

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **FAIRFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Basingstoke

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116232

Headteacher: Mrs Phyl Shaw

Reporting inspector: Geoff Burgess  
OIN: 23708

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> September to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2002

Inspection number: 247628

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Council Road  
Basingstoke  
Hampshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Mike French

Date of previous inspection: November 2000

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24342	Denise Franklin	Team inspector	English; SEN Religious Education	Extra-curricular and community
23330	Tony Burgess	Team inspector	Mathematics: EI Physical Education Information Technology	Learning opportunities
27333	Richard Selby	Team inspector	Science Art Design Technology	Strategic use of resources Adequacy of resources
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Fairfields Primary School serves a wide spectrum of families of mainly British heritage with a significant minority from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, several with English as their second language. Almost all live in the urban area surrounding the school. A well below average number of pupils are entitled to meals provided without charge by the school. The number of pupils on roll has fallen from a high of 473 in 1998 to just over 400. Around a quarter of pupils are on the special needs register with a small number having statements of special need but with it's growing reputation for helping such pupils, numbers of these pupils are rising. Attainment on entry in the foundation year shows a full spread of abilities similar to that found in most schools, which is lower than that reported at the time of the last inspection.

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

This is a good school, very well led and managed, where good teaching and very good care is helping pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Given recent financial constraints and the overall average attainment of most pupils when they start school, it provides good value for money.

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

- Good teaching, with much even better, and very good work by support staff, ensures that pupils achieve well in literacy and numeracy and standards are improving year on year.
- Pupils who find learning difficult and those for whom English is not their first language are very well catered for and make good progress.
- Pupils' personal, moral and social development has a very high priority. They behave well, are enthusiastic about school and get on very well together.
- Staff take very good care to ensure that their pupils are safe and happy and able to do their best by carefully monitoring their progress and development.
- It works very well with parents and the community in the best interests of the children and provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum
- Excellent leadership by the headteacher is making it possible for all members of the school community to contribute fully to the improvement of provision and standards.

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

- Boys and girls are not achieving as well in year five as they are in the rest of the school
- Standards are not as good in science as the other core subjects and below expectations in art
- Pupils have too few opportunities to celebrate and value the diversity of the rich cultures and faiths represented in the school or to reflect on the more spiritual aspects of their lives

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

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

Although national test results achieved by school leavers in English and science have fallen in the two years since the inspection undertaken by HMI in 2000, over the past four years since the school's last full inspection they have improved at an overall rate similar to most schools as have mathematics results. Current standards, re-establishing the improving trend, should be above average at the end both key stages in numeracy and literacy by the end of the year. All aspects of provision, leadership and management have improved tremendously since the last full inspection, building on the gains noted in the 2000 inspection. The school is now a very different physical, educational and social environment for children, parents and staff and overall improvement is very good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	A	A	B
mathematics	C	C	C	E
science	C	C	C	E

<b>Key</b>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Since the inspection in 2000 when the school achieved its best ever grades, results in national tests for eleven-year-olds fell a little in 2001 but remained well above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Provisional figures for 2002 show a good improvement in mathematics, probably to above average, a fall in English, notably in writing, to above average, and a small fall in science. In tests for seven-year-olds, reading and mathematics improved significantly in the past two years to be above average but writing results fell this year to below average. Current standards in years two and six are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Achievement is good in almost all classes including the foundation year, for pupils with a range of special needs and for those with English as a second language. Apart from year five where attainment is lower, standards are building through the school as the many improvements take effect, with years one and three particularly strong. However, reading standards are very good throughout the school. A similar, much improved, picture can be seen in most foundation subjects including information and control technology (ICT) and religious education. However, acute problems with resources, accommodation and subject knowledge until recently in ICT, music and physical education have meant that older pupils have not had enough time to catch up in these areas. Standards in art are below expectations.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Boys and girls are very positive about school and join in wholeheartedly with all it has to offer. They are very keen to talk about their work, proud of their achievements and their school and most work hard to complete tasks set. Attitudes to school and learning are good
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good behaviour all round the school makes a very significant contribution to improving standards and the happy, ordered feel of the school. Behaviour in class is usually good, often very good, sometimes excellent but occasionally poor behaviour by a few wastes time for the rest.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships throughout the school underpin its happy, relaxed feel. Visitors are made very welcome and a great deal of mutual respect exists between adults and children. Most pupils act in mature and sensible ways and are very happy to take on any responsibilities when they are offered. The way staff and pupils thoughtfully minimise the potential problems caused by the difficult accommodation is very impressive.
Attendance	School is a positive experience and attendance levels are similar to most schools. Punctuality is not as good.

The school has worked very hard, with great success, to build a community where pupils of all ages understand their roles and responsibilities, enjoy learning and are happy and confident. It is a shame that a few pupils take up valuable time with thoughtless behaviour.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	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.

