil feels *confident*, is *getting* there, or does *not* understand by recording the letter C, G or N on a piece of work. Some teachers of younger pupils in the school get immediate assessment indications by asking pupils to raise thumbs for the same purpose. Traffic lights are also used to denote the same three signals. This very good process contributes positively to the pupils' knowledge of their own learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Partnerships and communication with parents and carers is a very positive feature of the school, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Many parents speak openly about the ease with which they feel they can approach the headteacher and staff, and the encouragement they give to share and resolve any difficulties, however minor. These good links are well established, but the school is fully aware that there are still some parents who, for whatever reason, are less able to fully involve themselves in school life. A small minority does not always give it their full support, for example, in ensuring all pupils attend as often as they can.
44. Parents and carers views of the school are good. Only a small number attended a meeting held before the inspection, but approximately half responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, which is an impressive response when compared with many schools. Inspectors also spoke to several parents during the week of inspection, many of whom work in the school and know it well. Parents and carers say their children like school that the teaching is good, that teachers have high expectations, that staff are approachable and that the school is well led. They think teachers are friendly, but firm, enabling good communication at all levels. Parents seem to know about the extensive reward systems in place to encourage good behaviour, which they feel, are usually followed consistently. Inspectors agree with all these positive views. The only areas which prompted some concern amongst parents and carers were homework, with a significant minority responding that they were not convinced the school sets the right amount of homework and some parents responded less positively on questions about information on progress they receive. Many parents rightly recognise the exceptionally high standards of care given to all pupils, and they know their children will be looked after well. Overall the parents' views of the school are good.
45. The very supportive Friends of Newbridge School Association is successful in raising considerable sums of money, and the events it holds are well attended and involve many parents and carers and members of the community. Many parents work while their children are at school and have less time to be involved in its daily life, as such. However, they are still regularly and warmly invited into school to help voluntarily. There is a small number who have been police checked who help on school visits and swimming trips and in the computer club. Due to limited space in the halls, parents and carers are also invited in turn to assemblies and special services and occasions. They are always encouraged to become involved in their children's homework, and any queries and responses can be written daily in homework diaries. For some pupils, who are following more specific behaviour programmes, close contact is kept with parents to fully involve them in their children's progress during the school day. Parental permission is always sought for all school activities and, for example, in the use of the Internet. Time is always taken to inform parents and carers fully so that they know and understand what goes on in school and can be involved wherever possible.
46. Information is very good and parents and carers feel well informed especially through the very well presented school newsletter, 'The Newbridge News', which is sent out every month. Recently, year group newsletters have also begun, which are very helpful. The governors' annual report to parents is excellent, and plans are in hand to make it even more interesting, by including some drawings by

pupils. The school prospectus is very detailed, but easy to read, and it gives a lively picture of school life. Parents and carers are invited to termly consultations with class teachers and many attend all three evenings. Contact at the end of the day, or over the phone, is always made with those who do not attend and, if necessary, more convenient times arranged. Partly in response to weaknesses identified in the previous inspection, there have been changes made to the written reports in the summer term, which are now good and meet statutory requirements. These are now much more consistent across the school. Targets in English and mathematics are shared with parents and, as from next year, targets in science and information and communication technology will be included formally. For those parents who need translation services, contact is made with appropriate personnel to help. Curriculum evenings are occasionally held, but usually attended by only a minority of parents. Overall, information is very good, with verbal channels of communication being a particularly strong feature.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff

47. Leadership and management was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection, due to insufficient importance being placed on raising pupils' standards. There were also several weaknesses in school improvement planning, which failed to clarify how progress was to be monitored, or how subject managers were to influence the raising of standards. These weaknesses have been addressed successfully and leadership and management is now satisfactory overall. The educational direction of the school is now very clear, with a strong focus on raising standards that sits very comfortably with the wider aims and values that the school community strives to achieve.
48. The headteacher provides good leadership, founded on good relationships with all members of the school community. Her caring style of leadership and concern for pupils' all-round development continue, as before, but she has now sharpened management skills to include good delegation of responsibilities to staff and the establishment of a good management structure for the school. As a result of these measures, the headteacher has created an efficient approach to decision-making, with the essential people making the decisions that most affect their work. At the same time, there are good lines of communication that keep all staff aware of all aspects of school development. Staff are enabled to make valued contributions to school improvement that are prompted by good leadership. The headteacher is successfully leading the school in putting into practice a wide range of procedures that ensure equal opportunities for all pupils and all staff.
49. The management of the school is satisfactory overall. The headteacher is supported very well by the deputy headteacher and the senior management team. Amongst many developments in the management structure, the most significant is the seniority now given to year group leaders. When carried out most effectively, this vital role provides opportunity for all the teaching and learning of pupils in a year group to benefit from high quality planning and ongoing evaluation. Procedures common to all year teams are the responsibilities given to individual teachers for the planning of specific subjects and the good involvement of support staff in the planning process. Each team also carries out half-termly evaluation of the pupils' work during the period that, in turn, is monitored by the headteacher. Such evaluations enable future teaching of topics to be modified in the light of experience. The approach to planning makes good use of individual teachers' expertise, although the teams vary in the effectiveness with which they attend to how learning activities are to be modified so that the needs of groups of pupils of different abilities can be met. It is no coincidence that in Year 6, where detailed planning and ongoing assessment go hand-in-hand, the quality of pupils' learning is significantly higher than in other years. The Year 6 leader also creates good opportunities for teachers to observe good practice by colleagues.
50. Since the last inspection there has been good standardisation of the procedures to be adopted by subject co-ordinators in the management of their subjects. This provides a basis for effective observation of lessons and scrutiny of samples of pupils' work. At the present time, many subject managers are comparatively new to their areas of responsibility, but all have produced action plans for the current year that show good awareness of priorities, targets to be reached and action to be taken. There are examples of very good subject leadership to which all can aspire, notably in English, information and communication technology, music and special educational needs.

51. The very good management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs has particular strength in the day-to-day focus on meeting individual needs, and the flexible arrangements the school makes in order to do this. The special educational needs co-ordinator has created a positive and mutually supportive working ethos between teaching and support staff. She has worked hard to put efficient and practical systems in place to ensure that pupils' individual education plans are relevant and targets are achievable. As a result, the school has been successful both in reducing the need for additional support and raising attainment for pupils on the register for special educational needs. Statutory requirements are fully met and, since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in supporting teachers in their writing of individual targets, and liaison with outside professionals.
52. Good co-ordination of provision for pupils with English as an additional language is based on good liaison between the school and the local authority service. There is funding available, through the ethnic minority achievement grant, to help pay for the extra help that these pupils need. The level and quality of support is effective and ensures that these pupils make good progress. The weaknesses mentioned in the last report have been addressed and there has been an improvement in the arrangements since then.
53. In working towards improvements in the areas of under-achievement that were identified at the last inspection, significant progress has been made which, together with other improvement in important areas, such as the quality of teaching and the standards now being achieved by pupils, has resulted in satisfactory improvement overall since the last inspection. The improvement has been greatest in the areas of management and school development planning. Pupils are under-achieving in mathematics but, due to the strong commitment to raise standards, which is shared by staff, there is now a good capacity to succeed in rectifying the far fewer areas of weakness than at the time of the last inspection.

Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance

54. The school has good systems for monitoring and evaluating its own performance. There is a developing rigour and consistency in its procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, the quality of teaching, and the standards of pupils' work. The teaching of literacy has been improved through external monitoring, and the lesson observations by consultants from the local education authority have been effective in refining teachers' skills. Standards of pupils' work are monitored through analysis of National Curriculum test results and occasional work sampling. Test results are analysed in detail in terms of performance of different groups of pupils, such as by gender or ability, as shown by past performance. The data is starting to be used constructively to predict pupils' future performance.
55. Liaison between year group leaders and the assessment manager enables data from pupils' test performances to be used constructively in the identification of long-term targets and predictions. This analysis of data does, however, need to be more precise in its identification of weaknesses in pupils' learning. This is, currently, most effective in English, where the information helps to identify any groups of pupils who need extra help in specific aspects of their learning. Such detailed use of information from data is not happening sufficiently in mathematics or science.
56. The school has policies for self-evaluation, monitoring and review and performance management, and these are starting to have a strong impact on school improvement. The arrangements for performance management that have recently been adopted are setting clear targets for teachers to work towards within their own professional development.