Teaching overall is good with much very good, notably in the foundation year and Key Stage 2, and very little unsatisfactory. Good quality provision in the foundation classes is enabling four-year-olds to make a successful start to their school careers and, with almost all good, very good and excellent lessons, year six are having a very successful final year. In other classes better teaching is mainly associated with the abilities of individual teachers with some good teaching in every subject observed. With the very good implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies, nearly a third of lessons in the core subjects of English and mathematics in years one to six are very good and better but no very good lessons were observed in other subjects. Unusually challenging pupils in a few classes are dealt with well but establishing routines is taking up teaching time, notably in the afternoons, and some learning is inhibited. Otherwise boys and girls make a good contribution to their own learning. Pupils who, for various reasons, find learning difficult and those with English as a second language are very well supported by classroom assistants and they make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Boys and girls experience an appropriate range of well-planned learning opportunities with literacy and numeracy suitably emphasised. The youngest children are provided with an active curriculum well matched to their needs. Good attention is given to promoting pupils' understanding of themselves and matters of health and welfare and every effort is made to ensure that all pupils share in all the school has to offer. Many pupils enjoy the extra events and activities provided during and after school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils who find learning or conforming difficult is very good and they make good progress. Well trained and very effective classroom assistants are closely involved with teachers in providing necessary support mainly as part of normal classroom work. Very good procedures for identifying, monitoring and supporting such pupils have been established and all necessary paperwork is in place. Pupils with very special needs are very well catered for and included in all the school has to offer.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has worked hard to support its minority of pupils from a range of ethnic backgrounds who use another language at home with great success. All are very well integrated into the life of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Staff make very good provision for promoting pupils' personal development with very good arrangements for the development of pupils' social skills and attitudes and moral awareness. Curricular provision for pupils to study and appreciate the arts and their own cultural heritage is good with sound attention given to helping pupils to reflect on the more spiritual aspects of their growth. However, few opportunities are taken to celebrate the rich cultural diversity of the significant minority of pupils from other cultures and faiths.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils and ensures that they are safe and not at any risk. Teachers and other staff know the circumstances of each child extremely well and very good assessment procedures are well used to keep an eye on progress in English, mathematics, science and most other subjects. It keeps a close watch on attendance, behaviour and personal development, does all it can to improve each and maintains suitable records to note events or trends that may be significant. Very good communications with individual parents help to ensure that potential problems are dealt with promptly.

The great majority of parents are very pleased with the way the school is helping their children to learn and mature. They feel comfortable in their formal and informal dealings with school and make a good contribution to their children's learning. The general information provided by the school for parents is very good, as is the impact of parents' involvement with the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher & other key staff	The head has made an excellent contribution to the success of the school by providing very clear, firm and determined leadership and keeping the big picture of standards and high expectations in focus despite difficulties with staffing, accommodation and resources. In this she was, until very recently, very well supported by the previous deputy headteacher. Many subject and other responsibilities have changed hands recently, several over the summer, but the robust systems and procedures put in place have meant that this has not unduly slowed down the process of improvement. Overall leadership and management is very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and keen for the school to succeed. They have very well developed arrangements for fulfilling their responsibilities, know the school well through hands on monitoring and reports from managers, and are keenly aware of its strengths and limitations. The headteacher has ensured that they are fully involved in identifying what needs to be done to keep improving and training has a high profile. As a group, in committees and individually they are providing the school with great commitment and necessary practical and moral support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A significant factor in the school's success is the very good way the head leads an on-going analysis of what the school is doing and the impact it has. Staff and governors are fully involved in the process and this results in a noteworthy degree of informed discussion about the direction of the school. Relevant data at every level, starting at the baseline, is used to set priorities and targets and to track the impact of initiatives. The school strategic plan appropriately identifies specific areas for improvement, each of which is directly related to standards. Over the years, the actions taken as a result of this process have been very effective.
The strategic use of resources	The present leadership inherited a large budget deficit. It has shown great foresight and strength of purpose to achieve the many improvements to the accommodation and resourcing while managing its steady reduction. All spending is targeted on agreed priorities and is carefully managed and monitored. A much better supply of well-maintained and used teaching resources have been accumulated in all subjects. Despite frequent changes, teaching and support staff are well deployed and the school has made very good use of its interior accommodation but it remains a difficult teaching and learning environment.

The head has made an outstanding contribution to the enormous improvement in the school. She is well aware of what still needs to be done and with the continued hard work of the staff and the ever-increasing effectiveness of the governing body, there is every reason to believe the school will continue to thrive.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their children enjoy going to school</li> <li>• teaching is good and their children are making good progress</li> <li>• the school is helping pupils to grow up sensibly and behaviour is good</li> <li>• pupils work hard and do their best</li> <li>• the school is well led and managed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the work their children are expected to do at home</li> <li>• information about how well their children are doing</li> <li>• the school's partnership with parents</li> <li>• the range of extra activities the school provides</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all positive comments made by parents but find that, in each of the areas

they would like to see improved, their concerns are unfounded. The information the school provides about pupil progress, its partnership with parents and the range of activities outside lessons are better than in most schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Results for school leavers in English, mathematics and science showed a good improving trend since the last full inspection peaking to a little above the standards achieved in most schools in mathematics and science in 2000 and well above in English. Particularly noteworthy was the increase in the numbers of pupils achieving higher grades. However, with a difficult cohort the following year, results dropped a little in all three subjects to average and above average respectively. This year's results in national testing are down in English, mainly in writing, and science, and up in mathematics but, using last year's data as a guide, they should still be at least above average in English and mathematics with science a little below. It should be noted that of the eight pupils admitted to this year group in the two terms prior to national testing, six were placed on the special needs register with very significant needs. However, with low free school meals numbers, the school's position using this criteria will probably be average in English and mathematics with science below. A similar picture emerges when these results are compared with those gained by the same year group when they were seven years old. Over the years, boys and girls have done equally well in all subjects.

2. Good gains have been made in national tests in reading and numeracy by seven-year-olds over the past four years from a low in 1998. The indications are that both will be at least above average in Key Stage 1 tests when comparative tables for 2002 are available. However, as in Key Stage 2, after good gains over the previous few years results in writing were disappointing this year, falling probably to below average. When compared to schools in a similar situation reading standards were average, numeracy above and writing well below. However, using its own assessment procedures, the school predicted the drop in standards in writing, identified the cause as expectations in year one, and have already put in place improvements to put this right for this year.

3. Most children who have only just started school in the reception classes are showing good signs of being able to achieve all the early learning goals by the end of their foundation year. The majority already have well developed personal and social skills and a lot have good speaking and listening skills.

4. With good teaching and the many other improvements in provision developed in the past four years, current standards in literacy and numeracy in years two and six are better than in most schools. Reading standards are well above average. Science standards are back up to average. With good achievement in the core subject in most classes, these standards are reflected in year four with years one and three looking even better. However, year five contains higher numbers of pupils with special needs and has suffered disproportionately from staffing difficulties during their time in school. Several pupils need a great deal of help to manage their behaviour and achievement in these classes is not as good which has resulted in standards in literacy, numeracy and science being below average. Pupils' good listening and speaking skills reflect the importance teachers give to encouraging role-play, discussion and conversation through many subjects but especially personal and social education, literacy and drama.

5. When most other subjects were last reported on in 1998, many were unsatisfactory in one or both key stages or there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement. Despite the school's very full agenda, big efforts were made to improve this situation. However, continued deficiencies in accommodation, equipment, resources and subject knowledge in information technology, physical education and music meant that only with big improvements made in these areas in the past two years have real strides been made in these subjects. As a result, although boys and girls are making good progress in each throughout the school and pupils in years one to four are mostly achieving expected levels, pupils in the older classes are still catching up with work missed in previous years and standards are below those observed in most schools.

6. Standards in other subjects are generally associated with the competence and confidence

in the subject of their most recent teachers. Overall, boys and girls are doing as well as expected in design technology, geography, history and religious education but standards in art are lower than those seen in most schools.

7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they have very good focused support during lessons. Most pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in relation to the targets on their individual education plans, which are measurable and reviewed regularly so that new targets can be set. Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and plan work that matches their previous attainment.

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

8. Boys and girls have good attitudes towards their school. They are eager to come in the morning and show a good level of interest and involvement in activities. The vast majority of pupils are proud of their school, enjoy talking about the activities they do and try their best in class. Pupils are articulate, friendly and courteous towards visitors and towards each other. They smile readily and love to talk about themselves and their interests. In discussion with inspectors, pupils said they thought school was 'always fun', the teachers were nice, and that pupils at other schools were amazed how enthusiastic they were about going to school. Pupils understand the routines they must follow and carry them out sensibly. It was noticeable that on the (rare) occasions when some were misbehaving, their classmates did their best to ignore them and concentrate on what they were supposed to be doing. Boys and girls are very keen to volunteer to help, whether to take a visitor round or to assist a teacher in assembly.

9. Behaviour is good. Pupils behave very well in assemblies, listening intently and joining in singing or any other activities enthusiastically. The buzz of conversation as pupils entered and left the hall disappeared immediately their attention was required. Lunchtimes are civilised, well-organised occasions. Pupils clear away their own lunch things and follow the arrangements made for managing lunchtimes sensibly. A group of Year 5 pupils were clear that behaviour in the school had improved during their time there: 'people know now that they will get punished if they are bullies or really naughty'. Behaviour in class is usually good, often very good, and sometimes excellent. A minority of pupils who find conforming or concentrating difficult try to challenge adult authority, calling out irrelevant comments, sometimes getting up and moving around the classroom. However, it is noticeable that even they have a good understanding of the school's behaviour management system, and respond to its low-key sanction system very well. In the case of other less than satisfactory behaviour, this was either because their task was too challenging or too easy, or because a teacher did not have firm enough control over the class. Two fixed period exclusions during the last academic years involved two boys.

10. The personal development of pupils is good and they respond well to opportunities to take responsibility. In the school council which has been established for three years, pupils have made many suggestions which have been adopted by the school (for instance, toilets were removed from the medical room). The council organises regular 'fun days' when pupils can decide on the activities that they would most like to do (such as hiring a bouncy castle). Costs are covered by a small donation and any excess goes to charity. During the inspection the council was planning a 'Denim for Diabetes' day when the whole school will decorate denim items and stage a fashion show. Pupils respond well to the various responsibilities they are given and undertake them sensibly and with pride. They are delighted when teachers trust them to do these unsupervised and want to prove that they are worthy of that trust. The youngest pupils quickly learn to become independent, moving around their complicated classroom with assurance and carrying out errands to other parts of the school without hesitation.

11. Relationships within the school community, particularly between adults and children, but also between pupils, are very good. This is an improvement since the last report. The respect and courtesy that staff show to pupils wins their confidence and respect in return. Pupils are confident that teachers will always want to help them to sort out any problems they might have. Older pupils often play voluntarily with younger ones. A Year 6 boy shared a skipping rope with a Year 1 girl and two Year 3 boys. All four took turns to hold the rope for the others and praised each other's

efforts. Most pupils show clear understanding of the impact of their actions on others, and respect their feelings, attitudes and beliefs. They are able to talk about negative feelings, for instance during a brainstorming session in Year 4, a list of sad situations, included 'When no-one listens' and 'When other mothers tell me off'.

12. Attendance is good. In 2000-2001 it was above the national averages (94.9% as against 94.1%) with unauthorised absence well below (0.1% as against 0.5%). The prompt start made by teachers to the school day and pupils' sensible behaviour between lessons are aids to good learning. However, by arriving late, a minority of pupils cause time to be wasted while they are sorted out.

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

13. In 1998, inspectors noted that one in six lessons were unsatisfactory and they said that teaching 'had not improved since the last inspection' !! Improving teaching was a key issue. HMI were not happy with one in ten lessons when they visited in 2000 and less than half the lessons observed were good or better. During the current inspection, only one lesson was less than satisfactory and more than two-thirds were good and better with a significant percentage very good and excellent. This represents a very good improvement over the years.