The Governing Body

57. When the school was last inspected the governors were reported to be fulfilling most statutory responsibilities satisfactorily, but were failing in their duty to hold the school to account for pupils' standards. There was also concern that governors did not have sufficient understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Helped by appropriate training and a collective determination to improve, governors have made good progress. The chairperson was elected after the last inspection and there has been a relatively high turnover of governors since then. In achieving a clear strengthening of their role, governors have made the most of good advice from the local education authority's adviser to governors. This has developed a self-evaluative capability and a

confidence to monitor what is happening in the school with more rigour than before. The governing body now fulfils all statutory duties satisfactorily.

58. Governors are fully involved in the work of the school as members of various committees, undertaking link activities and properly fulfilling their responsibilities for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. The curriculum committee monitors standards and targets, through the reports that it invites from subject managers. The finance committee monitors spending decisions effectively, despite being severely constrained by the inadequacies of the local authority's financial systems. Governors are provided with reports from the headteacher that inform them well about school activities and the opportunities open to it. As a result, taken together with the results of the external monitoring visits, they now have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have identified areas of the school's provision that need further development and have strategies in place to support them. Governors' communication with parents, through its annual report, is exemplary. The report itself is a very attractively presented document that makes most interesting and informative reading.

Strategic use of resources and the application of the principles of best value

59. The school has good procedures for ensuring that the financial resources available to it properly support the educational needs of its pupils. There is good identification of priorities related to improving the quality of education and raising standards. This arises from the clear cycle of financial planning that is closely linked to the school's improvement plan. The monitoring of expenditure is very good and, through contingency planning, governors have ensured that financial reserves will be sufficient to respond to changes in circumstances with minimal disruption to its planned strategies. The school is, thus, well prepared for the implications of the known reduction in pupil numbers due to lower birth rates in Portsmouth. The much-delayed final balance sheet, from the local authority, for the last financial year, has revealed an underspend that the school has quickly been able to target at priority areas, such as the library.
60. The specific funds element of the school's finances, the money received to provide support for pupils with special learning, behaviour or language needs, is used well. The school has responded well to the weakness at the time of the last inspection in evaluating the value for money gained from its expenditure on special educational needs. The funds allocated to employment of learning support assistants are about average for a school of this size, but the high quality of these staff means that very good value for money is gained from their work. There is good liaison between the school and the local education authority service for pupils with English as an additional language. There is funding available, through the ethnic minority achievement grant, to help pay for the extra help that these pupils need. The level and quality of support is effective and ensures that these pupils make good progress. The weaknesses mentioned in the last report have been addressed and there has been an improvement in the arrangements since then.
61. The school's overall administration arrangements are good. The school office works smoothly and effectively and staff provide a very welcoming first contact for visitors to the school. Administrative staff make a very positive contribution to the efficient day-to-day running of the school. There is appropriate use made of new technology to support the work of the school. Day-to-day financial administration is very good and this is due to the excellence of the administrative officer responsible. Her expertise is a very significant factor in ensuring that financial management is so good when the school is hampered so severely by the inadequacies of the local authority's financial systems. These systems no longer produce, for example, the monthly budget reports that governors so rely on. Tracking of the standards fund monies is only possible because the finance officer has developed her own system. The school's last audit was over four years ago.
62. Governors use principles of best value satisfactorily to plan and evaluate the work of the school. Governors are aware of the need to ensure that best financial value is obtained when purchasing products or services. There are some good consultation procedures, with governors making use of a variety of information from parents, staff and the pupils. Governors are aware of trends in performance and are making effective comparisons with how school standards compare with those expected and achieved elsewhere. They have an increasing appreciation of the need to challenge what is being done in the school to assess the impact on pupils' learning.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

63. Good management and development have resulted in good staffing, accommodation and learning resources. The school has made steady improvement since the previous inspection, through its well-structured maintenance programme.
64. Teaching staff are suitably qualified to meet the demands of the curriculum and the age group they teach. Roles and responsibilities generally match areas of expertise and there is a strong commitment towards the professional development of all staff. Regular staff interviews and job description reviews, in addition to the school's purposeful professional development programme, form the basis of a target setting process, linked closely to the needs of individual teachers and the whole school. Newly qualified teachers are full of praise for the good level of formal and informal support they receive. However, the demands of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have made training for the co-ordination of some subjects difficult. It has not been possible for subject managers, who have recently taken over responsibility, to receive the training they need. Although most have a very positive attitude towards their new roles, not all have acquired the skills necessary to develop an overview of standards in their subject.
65. The school has a generous number of learning support assistants, an improvement since the previous inspection, and pupils of all abilities throughout the school benefit greatly. The work of support staff is of high quality and provides very good value for money.
66. At the time of the previous inspection, there was uncertainty about whether the co-ordinator for special educational needs was being deployed effectively. This issue has been fully addressed, and the work of the co-ordinator and support staff now makes a major contribution to the very good quality provision for pupils with special needs. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is also good.
67. Accommodation is generous and well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff. However, occasionally, noise levels between rooms cause difficulties and some classrooms are cramped. Communal areas are filled with attractive, welcoming displays. A well-structured refurbishment programme ensures a systematic approach towards repair and maintenance. Specialist areas, such as a separate hall for gymnastics and a music room, are put to good use. The school pays careful attention to the needs of its pupils with disabilities, although there is not yet ramp access for wheelchairs. Facilities, including hearing loops, have been specially installed and demonstrate the school's strong commitment to the welfare of all pupils. Outdoor areas are good, with interesting playground markings for pupils' games. Woodland areas effectively create a feeling of the countryside in the heart of the town. The school also has a good development programme for the school grounds, devised to support the science curriculum more effectively.
68. Following weaknesses identified in the previous report, the school has tackled the issue of under-resourcing in information and communication technology well. The school now has two computer suites and, consequently, standards in information and communication technology are improving. Levels of resourcing are at least adequate in all other subjects. Resource expenditure has increased significantly. Subjects, such as English, science, art and design, and music, have a good range of materials. Funding for literacy and numeracy has been used appropriately to provide a good range of reading books and mathematical equipment. The library is now well resourced and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to improve the standards of work and the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
 - Raise standards in mathematics, and numeracy skills in particular by:
 - building on examples of good practice to achieve improvement in the overall quality of teaching;
 - focusing year group planning and evaluation of learning activities more precisely on the needs of different groups of pupils;
 - ensuring that subject management provides rigorous monitoring of pupils' standards and the quality of teaching. (*Paragraphs 4, 14, 17, 22, 49, 55, 80 and 82*)

- ❑ Review planning and organisation of the curriculum in order to:
 - achieve greater continuity in the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in geography and history, by reducing the time interval between topics;
 - provide pupils with a better balance between areas of activity in physical education, by increasing time allocations to dance and swimming. (*Paragraphs 21, 107, 109, 111, 124 and 127*)

- ❑ Increase ongoing assessment of pupils' learning in mathematics and science so that:
 - information from ongoing assessment is used, alongside analysis of test data, to identify specific weaknesses more quickly and to take immediate action to rectify any such weaknesses. (*Paragraphs 40, 41, 55, 88, 90 and 94*)

Other issues which should be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:

- continuing to work to improve attendance. (*Paragraphs 11 and 39*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

76

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

43

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	14	35	20	5	0	0
Percentage	3	18	46	26	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	447
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	95