14. What makes this even more impressive, is the fact that several factors have conspired to make the process of improvement more difficult than anybody would want. Mainly:

- the turnover of teaching staff has been high with several only staying for a year or less. Five teachers started this term, two of whom are newly qualified
- the recruitment and retention of teachers is difficult in the area at the best of times, but with the problems the school has had, it has been, and remains, very difficult. The school frequently has no or little choice about who to appoint for particular posts.
- the school building is very impressive to look at but is very difficult to teach in with very poor acoustics, big difficulties with access and with both the hall and the library/ computer suite doubling as corridors to several classrooms.
- until fairly recently, deficiencies in resources and equipment have inhibited teaching and learning

15. Several whole school developments, some stemming from the last report, have contributed to this much higher quality picture. These include:

- the very effective implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the adoption of national schemes of work in other subjects which has provided a detailed agreed planning structure to ensure consistency and progression
- year group planning meetings and support from subject managers helps to ensure that learning objectives and work expectations for equivalent pupils in parallel classes are the same and that best use is made of subject strengths in planning
- an increase in the number of learning support assistants and the enhancement of their role and expertise especially in supporting pupils with extra needs
- performance management procedures have added structure and focus to existing very good professional development procedures and senior managers are very active in monitoring and evaluating teaching and promoting good practice through in-house and external in-service training.

16. However, though teaching overall is good and never less than satisfactory in all subjects and year groups, combinations of many of the above factors mean that the picture is far from consistent. For instance:

- almost a third of lessons in English and mathematics in years one to six were very good and better but no lessons in science or the foundation subjects were better than good
- in the reception classes and in year six, all but one lesson per year group was at least good with a third or more lessons even better; in years two and five, more than a half of lessons were satisfactory with just one very good lesson.

17. The success and potential of new team teaching arrangements in the foundation year were plain to see in many lessons even though it was very early in the year. A good example came in a session with a mathematical focus where staff were engaged in assessing boys' and girls' current understanding. With one teacher leading and the other noting children's contributions, very good use was made of number rhymes such as '1,2,3,4,5 - once I caught a fish alive' to practice counting to 20. With classroom assistants supporting individuals, very good questioning, 'How many more?', 'Which is smallest?', showed that many children understand the number system very well. A very good range of activities, including a number walk and laying the table for the Three Bears, kept very young children, supported by thoughtful interventions from teaching assistants, constructively occupied while teachers were constantly assessing individual pupil's understanding to set a 'baseline' from which to measure future progress and determine need.

18. Teachers usually ensure that the needs of pupils who find learning and conforming difficult are very well met during lessons. Individual education plans, written by the teachers in consultation with the support staff and often the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator, have clear, concise targets, which are reviewed regularly. Pupils are usually consulted about their problems but a target, relating their understanding of their needs, is rarely set. The support staff are very well deployed to ensure that these pupils can access the curriculum and to help them with their tasks. Support staff are enthusiastic, committed and have a thorough understanding of their work. All are very well briefed and work extremely closely with the teachers to provide suitable activities to meet the individual needs of these pupils and those for whom English is an additional language. They make a very good contribution to the attainment and progress of these pupils. Where there is no classroom support available, the pupils' needs are well met wherever possible by the teachers, but in some classes, the behaviour of a very small minority, impedes the learning of others because of the time spent dealing with them.

19. This is particularly the case in Year 5 where afternoon lessons are often difficult for teachers and the majority of pupils, despite the teachers' best efforts but where, with very effective support, the same classes can achieve very good teaching and learning in the morning. This was well demonstrated in a literacy lesson where, while discussing the feelings raised by the poem 'Mercy', a pupil who the previous day had been very disruptive, was able, with whispered support from the teaching assistant, to contribute the perceptive idea that 'the blind lady trusted her helper'. No such problems exist in year six where in both classes, thoughtful, sensible and hardworking pupils make a very strong contribution to their own learning. Many very good examples were observed notably in numeracy and literacy. In one class pupils thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of changing the perspective of the narrative of 'Cider with Rosie'. Building on the previous day's work, but writing from another person's point of view, pupils took their lead from the teacher, using adventurous vocabulary to create interesting writing. High expectations, challenge and pupils' very good work habits meant that very good learning took place.

20. Of two excellent lessons taken by the same teacher, one involved drama which is her speciality and for which she is responsible throughout the school. Making very good use of constructive homework, pupils were encouraged to imagine the thoughts of two parties when a family member confronts a victim of bullying. The very confident teacher and very confident pupils quickly sorted themselves out and groups performed their roles seriously with rapt attention from the 'audience'. Using excellent questioning, the teacher was constantly challenging pupils to come up with ever more complex arguments. For their part, pupils worked hard both as performers and as an 'audience' and tested their debating and listening skills to the full.

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

21. The quality and range of learning activities provided by the school is very good. In 1998, inspectors reported shortcomings in the learning opportunities provided by the school in ICT, mathematics, art, music and physical education. The school has worked hard since that time to

ensure all the issues and points for improvement raised in the last full inspection have been addressed so that the school provides a rich and varied curriculum, which more than fulfils statutory requirements.

22. Pupils are now given a very wide range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences that cover all the required elements. However, in some subjects there needs to be a greater emphasis placed in some elements of the taught curriculum to ensure appropriate balance within the subject. For example in ICT the school recognises the need to further improve the provision in simulation, modelling and opportunities to e-mail. The introduction of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum has greatly enhanced provision. It provides a carefully planned programme of work in PSHE to be taught throughout the school, much of it during science and drama lessons, and includes drugs and sex education. The school is part of the Hampshire Police initiative 'Getting it Right', which involves the community policeman working with every class in the school on a regular basis. It is presently working towards the achievement of the Healthy Schools Award.

23. A suitable emphasis is placed on the teaching of English, mathematics and science and both the Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been effectively implemented. A real strength of the curriculum is the way in which the school has developed cross-curricular links. For example drama is planned each half term to augment different curriculum areas, such as history, to promote learning and help pupils to develop empathy. Special weeks focusing on particular issues such as Health Awareness further strengthen provision.