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	90

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.4

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	58	59	117

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	36	33	53
	Girls	45	38	49
	Total	81	71	102
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (75)	61 (60)	87 (83)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	43	39	49
	Girls	47	39	45
	Total	90	78	94
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (70)	66 (63)	80 (79)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
430	2	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
6	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	28

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	332

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	1,015,970
Total expenditure	978,458
Expenditure per pupil	2,164
Balance brought forward from previous year	49,160
Balance carried forward to next year	88,672

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	447
Number of questionnaires returned	208
Percentage of questionnaires returned	47

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	54	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	47	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	52	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	50	16	2	4
The teaching is good.	39	50	3	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	48	13	2	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	36	6	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	37	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	30	50	12	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	46	43	2	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	51	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	46	15	2	8

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

ENGLISH

70. Standards in recent years have risen at a similar rate to those seen nationally. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, standards in English were below the national average, but above average in comparison with similar schools. This reflected a slight decline in results, compared with the previous year, when standards overall were average compared with those achieved nationally. The lower overall standards were due to a greater percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the year group that took the tests. Significantly, however, the school successfully achieved an increase in the number of pupils achieving the higher-than-expected Level 5, which was the same as the national average, and well above average in comparison with similar schools. Inspection findings suggest that the pupils currently Year 6 are securely on track to achieve the standards expected for their age. This position of greater stability has been reached initially through very good leadership and, subsequently, through much improved teaching in the subject. As a result of the initiatives that have been introduced, pupils of all abilities now make consistently good progress in lessons. Those in lower ability groups, or who have special educational needs, receive very effective help from learning support assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have similar skills in English to their classmates and make the same amount of progress. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection, when standards were well below average and progress was unsatisfactory. The school is now in a strong position to further improve standards.

Speaking and listening

71. Standards in speaking and listening are average overall by the end of Year 6, and pupils' listening skills are above average for their age. Pupils now achieve well in speaking and listening throughout the school. This is because, from Year 3 onwards, teachers are encouraged to include in their planning, both in English and across the curriculum, opportunities for pupils to develop these skills. In many lessons, for example, teachers regularly say to their class, *'You have two minutes to discuss your ideas with the person next to you'*, or create opportunities for them to talk in larger groups and report back clearly to the whole class. Additionally, many lessons incorporate a session where pupils evaluate the quality of their own or their classmates' work and this makes a good contribution to the development of speaking and listening skills. Good examples of this were seen in Year 3 lessons, where teachers, firstly, made very good use of dramatisations of *'Jack and the Beanstalk'* to develop pupils' confidence in speaking to an audience, and then asked the rest of the class to comment on the quality of the work. Pupils in Year 6 are beginning to benefit from this approach. The majority speak with clarity and assurance on a variety of issues, ranging from the effects of weather in people's lives to the imagery used in Wilfrid Owen's war poetry. Some of the more able pupils express ideas very articulately and at length, reflecting standards above average for their age, whilst a small minority at this stage restrict their answers to single words or short phrases, which is below expectations.

Reading

72. In Year 6, standards of reading are average and are improving consistently throughout the school. This reflects good improvement since the last inspection, when progress was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school has successfully introduced a number of initiatives to address this issue. To begin with, an enthusiastic and capable teacher has been appointed to take responsibility for maintaining and improving reading resources. She has had very good support from the Portsmouth Library Service in ensuring that classrooms and libraries are stocked with good quality fiction and reference books at the right level of interest and difficulty for pupils of all abilities. Secondly, a librarian has been appointed with a view to ensuring regular and appropriate use of the libraries, a project which is in the early stages of development, but which is already starting to contribute satisfactorily to achievement of objectives within the National Literacy Strategy. Thirdly, the subject manager has introduced a successful and well-attended reading club that is having a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes to reading. This has been well supported by visits from a local author, who is a former pupil of Newbridge. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic about reading, and make good use of the wide range of books available to them, regularly exchanging the ones they have read. They enjoy reading together during literacy lessons as well as individually.

The higher- and many average-attaining pupils read accurately, fluently, and with good expression. When they make mistakes, they correct themselves and use a good range of strategies to help them to decipher unfamiliar words. Some lower-attaining pupils, and including Year 6, experience a degree of difficulty and need adult support with reading, because they have not mastered strategies for tackling new words. Overall, pupils of all levels of attainment have sound 'book skills', so that they know the difference between fiction and non-fiction, competently use the index and skim pages for information. Their research skills are steadily developing, through regular opportunities to use the non-fiction library, for example during homework club. Pupils are also given opportunities to be class librarians or to help younger schoolmates during reading club, and these responsibilities contribute positively towards their personal development.

Writing

73. By the end of Year 6, standards in writing are in line with national expectations. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged as unsatisfactory and the performance of boys was well below average for their age. The subject manager and her colleagues have worked hard and successfully to address this issue. To begin with, books that appeal specifically to boys have been added to school and class libraries and this has had the additional effect of stimulating their interest and ability in writing. Secondly, weekly '*writers' workshops*' have been introduced, which are having a positive effect on standards. Finally, teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy to develop pupils' capacity for writing. The combined effect of this increased attention, and imaginative approach, is that pupils, throughout the school, enjoy writing, try hard and achieve well.
74. In Year 3, the higher-attaining pupils produce independent pieces of writing that are accurately spelt and punctuated and they are beginning to use a good range of descriptive language. They have broadening vocabulary and a developing awareness of how to use language for effect. One pupil, for example, writing a Beatrix Potter story as a play script wrote: *'I'm sorry to say you will not be able to see my children because they are both in bed with measles'*. As they get older, pupils are given regular opportunities to write for a widening range of purposes such as narratives, letters, poetry, book reviews and instructions. Their writing benefits from learning how to structure their work, use language and figures of speech for effect, and pay careful attention to correct spelling and punctuation. A minority of less able pupils at this stage, although they produce writing that is logical and accurately punctuated, do not make use of such a wide vocabulary and their spelling is not always accurate. Some more able pupils, on the other hand, write expressively and introduce tension and atmosphere into their writing, as in, *'As soon as Lucy started playing her flute, the room fell silent'*, reflecting standards above expectations for their age.

Teaching and learning

75. Taking account of the lessons observed and the findings from studying pupils' work, teaching is good overall, in all year groups, often very good, and was excellent in one lesson seen. There are a number of strengths which are consistent to all year groups and most classes. Firstly, teachers throughout the school make good use of the National Literacy Strategy and plan lessons well. Secondly, they work closely with learning support assistants, who provide very good guidance for less able pupils and those with special educational needs. Thirdly, all teachers mark work conscientiously and the vast majority make very good use of day-to-day marking as a means of showing their pupils how they can improve. This is also clearly reflected in the care that pupils take with their work, their obvious pride in their books and the good overall quality of handwriting throughout the school. Common features of the very good and excellent teaching are teachers' lively and imaginative approach, very good relationships with pupils, and high expectations of the standards of their work. In the excellent lesson seen, for example, the teacher's enthusiasm and powerful development of teaching points inspired her class to the extent that their attitudes and behaviour were exemplary. Teaching is only occasionally less successful when too much time is devoted to the introductory session of lessons or the planning stages of written work, leaving too little time for writing activities. There is also room for improvement in the planning of work for middle ability groups, which sometimes is either too difficult or too easy for them. All teachers make good use of overhead projectors to illustrate the text they are using and make appropriate use of computers to enable pupils to edit and enhance their work. Teachers make good use of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills in learning activities in other subjects. This was seen in Year 5 when pupils' were set the task of writing in the character of Howard Carter when he

discovered Tutankhamun's tomb. There has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

76. The subject manager provides very good leadership and clear educational direction for her colleagues. In the relatively short time since her appointment she has made a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning, particularly through the consistency of teachers' planning and day-to-day marking of work and has, thereby, created a strong platform for further improvement. In order to raise standards further, work needs to be planned more precisely to meet the needs of pupils in the middle ability range, and the balance between the time spent in discussion, and preparation of writing activities, and the time available for completing extended writing tasks, needs to be reviewed.