24. Comprehensive curriculum planning covers all aspects of the National Curriculum. All subjects now have appropriate policies and schemes of work in place to ensure coverage, progression and continuity. National guidance is considered and incorporated at a level that is relevant to the ability of pupils. Overall the planning is thorough, involves all the teaching staff and has a positive impact on teaching and learning. Joint planning in year groups strengthens the delivery of the curriculum and encourages staff to share their ideas and expertise. Lesson plans now clearly identify the learning objectives to help assess what skills, knowledge and understanding have already been learned. These plans make clear how pupils of all abilities are to be challenged, often by providing work at a variety of different levels. The school recognises the need to continue to seek to improve provision for more able pupils. Sufficient flexibility in planning allows regular updates at the start of each medium term planning period to recognise differences in groups or cohorts of children and to incorporate aspects that will inspire children.

25. Since the last inspection, pupils have had greater opportunity to increase their ICT skills by the provision of a computer suite, comprising 15 computers and accompanying software. Each class has at least one hour dedicated teaching time in the suite per week and at least one additional computer available in the classroom. The provision of new indoor fixed climbing apparatus and external play equipment has further improved learning opportunities in physical education. Pupils regularly play competitive team games against other schools. In music the school has an active choir and provides individual instrument teaching for some of its pupils. Where pupils miss part or all of a lesson for instrumental tuition, staff ensure that they are made aware of what they have missed and what they need to do on their return to class.

26. The school makes satisfactory use of subject expertise, usually by subject managers providing in-house support. Occasionally subject managers teach their subject to more than one class, but this is an area that could be further developed. The school has produced a very good policy and guidelines to promote ethnic minority achievement, recognising the need to ensure all pupils are given every opportunity to succeed. Although pupils, for whom English is an additional language, are well integrated into the school, opportunities to use cultural differences to enrich the curriculum are missed.

27. Arrangements made by the school for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils who find learning difficult and those who find conforming difficult are very well supported, particularly for English and mathematics, by very well trained learning support staff. This enables them to have equal access to the curriculum and to make the same progress as the rest of the pupils in the class. This support occurs either in the classroom or by withdrawal individually or in small groups depending on the need of the pupils. Some receive specific programmes planned to support their individual needs and these involve individual or small group work that is best done



outside of the classroom. For example, some pupils have specific programmes to develop their reading and spelling skills, which need to take place in a quiet atmosphere. Others have individual occupational therapy programmes. The school is fully committed to inclusion and provision meets the needs of these pupils very well and has continued to improve since the last inspection.

28. Provision for extra-curricular activities, including a very good range of clubs that mainly take place after school on Tuesdays, is very good. Both teachers and parents are involved in running the clubs. Football training and matches also take place on other evenings. There are opportunities for the teams to be involved in sporting events with other local schools and for pupils to go to see matches such as those held at Reading Football club. The lunchtime club held daily, for pupils who do not want to go into the playground, organised by the Head Teacher and the acting deputy is very popular. Many pupils say how pleased they are that this is available for them. Activities on offer include use of the computers, board games and some construction kits. A wide range of music tuition is available and lots of visits, including a residential trip for pupils in Year 6, and visitors to school, which supports pupils' learning very well. Some parents expressed concerns about the number of extra-curricular activities available for their children but the inspection team felt they were better than in most schools.

29. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. Staff make good use of the local area for visits to enhance the curriculum, particularly in history, and many people come to the school to share their expertise. For example, the school invited people to talk to the pupils during book week, Healthy Schools' week and to talk about environmental issues. Regular visits are made to the local library and shops. The choir sings to residents of an elderly people's home and has been very much involved with nine other schools in a production held at a theatre in town. There are very good links with the local church, who are funding a musician in residence for the local schools. The Head Teacher has a business partner and they are working together successfully, sharing their expertise. All these activities effectively enhance the curriculum, provide vital links with the community and have a positive impact on learning.

30. Links with partner institutions are also very good. The school has close links with the main school to which the pupils go for their secondary education and maintains good contact with the other four schools. Staff, from the main feeder school shared their expertise with pupils in Years 5 and 6 during a recent science day. Plenty of information is shared and a number of visits are made to the secondary schools. Teachers have opportunities to attend curriculum meetings with other schools to discuss issues and share expertise. Particularly good links have been made with reception classes in the area, local playgroups and nursery schools over the last year to support each other with planning the Foundation Stage curriculum. These links prepare pupils very well for the next stage in their education

31. Provision for the personal development of pupils, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good overall, a marked improvement over the last four years. Staff believe very strongly that education is more than just academic learning. Themes from assemblies are often used in 'circle times' or in drama sessions. Provision for the moral development of pupils is very good. This is an improvement from the last report. The school has a clear moral code, which is delivered through the school's code of conduct and the rules that each class makes for itself at the start of the year. There are also rules governing Internet use and behaviour in special areas like the playground and the computer suite. This moral code is consistently promoted throughout the school in clear, readily comprehended language. Pupils learn to consider moral issues such as friendship, bullying and loneliness from their earliest time in the school through circle time sessions and class discussions. Drugs, sex and relationship education is well integrated into the curriculum. Certificates are awarded to pupils who have performed acts of kindness and thoughtfulness: smaller acts are rewarded with 'I helped someone' stickers. Teachers use different strategies to ensure that pupils feel able to approach them with their difficulties: for instance, some have a 'private post-box' where children can post messages which they are too shy to convey verbally. Staff take care to end discussions of difficult issues on a positive note. For instance after a Year 4 session on 'things that make me feel sad' the teacher led her class in a rousing rendition of 'If you're happy and you know it' and sent them off to lunch telling them to 'find something positive to say to everyone this lunchtime'.