MATHEMATICS

77. In the National Curriculum tests in 2002, the school's results were below those of similar schools. Six out of ten pupils reached or exceeded the national expectation, compared with just over seven out of ten nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group taking the tests was high and contributed to the below average standards. There had been little improvement on the previous year's results and the school fell far short of the target set of 80 per cent achieving or exceeding national levels. Although there has been some improvement since the previous inspection, the overall rate of progress has been too slow. Pupils' year-on-year progress has been erratic and standards have fluctuated.
78. Inspection findings confirm that standards of pupils currently in Year 6 remain below average and that not all are achieving standards in line with their ability. Many pupils attempt work appropriate to their age and ability without the necessary skills. The school will, once again, have difficulty in reaching the ambitious targets set for this year group, because many pupils will not have acquired a secure enough breadth of knowledge and understanding.
79. There is, however, some room for optimism. The recent whole-school focus on problem solving has given this aspect of mathematics a much higher profile, and younger pupils are beginning to apply their mathematical knowledge with greater confidence. Although lack of basic numeracy skills often hinders pupils' progress, the attention given to improving mental skills during the initial part of each numeracy lesson is starting to impact positively on standards. Within a very narrow range of topics, pupils' knowledge of shape, space and measures is close to the average. However, their data-handling skills are weak, and, although the school accurately identified this as a priority for development, there is insufficient evidence of improvement. Indeed, throughout the mathematics curriculum, too little attention is paid to the systematic development of skills and a very rigid planning structure makes it difficult for class teachers to accommodate new priority areas.
80. The school has started to analyse test results in greater depth and target areas in most need more effectively, in order to reverse the trend of under achievement. The introduction of ability groupings has started to address the needs of individual pupils, particularly of lower-attaining pupils. A substantial increase in the number of learning support assistants has also made a positive impact on standards. Support work is of high quality and makes a major contribution to pupils' rate of learning. However, this is only part of the picture. Although the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, it is not good enough to raise standards. The wide variation in quality within each year group is the key to the slow pace of improvement. Some teachers provide high quality lessons, whilst others neither challenge nor inspire. A higher proportion of unsatisfactory teaching occurs in mathematics than in most other subjects and some teachers are not as secure with teaching numeracy as they are with literacy. The school has placed considerable emphasis on monitoring teaching, but it has not been effective enough because it lacks rigour. It has not given teachers a clear enough indication of the quality of their teaching or the standards pupils are achieving.
81. Evidence taken from examples of pupils' current and previous work gives greater insight into why the overall quality of teaching and pace of learning have not been good enough to raise standards. Until recently, there has been very little opportunity for pupils to think for themselves or practise skills enough. Consequently, many pupils have only a superficial knowledge of concepts and do not produce enough written work to broaden their understanding.

82. The key to future success lies in teachers' confidence with the subject. Currently, not all teachers are secure with the Numeracy Strategy format. In addition, lengthy mathematics lessons, followed by extra numeracy work, do not encourage teachers to make the most effective use of time. Activities frequently stretch to fill the time available and pupils lose concentration. Some teachers provide pupils with a variety of interesting activities, very appropriate to their needs, give good support and encourage independence. Others provide one activity that is too easy for some and too hard for others. The clearest example of the two extremes was most evident in Year 6, where two different ability groups were completing the same work on measurement. One group made very good progress, because the class teacher gave a clear, but concise, explanation of the measuring activity, accurately assessed pupils' individual needs, supported them appropriately, and asked challenging questions of those who understood. Pupils in the other group made very little progress, because they found the work easy. They showed considerable lack of interest as they sat waiting for others to finish.
83. The qualities of teaching and learning are satisfactory, but the overall picture is very mixed. Since the previous inspection, the amount of unsatisfactory teaching observed has increased to 17 per cent of lessons. In Years 3 and 4, the vast majority of lessons observed were satisfactory or good, with a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. In Years 5 and 6, a greater proportion of teaching was good or very good, but there was also more unsatisfactory teaching. There is very little that is consistent in any aspect of teaching. Some teachers plan thoroughly and provide well for all abilities within their groups; others do not plan in sufficient detail.
84. In the best lessons, teachers use every minute of time purposefully, promote mathematical vocabulary well and transmit high expectations clearly. In a very good Year 5 lesson, pupils of average ability were attempting to record information on either a line graph or bar chart. The teacher referred to vertical and horizontal axes. She used previous work on bar charts very effectively to lead into new work and challenged pupils continually. She encouraged the use of whiteboards, very appropriately, supported individual pupils who were having difficulty and explained with care and precision. The pace was swift. In return, pupils made rapid progress, because they were highly motivated, had been taught well and wanted to succeed.
85. In lessons where teaching is less successful, there is not enough sense of urgency and pupils do not have sufficient time to practise or develop skills, particularly when the teacher talks for too long. In one lesson, where pupils were learning about number sequences, they listened to the teacher's explanation for 30 minutes. Consequently, they ran out of time to finish valuable written work. Pupils are extremely resilient. Even in lessons where they are bored, they behave well and maintain positive attitudes towards the subject. They occasionally become very confused, however, when teachers who are insecure with the subject, give them inaccurate information.
86. Information and communication technology skills are built into the planning and are beginning to be linked well to numeracy topics. Pupils are also starting to develop numeracy skills through other subjects, such as science. Homework is generally used well to support classwork. Activities are often interesting and provide rewarding opportunities. A group of pupils in Year 5 produced some very pleasing results, in response to their teacher's request to find examples relating to work on percentages.
87. Support staff play a vital role in all lessons. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, benefit most, and frequently make better progress than others, due to the very good support that they receive. All pupils have good awareness of their own levels of understanding, through simple, but effective self-assessment of their work at the end of each lesson. The school has also devised an appropriately challenging programme of work for its highest-attaining pupil who is in Year 6 and he is achieving well.
88. Staffing instability in the past has made continuity difficult. The current picture is far more stable. Recent initiatives, such as developing the use of data from pupils' test performances signal a move in the right direction. However, much work remains to be done. Leadership and management of the subject are, currently, unsatisfactory. Data analysis does not identify weaknesses with enough precision, and does not relate sufficiently well to the specific needs of individual pupils. Target setting is not yet used with any degree of consistency, and the school has only recently started to track individual pupils' progress. Subject monitoring is another area in need of improvement. Part of the problem with weak mathematics teaching is that, although much monitoring has taken place, it

has not been done with enough rigour. The huge variations in the quality of planning, marking, volume of work produced and inconsistencies in teaching methods have not been identified or rectified effectively enough. Areas for development have not been prioritised in any systematic way and class teachers have been left confused and uncertain by the vast number of different initiatives they have been expected to implement.