32. Provision for the social development of pupils is very good. This is an improvement from the last report. Every child is respected and valued for him or herself, and the staff provide very good role models through their courtesy and team spirit. The dedication and stability of the non-teaching staff has been greatly beneficial to the school's sense of community during the many recent changes of teaching staff. Their relationships with pupils are very good. All pupils are given a range of duties in their classrooms, and Year 6 pupils do much more, including helping in the library and lunchtime activities, and providing help in the playground. All act as a 'buddy' for one of the new Year R children. Year 5 take over these responsibilities during the summer term. The school council has representatives from Years 1-6. Although the current council met for only the second time during the inspection, it was explained that they would be electing a chairman and secretary to take over its management from teachers. The school has a strong community spirit, which is clearly promoted from the moment visitors arrive in the building, with displays celebrating pupil achievement and the progress the school has made in recent years. Pupils are frequently asked to work together in pairs or small groups. Staff provide opportunities outside the classroom for pupils to learn to cooperate together in a common endeavour, for instance in football teams and theatrical productions. The school council has been established for three years, and its opinions are sought on a wide range of matters. The curriculum for personal development includes planned provision for citizenship. Parents and other visitors (for instance, from the emergency services) talk to the pupils about their jobs.

33. Good provision is made for the cultural development of pupils. This is an improvement from the last report. Provision for art and music make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development. Drama, which is taught in all classes, makes a very good contribution to their personal development generally, because it is often used as a means of exploring social, moral and spiritual issues. All pupils in Years R, 1 and 2 present a Christmas production each year, and Year 6 pupils do one each summer (last year's was the musical *Oliver!*). Staff make good use of offsite visits and of visitors to the school to enrich pupils' cultural experiences. They visit theatres and museums, take part in drama and historical workshops with visiting experts and the choir has participated in local music festivals. The school has been used as a model for its integration of children from minority cultures. A Muslim parent has visited the school to talk about her religion with a group of pupils. The school is a completely harmonious multi-racial community but it could do much more to celebrate the diversity of the rich cultures and artistic heritages represented in it. There are very few books or other cultural resources in the school which could be used for this purpose.

34. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. Assemblies make a good, and sometimes very good, contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Those held in the school hall fulfil statutory requirements as acts of worship and contribute well to pupils' social and moral, as well as their spiritual development. This was very much the case when the headteacher led an assembly for the whole school drawing together all the work that each class had done during the week on 'Trust'. She led the children through an extemporised re-enactment of the fall of Jericho, deftly encouraging them to reflect not only on the story, but also on its implications in a social, moral and spiritual context. Some assemblies did not provide opportunities for pupils to reflect. Sometimes no explicit link was made between music played and the subject of the assembly, or no mention was made of it at all. Good provision is made for those pupils whose parents wish them to be withdrawn from acts of worship, such as Jehovah's Witnesses. Pupils are given opportunities (particularly through circle time sessions) to understand feelings and emotions. They are encouraged to think for themselves and their views are treated with consideration. However, there were few opportunities in class for pupils to consider the deeper implications of what they were studying, or to marvel at the wonders of science and nature.

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

35. Procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development are very good. This is a considerable improvement since the last report. All staff work hard to get to know pupils and their families: given the many changes amongst the teaching staff, the role of the non-teaching staff has been crucial. Their cheerful unflappability is a great asset. A planned scheme of work for

personal, social and health education has linked themes for each year group. Good use is made of visiting specialists, including the emergency services and representatives of charitable organisations. The school will obtain the Healthy Schools Award later this term. Special focus weeks on personal development issues are held, such as an Environment Week and a Health Awareness Week. This latter included a sponsored skip in aid of the British Heart Foundation which raised £1,800. Personal development is well documented in pupils' annual reports and in the transfer documents used when pupils move to a new year group. In the best-managed sessions of circle time, teachers' sensitive handling of difficult issues and the very good relationships they have established with their classes, encourages pupils to share their views on important issues. In a Year 6 session, after four pupils admitted to have been the victims of bullies, two admitted that they had been bullies, and discussed why this was.

36. The systems the school has evolved for monitoring and improving attendance are good, and will no doubt become even better when an electronic monitoring system comes into use during next term. Registration is carried out correctly and registers fulfil statutory requirements. The school office contacts parents on the first day of absence if no explanation has been received. Attendance and punctuality are regularly promoted to parents through the prospectus and the weekly newsletters. Pupils arriving late report to the school office. The administrative assistant checks the 'late book' and the registers at least once a month to identify any patterns of late attendance or absence. These are then drawn to the attention of the headteacher, who herself regularly monitors attendance.

37. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good overall. The framework and documentation for managing behaviour, which is regularly reviewed by all the staff, are very good but with a succession of new teachers, its implementation varies. All staff, including lunchtime supervisory staff, are briefed on behaviour management when they first join the school. The documentation for the management of unsatisfactory behaviour is very well planned. Behaviour contracts are drawn up for teachers and pupils to state what they will do to help the pupil improve their behaviour. A behaviour log can be kept, tracking an individual's behaviour over a week or longer. Any incidents of particularly poor behaviour (such as bullying, fighting or defiance) are meticulously recorded together with all actions taken. Parents are kept fully informed of all developments. Pupils work towards achieving bronze, silver and gold targets in merit points. Awards are regularly made for achievement in work, effort or behaviour, and a series of awards 'of the year' are made to Year 6 pupils in their final term.