SCIENCE

89. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 is currently in line with the national average. This reflects the findings of the previous report. The results of the National Curriculum tests in 2002 show a small improvement on those of the previous year, with a slight increase in the number of pupils attaining at a level higher than expected. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Achievement overall is judged to be satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils' progress was judged to be unsatisfactory, particularly in relation to the more able pupils, and those with standards just below average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, are fully included in all lessons to enable them to make satisfactory progress.
90. The overall satisfactory improvement in science is attributable to a number of considered strategies initiated by the subject manager in order to raise standards, and includes the development of teaching skills in the subject. The subject manager has looked closely at previous results of National Curriculum tests and carefully analysed where weaknesses lie. This is a positive initiative and has been used well to adjust the focus of lessons. However, the attainment of pupils as they enter the school is not yet looked at carefully enough by the subject manager and the assessment manager together. No predictions about forthcoming standards are made so that the progress of pupils can be rigorously tracked. The results of the on-going assessment of pupils, as they move through the school, are not yet used to determine weaknesses more precisely, so that appropriate action can be taken in planning for pupils in the next step in their learning.
91. Standards in investigation and exploring are good and provide a sound basis for further learning across the science curriculum. Pupils make significant progress in learning how to conduct an investigation. For example, in Year 3, pupils explore the use of data when recording the measurement of their height against the measurement of other parts of their body, and look for emerging patterns. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are confident in discussing the attributes of a fair test. They use this knowledge to investigate, for example, the absorbency of paper, and explain their findings, based on sound and reasoned conclusions of what they observe. In the best lessons in Year 6, pupils are given ownership of an investigation, where they show initiative and reasoning in choosing their own equipment and criteria before undertaking their task. They confidently explain their choices, and, through this, the more able pupils show a high level of knowledge and understanding. In the lower part of the school, pupils are taught to record their findings systematically using a range of writing, diagrams and charts. This good practice is continued, so that by the time pupils reach Year 6, some are able to make independent and considered decisions on the best ways in which to present their findings. In some classes, pupils are given structured guidance, which inhibits the ability of more able pupils to identify key factors in organising and recording their investigations. Throughout the school, pupils have a secure and growing band of knowledge across all aspects of science. For example, pupils in Year 5 are confident in their knowledge of how to separate materials and the difference between evaporation and dissolving, although, at times, they are keener on the process of an investigation, rather than sharply identifying the key features of what they are doing.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, where teaching was judged to be satisfactory, although the range of teaching varied from unsatisfactory to excellent. The best teaching ensures that there is careful structure to lessons with appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities. Pupils' curiosity and interest is stimulated by energetic and knowledgeable teaching, resulting in their good application to tasks. Teachers combine an effective balance of direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to work practically and independently. All these qualities were evident in an excellent lesson in Year 6, and the teacher additionally made sure that there were opportunities for initiative and independent investigation, and that pupils of all abilities were continually extended and supported in their learning. The excellent quality of questioning contributed much to the development of pupils' thinking and reasoning skills. Teachers' expectations are variable, as not all teachers plan sufficiently to meet

the needs of all pupils. Progress is better in classes where teachers make sure that work is properly matched to all pupils' level of understanding. The unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by a slow pace and an unprofitable use of time, together with a lack of challenge for the more able pupils. This inevitably leads to pupils who lose interest and show no urgency in their tasks. In other lessons, teachers place too much emphasis on the task, rather than on what should be learned from it, so that pupils' learning is not sufficiently guided to a proper scientific outcome. When available, learning support assistants play a positive and helpful role in supporting pupils' learning.

93. The subject frequently makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. In all classes, pupils are encouraged to co-operate together and work together in groups. This they do very well. Some teachers are aware of opportunities for reflection and the consideration of the wonders of science, but this is not consistent throughout the school. In the previous inspection, the use of the school grounds made a strong contribution to environmental awareness in the school. Although it has not been possible to use this so positively in recent times, the school grounds manager, in conjunction with the subject manager, has well laid plans to establish future use for the benefit of pupils' learning. Pupils use their literacy skills well. They increase their knowledge of a scientific vocabulary and use the correct terminology when talking about their work. The majority also record their work with clarity, showing a satisfactory standard of literacy skills. Pupils use books to help them with their research, but these are frequently selected by the teacher and there are insufficient opportunities for library-based research by pupils. Satisfactory use is made of numeracy skills, both as part of investigations and in interpreting and recording data. Information and communication technology is still not used sufficiently to support learning. This weakness, identified in the previous inspection, has not yet been sufficiently addressed.
94. The leadership and management are good. The subject manager has had a positive impact on helping to raise standards, and improving teachers' understanding of the science curriculum. The scheme of work ensures that there is equal breadth and balance across the curriculum, although the policy is brief and does not effectively address specific issues for the overall teaching and learning in science. There are procedures for the assessment of science, each term, but the results are not yet consistently used to match work to pupils' needs. Resources are good and effective use is made of visits and visitors to further extend learning in the subject. Pupils' learning is further enhanced by initiatives, such as a Science Fair for Year 6, and enrichment activities, such as a themed science weeks. The subject manager is rightly keen to ensure that pupils enjoy a wide spectrum of thoughtful and realistic science experiences.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Standards in art and design are higher than those generally seen in Year 6 and all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, are achieving well. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged as satisfactory. The improvement has been achieved because the school has reviewed and developed the curriculum, which provides a rich and varied range of activities to develop artistic skills and appreciation. The planning and teaching from the scheme of work are good across the year groups and this ensures that pupils improve step by step as they get older.
96. Throughout the school, pupils learn about how to apply colour in different ways using paint, pencil and chalk or water pastels. From Year 3 onwards, they are given opportunities to explore texture and light and dark effects using colour, art pencils or charcoal. They successfully transfer these skills to still life pictures and use good colour blending techniques in their representations of pieces of fruit, for example. In Years 5 and 6, pupils broaden their range of techniques to include batik, collage, and portrait work. They make mythological creatures, using a combination of papier-mâché and printing techniques and work with clay to mould sculptures of human heads. By the end of Year 6, the majority confidently discuss the styles and work of modern and past artists, including artists from around the world, and fully appreciate that art is a means of expressing emotion.
97. Taking full account of the work seen in pupils' sketchbooks, on display and in lessons, the quality of teaching is good, overall. The teaching in all of the lessons seen was consistently good, and was very good in one lesson. The main strength of teaching is that teachers have the courage and confidence to enable their classes to practise and develop 'hands on' skills, using a wide range of media for two- and three-dimensional work. To achieve this, teachers plan lessons thoroughly and

work closely with learning support assistants, some of whom are particularly competent in art and design, to organise resources and support pupils with special educational needs. This has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes to the subject and makes a significant contribution to their spiritual and cultural development. As a result of good teaching in Year 5 classes, for example, pupils spoke knowledgeably about the imagery used by the artist Frida Kahlo in her work. They brought in objects from home, which aroused optimism or sadness within them and used 'warm or cold' colours to symbolise how the objects made them feel. Teaching is only occasionally less successful, where teachers lack confidence and do not create enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. This creates a slight unevenness in the rate at which pupils progress from year to year. In some cases, more care could be taken to ensure that work is attractively mounted and labelled. Most teachers look for opportunities to link artwork with teaching in other subjects, where possible, and use computer software appropriately to illustrate the role of information and communication technology as an additional tool for artwork.

98. Leadership and management are good. The subject manager has worked hard and successfully to improve standards since the last inspection, and the vast majority of colleagues are now confident and capable when teaching the subject. She has also made very good use of visiting artists to promote pupils' interest and broaden their experience. She has introduced a portfolio of annotated pieces of work, which has good potential as a tool for assessment. In order to further raise standards, the main area for future development is to continue to improve and refine the portfolio to include examples of clearly labelled work, moderated against nationally agreed standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. There was no teaching of design technology during the period of the inspection and this has led to no overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Taking into account the work seen in pupils' books, available records, interviews with pupils, and display material, pupils in Year 6 are achieving standards that are in line with expectations. When drawing up their plans, pupils are aware of constraints and take these into account. They also can join materials in a variety of ways and the finish of most of their work is of a satisfactory standard. They have developed skills of working with a range of materials and tools appropriate to their age, although it would be good to see them extending this by the use of simple hand-drills. These standards are similar to those seen at the last inspection.
100. Pupils in Year 6 carried out a project on building buggies. They were aware of any constraints, for example, the need for the buggies to be able to travel a certain distance in the hall and made their models after evaluation of alternative designs. In Year 5, pupils made containers for Easter eggs. This project was also devised so that pupils were constrained by various factors for instance, a budget, the size of egg, and the number of colours available. They drew three designs and then chose the one that was most suitable. Younger pupils make maze games and puppets. In all these projects, standards matched age-related expectations. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and talk about it in positive terms. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the cultural development of pupils, for example, when older pupils tried samples of bread from different countries and evaluated them.
101. The school has devised its own curriculum guidelines and has allocated topics for each year group. This scheme covers all the areas of the National Curriculum in this subject. The subject manager has not been in the post long, but is enthusiastic about developing the subject and is providing satisfactory leadership and management. One of her priorities is supporting colleagues who are less confident. Monitoring of pupils' progress has been developed and the system for this is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The resources for the subject are satisfactory. There are scissors, hand tools, saws, bench hooks, and so on, as well as a range of components and other items. These are kept in the art room in the upper school, which is accessible to all staff who need to get equipment and materials for class work. The art room is also available for teachers who wish to teach design and technology there, and to use the workbenches and other resources that it contains.
102. There are few displays of pupils' work outside classrooms and it would be good to see more of the pupils' efforts celebrated. As is natural, most pupils take their projects home when they are completed. However, the assembling of a photographic record of the work of pupils is now established and this will be a valuable resource. Some of this is being done with a digital camera