38. Child protection procedures and arrangements for pupil welfare are very good, a considerable improvement. A very detailed child protection policy provides full guidance for staff and standard forms for logging any concerns. The headteacher is the child protection liaison officer and her training is up to date. All staff are given careful briefing on child protection issues when they join the school. Pupils are well supervised whenever they are on school premises. Health and safety issues are meticulously recorded and dealt with through a rolling programme of risk assessment managed by the governors' Environment Committee. Class teachers carry out their own risk assessments at regular intervals. The school has suffered only a few instances of minor vandalism and graffiti writing in the last four years. Pupils are allowed to play in the playground outside school hours but are asked to behave sensibly and look after the facilities. Regular fire drills are held at different times of day and the fire alarm and emergency appliances are regularly tested. The fire brigade has carried out an assessment of the premises for emergency purposes. There are four first aiders on the staff and all staff will be doing a first aid course during the course of this academic year. All minor injuries are reported to parents in writing. 'Alert cards' for all pupils with medical conditions such as diabetes or nut allergies are displayed in the relevant classrooms, the medical room and the staffroom. The medical room itself is sited rather out of the way and a child left here could not be readily supervised, as the law requires, without a member of staff leaving their work. Inspectors wish to endorse the concern the school feels about a number of health and safety issues which are outside their capacity to solve unaided.

39. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now very good. Procedures used include the local authority

baseline assessment in the Foundation Stage, statutory assessments for pupils in years three and six, and optional tests in years three to five. These are recorded electronically and the information is analysed against National Curriculum levels and used to set school and individual pupil targets. Assessment is well established as a natural part of learning and medium term planning in all subjects. It clearly indicates assessment activities but these are more developed in the core subjects than the foundation subjects. Recent staff training has focused on levelling pupils' work against National Curriculum criteria in writing, science and mathematics, and the school is gradually building up portfolios for levelled work in all subjects.

40. The assessment manager, with local authority support, has worked hard to develop these systems and teachers' assessment files are collected regularly with constructive feedback given in writing. Procedures are also in place to identify more able pupils who may be gifted or talented. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is good and is well monitored by the headteacher and subject managers. However, with recent staff changes it is not yet fully embedded in all planning in determining, for example, the need for consolidation and extension work or reviewing differing attainment groupings. The monitoring of individual pupils' progress is very good. Records are very detailed with, for example, the internal transfer document between classes at the end of each academic year providing the new class teacher with a very detailed analysis of individual pupil's strengths and weaknesses. Records are very well used to track individual pupil's progress, monitor the achievement of groups of pupils and to celebrate achievement and encourage effort.

41. Provision for pupils with special needs and for more able pupils is very good. The school is very effective in using assessment information to identify those pupils who find learning difficult, soon after entry into school. It completes a detailed annual audit for the authority very effectively in order to receive the necessary funding to support these pupils. Those who show persistent difficulties are given further, more detailed, assessments to identify what their needs are so that the school can provide them with the appropriate support. Teachers and support staff review the targets on the pupils' individual education plans at least three times each year. These include behaviour plans for those pupils who find it difficult to conform to the school rules. The school has very good links with speech and language and occupational therapists, who provide individual programmes of pupils. Links with the educational psychologist are satisfactory. Provision for pupils with statements of special needs is very good and the school ensures that all agencies outlined in their statements are fully involved.

42. With very good support from the local authority, the school takes good care of the minority of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Great care is taken to ensure that their first days at the school are happy and successful and that they are able to join in with everything the school has to offer. Making good use of volunteers from the local community, parents and pupils are provided with spoken and written information in their own language and the school's caring ethos means that other pupils naturally help and support their classmates. However, the school could do more to acknowledge the language and culture they share in displays, notices and resources.

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

43. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. This is a very considerable improvement from the last report when it was judged unsatisfactory. Information is regular, timely and useful. The prospectus and governors' report fulfil statutory requirements (except for that requiring a statement on security in the governors' report) and are clear and helpful. A helpful information booklet is provided for new parents and weekly newsletters give a good picture of school life, regularly accompanied by items from individual class teachers. School policies give a clear picture of the school's approach to behaviour management, homework and other important issues. The school's website is currently undergoing final adjustments before its next update. Each year group sends out detailed information on the curriculum and homework at the start of the year. Annual reports for parents provide a very clear picture of what pupils know, understand and can do in mathematics, English and information technology. They also include targets for mathematics and English. The quality of reporting on other subjects varies somewhat from class

to class and reflects the less well developed assessment procedures in these curriculum areas. However, the very good personal knowledge most teachers have of their pupils compensates for this to some extent, with comments such as 'he has worked more methodically this term and is now more able to represent his designs on paper'. Sections on personal development are outstandingly good in most cases. The overall design of the report is good and the effort grades for each subject are a useful aid for parents.

44. Parents' very good impact on the work of the school is a considerable improvement from the last report. The school keeps a register of parents and the ways in which they are prepared to help. A 'Monday afternoon' team of parents come in to help with administration and produce resources. Others help to run and organise the school library. Parents are always willing to help with school trips and swimming lessons. Some helped to redecorate the school, and a small group of parents have worked hard to help develop the school's website. Parents run the choir, a gymnastics club and help with football. Others have contributed expertise for special events like Science Day and also helped run activities. The parents' association, run by a committee of about 15 parents assisted by many others, is a very hardworking organisation which raises the impressive total of about £7,500 p.a. It raised nearly £5,000 to pay for the play equipment in the top playground but aims to be a social organisation as well as a fund-raising one, for instance organising weekly discos for pupils and regular social events for parents.