and photographs are put in pupils' design and technology folders. Apart from this, the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in this subject is underdeveloped. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, have full access to this subject and are making the same satisfactory progress as their classmates.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Standards of attainment in Year 6 are similar to those found in most schools, and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The achievements of all pupils are satisfactory, including those with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. However, there are examples of a lack of challenge for the higher-attaining pupils and this is linked to weaknesses in curriculum planning and in the effective use of assessment.
104. Pupils in Year 6 have a sound bank of factual knowledge, although their skills are weaker. This was a weakness identified in the previous inspection. They understand the use of co-ordinates and keys, for example, and identify the main features on a world map, but their ability to use a range of maps and plans at a range of scales is underdeveloped, and their use of the information they gather is hesitant. Pupils know the names of capital cities worldwide, and familiar physical features, such as mountain ranges and rivers. They have a sound knowledge of their local area, and make appropriate comparisons of this with the island of St. Lucia. In discussion, they describe the differences between the two environments, and between economic factors. They also appreciate how climate can affect peoples' lives. Within lessons, pupils' gains in knowledge are variable, and show a lack of continuity and careful planning across the geography curriculum. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 3 effectively extended their knowledge and understanding of the weather, and carefully examined symbols. A similar lesson occurred in Year 6, but with low level learning objectives, which showed a lack of positive extension in pupils' learning. In contrast, in a parallel Year 6 class, pupils' understanding of weather was successfully developed so that they understood how weather can influence peoples' lives and how to relate their knowledge to forecast maps. There is more consistency in planning in Year 5, where opportunities for pupils to carry out independent research successfully helped them to build on their previous knowledge of rivers of the world.
105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching observed and one unsatisfactory lesson. Most teachers have good subject knowledge, and use effective strategies to extend pupils' understanding of what is being taught. This was exemplified in a Year 6 lesson, where lively and relevant strategies, including the use of role-play, led to well-informed and enthusiastic pupils. Most lessons proceed at a good pace, with good opportunities for learning. Frequently, teachers use an effective blend of direct teaching and opportunities for individual research to help pupils' learning. The features relating to the unsatisfactory teaching are a lack of challenge to the tasks set, and insufficient real geographical focus, which results in passive pupils. A positive feature of all lessons is the support which teachers given to pupils with special educational needs and those pupils with English as an additional language.
106. Geography makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Overall, they enjoy demonstrating their knowledge of the world, and particularly enjoy the active side of learning. Through local studies they enhance their knowledge of their own environment, and pupils are made aware of other cultures further a field. Through topics such as 'In the News', they consider important issues, including those that are local. This gives pupils realistic opportunities for discussion and debate. Overall, the subject makes only a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy skills, particularly writing. The recording of pupils' work is frequently minimal, and does not consistently reflect a challenge to learning. Pupils use books to help them in their research, but these are frequently prepared by the teacher, so limiting the opportunity for pupils to browse and make their own appropriate choice. Satisfactory links are made with numeracy, such as when looking at temperatures, or conducting traffic surveys. The use of information and communication technology was a weakness in the previous inspection, and, although it was observed being used during this inspection, greater improvement is needed. A good example of it being used purposefully to support learning was seen in a Year 6 lesson, when pupils designed a weather report, selecting the appropriate program and tools.

107. The new geography manager has only been in place since the start of the term, and has not yet had opportunity to properly monitor and evaluate the subject. At this early stage, leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject manager has, however, identified the development of geography skills as a weakness, also the lack of use of information and communication technology. The policy for geography is brief and does not address all the issues for teaching and learning carefully. The scheme of work used is based on national guidelines, but the weakness in the curriculum is the balance in content and organisation. There are variations in teachers' interpretations, which lead to inconsistencies in planning across the year groups, and in planning for progression throughout the school. The topics where pupils' work is devoted to following up different topical stories and events are not consistently planned for, leading to differences in the depth of pupils' learning. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, but are not used carefully to plan tasks, which match the needs of all pupils, and, in turn, to modify the planning.

HISTORY

108. By Year 6, pupils achieve standards that are typical for the age group. All pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils enjoy history, particularly because teachers make it very interesting, using artefacts and photographs well in order for pupils' to explore evidence. Good teaching generates excitement, and allows the pupils to become engrossed and fascinated. A very good example of this was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 4, as they discovered details of dress, jewellery, and weapons in the books they were using. However, the liveliest part came as they noticed that the picture of the Roundhouse used in all the books was the actual one they had seen and explored on their visit. This made the task of gathering evidence real to them, and they looked at increasingly small details to add to their drawings. Because the teacher allowed for this active learning, many pupils gained a real 'feel' for the texture of the woven cloth, or the bright, but muted, colours. Others noticed different hairstyles, especially plaits, and discussed, in a mature way, how and when those women would change their styles. Their ideas and pictures were very sensitive.
109. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection, nevertheless, a study of work done by pupils, and teachers' planning, indicate good subject knowledge and a general interest in history. When interviewed, pupils in Year 6 showed good understanding of why they should learn history. They understood very well how important the understanding of ancient peoples is to modern society, and how life and times have changed, to make us as we are. They showed sound understanding of chronology, because teachers refer to different settlements and cultures in context with all others. They also indicated a growing realisation about bias in documents and accounts from the past. However, little or no history takes place in the autumn term for pupils in Year 3, or Year 6, even though the planning indicates that it should. There are other instances where none takes place for two terms or more. The breaks between the times when it is taught are often too long to build skills consistently and logically. This results in gaps for some pupils, and fails to enable them to build knowledge and understanding systematically. They do what they do quite well, but the standards could be improved with an adjustment to the structure, to ensure more continuous learning.
110. Good teaching takes place in all year groups, but is not consistent across a whole year. For example, good planning for pupils in Year 5 resulted in a very good lesson for pupils in one class, and did not generate the same standard of teaching in another, where the learning was far less focused, exciting or engaging. In the very good lesson, the teacher made the pupils responsive and interested, by very good questioning techniques, including a supplementary question such as 'why?' to challenge pupils' thinking and to bring them back to what was the learning objective. She did not accept single word answers, or statements unsubstantiated by observation, evidence, or knowledge. In the other lesson, that teacher asked closed questions, gave too little support, and offered too much evidence, which did not train the pupils to focus on what was important to consider and think about. Other inconsistencies occur in marking, content and expectation of presentation across year groups. Different teachers have different standards, and work is not always as well set out as it should be.
111. The subject manager gives good leadership, especially through example, by her very good teaching. However, she needs support to develop the management of the subject, for example, to eradicate all the inconsistencies in teaching and learning, and to tighten up on when year groups are teaching their history modules, in order to keep track of standards and skills. In one year's set of

work it was obvious which pupils had been in a particular teacher's class, because the work and presentation were of a high standard, whereas, the books from other teachers were more variable. Generally, resources are good, but more books and artefacts would help. The school makes reasonable use of information and communication technology, and teachers make links to literacy, for example, through extended pieces of writing, accounts or other types of work. More links with other subjects would help to build skills and bridge gaps. During the inspection, there were few exhibits of an historical nature, even in the years where history was taking place. However, some rooms contain good, interactive displays, with a good mix of teachers' and pupils' work in a variety of different media. The subject manager has a realistic action plan, which contains elements of all the development points listed here. She has begun a portfolio of work, which indicates a good range of skills being used but, at present, the work is not annotated or related to the levels that should be achieved at different ages, and so it is of limited use to other colleagues in their understanding of how to improve work. This would help teachers with assessment, the procedures for which are sound. The manager has a good vision for the subject and a desire to make history ever more engaging for the pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. Standards in information and communication technology meet national expectations by Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. The well-planned use of the computer suites and systematic curriculum planning contribute significantly to this. Pupils learn the necessary skills to enable them to use computers for practical purposes such as research, word-processing and handling data.
113. By Year 6, pupils are confident and quick in their use of keyboard and mouse, and icons and menus. Many have good knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology. Older pupils use programs such as 'PowerPoint' to present information in a variety of ways, and show awareness of the likely audience for their presentations. In one lesson, pupils in Year 5 used a database program about British monarchs and understood the need for care when framing questions to collect information. They were then able to display their results in different forms, for example, graphs and lists. Pupils are making increasing use of the Internet and CD-ROMs to find information for their work in other subjects, such as history and geography. As yet, they do not use computers to control models, but the school now has the necessary equipment and has planned training for those teaching pupils in Year 5 to use it confidently. This will ensure that pupils experience all areas of information and communication technology required by the National Curriculum.
114. In the lessons seen, all teaching was at least satisfactory. Lessons were well planned and teachers were confident in their grasp of the subject. A feature of the good lessons was that teachers used their classroom skills in the computer suites. They made sure that they explained clearly what pupils were going to learn and framed suitable questions that encouraged pupils to think about which software would be best suited to the task. At the end of these lessons, pupils evaluated not only how well they had done, but also how the use of information and communication technology had helped them to do their work more effectively. However, not all teachers adopted this approach and some were too focused on how to use the software, rather than exploring the reasons for using particular programs. The computer suite in the lower school building is equipped with an interactive whiteboard that is a valuable teaching aid. However, the room is rather narrow and not all teachers took this into account when seating the class, so, sometimes, pupils did not have an unobstructed view of the board. The computer suite near the upper school building is effectively divided into two sections by a partition wall and this necessitates an inconvenient layout. When teachers needed to talk to the whole class, pupils had to sit in a rather cramped space, which sometimes led to inattentive behaviour. As this suite has no large screen to demonstrate the use of the computers, there is no particular advantage in the introduction to the lesson taking place in the suite rather than in the classrooms, which all contain computers and are of a more convenient layout.
115. Teachers are positive in their relationships with pupils, encourage them to try out new ideas and praise them for their efforts as well as success. In a Year 6 geography lesson in the computer suite, pupils created a weather chart. Throughout the lesson, the teacher asked effective questions that helped pupils to learn computer skills at the same time as gaining geographical knowledge.

Pupils usually work in pairs in the computer suites and this co-operative style of working makes a good contribution to their social development.

116. The accommodation for information and communication technology is good, although there are drawbacks in the smaller computer suite. The school now has more computers than at the last inspection and the ratio of pupils to computers is close to the recommended national figure. The computers themselves are up-to-date and the available software is good. All classrooms have desktop computers, which pupils can use through the course of the day. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects, particularly literacy, is increasing as teachers become more confident in their grasp of the software available. However, insufficient use is made in science, design and technology, or geography.
117. The subject is very well led and managed, and this has led to good improvement since the last inspection. The scheme of work provides good support for teachers when planning lessons. At the moment, procedures for assessment are satisfactory, but the co-ordinator has developed a more comprehensive system of assessment. Each pupil will receive a booklet on entry to the school that will be a complete record of their work in information and communication technology. These booklets are intended not only to contain teachers' records and comments, but also to involve pupils in commenting on their own progress. This should be a positive step towards giving pupils more awareness of their achievements.

MUSIC

118. The last time the school was inspected, pupils achieved expected standards. Teaching was good and extra-curricular opportunities were very good. During the intervening years, provision has gone from strength to strength. By Year 6, pupils achieve above expected standards. Throughout the school, some higher-attaining pupils make very good progress and achieve standards well above those expected for their age. All pupils, not just those who play musical instruments, make good progress and develop an enthusiasm for the subject.
119. The range of instrumental tuition has increased and is now very comprehensive. Pupils learn brass, woodwind, strings, recorder, guitar, drums and keyboards, as part of a very well-structured programme designed to interest all pupils. Most activities have waiting lists and pupils frequently ask when it will be their turn to participate. The school orchestra plays an important part in the development of pupils' performing skills. An impressive number of pupils participate in the school choir. It is open to all pupils, without audition, as part of a deliberate policy to include anyone who is interested. Members of the choir frequently perform at school concerts and at more high profile performances, such as Portsmouth Music Festival at the Guildhall. Pupils regularly perform for assemblies and gain a greater sense of audience. They are fortunate to have a separate music room, so that they can practise or participate in louder musical activities without disturbing other pupils.
120. Pupils throughout the school sing with great enthusiasm. Older pupils, particularly boys, remain interested in singing until they leave the school, because they are taught very well and the repertoire captures their interest. During the week of the inspection, pupils and staff alike were observed enjoying the liveliness of a Hawaiian and American Indian carol, in preparation for a performance later in the term. Each communal singing lesson was full of humour, with everyone enjoying a good social occasion and wanting to give of his or her best. Consequently, pupils sang well, demonstrated good breathing techniques, and articulated words clearly. Much of the music chosen had a strong multi-cultural bias. The school provides a good range of instruments to support its varied programme of work on the music and instruments of other countries.
121. From the wealth of opportunities offered to pupils and the small number of lessons observed, it is possible to make the judgement that standards of teaching are very good. The school makes very effective use of its specialist teacher's expertise, and class teachers gain valuable insight into how to teach music well, when they observe high quality lessons. In a very good Year 3 lesson, the class teacher quickly applied herself to her prescribed task. Pupils successfully worked in well-organised groups, deliberately designed to ensure everyone made equal progress. They responded well to clear instructions and offered a very mature level of discussion. They tried to use the correct musical terminology in their discussions, and there were high expectations all round. Behaviour was faultless because everyone was so engrossed in the task of trying to read a 'graphic score'.

Simple but effective assessment, involving pupils, showed levels of understanding well. Pupils were very appreciative of each other's music making and listened appreciatively. On other occasions, pupils demonstrated mature listening preferences.

122. Homework also plays an important part in pupils' musical development, and singing is used particularly well to promote literacy skills. Computer programs, linked to topics within the music curriculum, are being introduced into lessons. It is too early to judge their impact on standards. Lesson themes are linked very effectively to other subjects, such as the Baroque period in history, and the World Music Map in geography.
123. Leadership and management are good. The subject manager is an accomplished musician who successfully transmits her enthusiasm. She has a clear sense of direction for music provision. Her commitment to involving all pupils and staff in the high standards achieved is a major positive feature. Music is a very important part of school life. It makes a significant contribution towards pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils grow in confidence as they sing with other choirs and participate in performances both in school and in the wider community. Many pupils at the school continue to develop their talents at secondary level. Some appreciative ex-pupils return to help with extra-curricular activities, thus enabling another generation of pupils to develop a love of music. Parents and staff rightly regard music as a strength of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. No lessons in Year 6 were held during the inspection and this prevents a judgement relating to the standards being achieved by the oldest pupils. In other year groups, standards in gymnastics match expectations in Year 3 and in games standards match the age-related expectations in Years 4 and 5. Standards in these areas of activity have been maintained at the levels found at the last inspection. Records show that standards in swimming are below those expected nationally and this is due primarily to the very small time allocation.
125. Pupils in Year 3 perform a range of basic gymnastic actions satisfactorily. They link separate actions together to create smoothly flowing sequences. In one lesson, they showed a quick ability to learn appropriate ways of starting and finishing sequences and all pupils successfully included these by the end of the lesson. Games lessons, both indoors and outside, focused on methods of passing a ball in throwing and catching game situations. Pupils in both Years 4 and 5 perform isolated skill practices conscientiously and with a developing accuracy. They co-operate well with partners and in small groups. In games, higher-attaining pupils retain good technique under the pressure of competition. They move quickly into space to receive passes. Pupils of lower attainment generally maintain sound technique when they can dictate the speed of their practice, but skills tend to deteriorate when tested or when used in competition. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in all lessons and their abilities to perform physical skills are as broad as is seen in all other pupils. There are good arrangements for ensuring that any form of physical disability is no barrier to full involvement in physical education.
126. The qualities of teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers generally have satisfactory subject knowledge and most plan lessons thoroughly with learning activities building successfully on each previous stage. Behaviour management is good and, indeed, is frequently not needed because of pupils' very positive attitudes to the subject. All pupils are making good progress in the well-taught lessons and satisfactory progress over time. When teaching is good, there is thought, at the planning stage, to what pupils are to learn from each activity in a lesson and the activities do, indeed, provide good opportunities for that learning to take place. In satisfactory lessons, not all activities are necessarily the best methods of ensuring that desired skills are being developed. This indicates some weakness in understanding of how physical skills are learned. All teachers pay good attention to all aspects of health and safety. This was evident on several occasions when, due to bad weather, lessons planned for outside had to be modified for delivery in the hall. Appropriate changes to organisation, and thought about how space could be used safely, enabled the expectations of pupils' learning to be realised. In most lessons, pupils are provided with suitable forms of warming up and cooling down activities. Teachers do not, however, give sufficient thought to the timing of warming up, and a routine to prepare pupils for exercise is sometimes followed by a lengthy period of inactivity, while explanations are given or demonstrations are watched before pupils actually get active. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils were given the information about the lesson's intentions and how they were to be organised, while they were getting changed in the

classroom. This allowed the actual lesson to proceed at a brisk pace with minimal interruption and maximum activity.

127. The subject manager provides satisfactory leadership at present. Comparatively new to this area of responsibility, there has not been enough time for his good targets for subject development to have had impact on either the quality of teaching or pupils' standards. The subject action plan indicates a programme, this year, of monitoring teaching and school-based training for teachers. Teachers' planning is not monitored sufficiently at present and thus situations are missed, when individual teachers within a year group decide to depart from what the medium-term planning has established for the year group. As a consequence, it is possible for there to be variation in what classes are taught, and this upsets the balance of what is experienced in the long term. The current breadth and balance of the curriculum is unsatisfactory, due to the low time allocation, over four years, to dance, and the even lower time allocation to swimming. The present provision of five lessons only, is poor and, by being delayed until Year 5, is for an inappropriate age group. The school is further hindered by the pool management's, and presumably, therefore, the local authority's, refusal to allow teachers with nationally recognised qualifications in the teaching of swimming to actually teach the pupils. In contrast to curriculum weaknesses, extra-curricular provision is good. There is good liaison with local sporting clubs and national initiatives that enable pupils to receive high quality coaching in sports such as cricket, basketball, judo and athletics.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128. Standards in Year 6 are typical for the age group in relation to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This would appear to be a deterioration from the previous inspection, when standards were found to be above expectations. The school has worked hard to eliminate the weaknesses identified in the previous report, such as pupils being insecure about parables and the meaning of some stories, and these are now improved. However, since the time of the last inspection the school has had many other priorities to consider. There has also been a new subject manager, who, although keen, has had no in-service training about the subject, and whose action plan is modest, but realistic, in light of the lack of emphasis the school has placed on the subject, in the recent past. Three lessons were seen during the inspection and the quality of teaching and learning was good overall. Pupils' work and teachers' planning were analysed, and pupils in Year 6 were interviewed about their views and knowledge gained in lessons.
129. By Year 6, pupils have had many opportunities to consider life, the world and its religions. A good range of resources is used well to support learning about similarities and differences in religious beliefs, texts and symbols. For example, pupils know that a special religious text like the Qur'an must be treated with respect, placed in the correct position and read with reverence. They fully understand the meaning of respect, describing it as 'not offending', or 'not saying anything horrible, so people do not feel upset'. When thinking about particular stories from the Old Testament, their discussions showed they had strong beliefs about references to slavery and could relate this to their learning in history and to the lives of oppressed people today. They called it 'out of order', and expressed the view that all people are equal.
130. Pupils are expected to think for themselves and form their own opinions about life and religion. They do this well because teachers give them good opportunities to discuss. A good example of this was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 6. They were considering the importance and significance of religious icons, particularly within the Christian faith. The discussion went back and forth, as the different groups made their points about the various icons offered by the teacher. A very good moment came when one pupil decided the largest icon could not be Christian, because the skin was brown. The teacher led a very good discussion about the origins of the religion, drawing very well on the pupils' prior knowledge of Judaism. Deep questions arose about the symbolism depicted in the icons, such as the halo. One pupil described it like 'a light around their heads, and it represents that they are important'. The teacher's sensitive questioning led pupils through the difficult subjects of angels, saints and martyrs, as well as the nature of heaven. Many pupils had very strong views and expressed them in quite mature ways.
131. Pupils' written work demonstrates a sound understanding of Christian ideas and is full of respect for other faiths. Work in Year 6 is quite sparse but generally well written and presented. The major topic for this year has been the harvest, and pupils led a service to celebrate its deeply historical roots as well as modern-day ones. They have also considered the story of Jesus feeding the five

thousand. When interviewed, they were unsure about how so much bread and fish had been achieved, but had various views ranging from a miracle to people sharing.

132. Teachers have also provided ample opportunities to consider festivals in a number of religions, for example Hanukkah and Diwali. Pupils have also studied prayer from different points of view, from Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths, considering positions adopted and special prayers. They have used information and communication technology to research festivals and writing, for example through the use of CD-ROMs. Pupils' written work indicates sensitive ideas and understanding, as they translate the Lord's Prayer, for example, into their own words. Teachers use resources effectively to bring the different religions to life for pupils. Good work has been done on parables, such as the 'Good Samaritan', and pupils in Year 5 have put this into their own words well, and understood the moral. When interviewed, pupils in Year 6 described well what a parable is, saying, 'it's like a fable and it's got a message'. All pupils' views are valued and pupils of all abilities make a good contribution in lessons, especially when teachers' questioning is sensitive and supportive. Teachers use a good variety of methods, planning activities such as role-play, creating special books, or making their own versions of artefacts. These different approaches are an improvement from the last report, when tasks were found to be unexciting.
133. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new subject manager is keen and has made a reasonable analysis of the strengths and development points from the last report. He has amended the policy, which has now been ratified by governors, and the planning is sound. Throughout the school, there are few displays that focus on religious education. A notable exception was found in Year 4, where pupils were studying prayer and had made their own prayer stones, decorated to reflect the content of their contemplation. They had written some quite sensitive prayers and had studied other foci, such as worry beads and the rosary. The subject manager has secured a higher than usual sum for his budget, in order to supplement and renew resources, and intends to consult year-group leaders for their views. An asset to the school is the local member of the clergy, who works with all age groups to discuss aspects of religion and faith. He helps to arrange visits and offers extra resources when appropriate. He has made good links with the subject manager and brings sensitive thoughts and ideas to supplement those of the school.