45. The school has very effective links with parents and tries hard to involve them in all aspects of school life. This is a considerable improvement over the last four years. Class teachers are available for informal discussion after school and parents can see the head or deputy headteacher at very short notice. Parents are invited to class assemblies, when pupils present their work, at least twice a year. Three parent consultation evenings are held each year, and parents of pupils with special needs are free to ask for meetings whenever they want. The school often uses interpreters when meeting parents whose first language is not English, usually relatives of the parents concerned. These interpreters are also used to provide verbal translations of any documentation sent home. The school encourages parents to get involved with school life in as many ways as possible. They are regularly asked for help, for instance by offering professional expertise with special events like the Health Awareness Week or Science Day; by assisting in class; or with the installation of the new windowboxes. The school has held regular well-received information sessions on topics such as statutory assessment tests, drug education, and areas of the curriculum. It sends out questionnaires to parents on specific issues such as after school care. At present, little use is made of the diversity of cultures represented amongst its parents to enrich the life of the school.

46. The involvement of parents with children who have special educational needs is good. Many attend the regular consultation evenings, often with their child, where targets are set to support pupils with their individual difficulties. Individual education plans for those pupils who do not attend the meetings are sent to the parents. However the school does not always record this information on the plan. Regular meetings with parents ensure that pupils with statements of special educational needs are very well supported.

47. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning. More than 80% attend parents' evenings, and many send in items to support topic work and help their children carry out research tasks at home. Many, particularly in the younger age groups, regularly hear their children read. However, a significant minority of parents do not hear their children read and some show no interest in supporting their learning either at home or at school.

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

48. Since its low in 1998, levels of professionalism, leadership, responsibility and confidence have increased enormously and the staff team now constitutes a powerful force for good. Governors are becoming ever more efficient and effective in their group and individual roles. Every issue from the last inspection has been addressed and weaknesses have become strengths. The whole school community has been involved in creating a shared vision through the school's aims which form the starting point and the test of its actions. No aspect of the school has been ignored and every opportunity taken to make the most of its unique but professionally

challenging physical resources. The leadership and management of the school are very good and this is fully appreciated by parents.

49. The headteacher took over a school which in October 1998, was judged to have serious weaknesses in many aspects. Since then, she has, with enormous determination, a great deal of courage and untold hard work, been responsible for managing a revolution in the development of the school. She provides extremely effective and positive leadership and, with the considerable support of the recently promoted deputy head, has worked closely with the staff and the governing body to put in place policies and procedures to completely reform planning and decision making. Particularly impressive has been the way she has helped the school cope with the ups and downs of staff recruitment while sustaining the drive for improvement. Her contribution to the present very healthy state of the school is excellent.

50. Fundamental to the pace and extent of change has been the evolution of a comprehensive management structure with clear and specific roles and responsibilities. This has given teachers with little experience of management the opportunity to take on important responsibilities within the school which they have relished. Management training has been a very important part of the process and this is continuing with newly appointed managers primed for induction to their new roles after the inspection. Established staff manage their subject and other responsibilities effectively and are very conscientious. Much is asked and expected of managers and they form a force for good in the school. Everyone fully understands his or her respective role in the school and is committed to fulfilling it and in constantly improving.

51. Special needs provision was unsatisfactory at the last inspection. The previous deputy head, as special needs coordinator, managed its development excellently and was the instigator in the significant improvement over the last six years. Learning support staff are fully committed to their roles and have recently been able to take part in training both to meet their own specific needs and as part of whole school training programmes. As a result they feel very much part of the whole school team and know that their contributions are valued. Very good special needs resources are easily accessible to all staff. The special needs room has been decorated by the support staff and is an attractive secure learning environment for many pupils who are withdrawn for support.

52. Almost none of the governing body was in place at the time of the last full inspection when many aspects of governance were severely criticised. It is to their great credit that they have been very active participants in the massive improvement agenda, developing their own roles and procedures while supporting the school through difficult times. Governors are very supportive and committed to the school, visiting on a regular basis. Many bring considerable expertise to the governing body and all are very keen for the school to succeed. They now have a well-defined and understood structure of committees and individual responsibilities and a clear programme related to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Governors take their monitoring role very seriously visiting regularly and receiving comments from staff on the effectiveness of various current policy developments or items of expenditure. As individuals and as a body they know their school and their responsibilities very well. In all the above improvements, the head has played a crucial role well supported by the local education authority and, as a result, the governing body has made a very good contribution towards the success of the school.

53. Monitoring and evaluation have high priorities in the school community with the lead taken by the head and management team who keep a very close watch on what is happening. Standards, classroom practice and the effectiveness of policies and procedures are kept under review by the staff and governors responsible. Extensive use is made of information gained from national and optional tests to identify priorities and trends and, as records build up from recently developed assessment procedures, they are steadily being used for the same purpose. The school has set itself challenging targets for its pupils over the next few years and improvement planning is focused on achieving these targets. Individual members of staff are encouraged to think about their own performance through professional interviews and professional development has a high priority. The clearly structured, very practical school improvement plan is a comprehensive document which focuses on improving standards and involves everyone in

deciding what should be included and how effective actions have been.

54. The present leadership has been extremely effective in reducing the inherited deficit budget while still adapting the building and establishing a good range of resources in the school. While there is still work to do, the forecast is for the deficit to be reduced to a manageable figure this financial year. Major decisions taken over recent years include the improvement of the outside spaces, the establishment of a new front entrance and new offices for the administrative team, improvements in the special needs (SEN) room and the creation of a music and drama room. The staff and governors deserve full credit for the success of these improvements.

55. Good use is made of grants and the school seeks opportunities to improve its facilities and resources. SEN grants are used effectively, grants for security have helped in the development of the new entrance and general access to the building. The school has actively sought grants to help develop external areas and to support pupils going on school journeys.

56. Office staff administer good systems of financial control very effectively, support teachers very well and the 'front desk' provides an efficient and welcoming introduction to the school for parents and visitors. The budget is monitored regularly; the finance officer prepares useful reports for the Head and Governors; and when required the finance officer attends governors meetings. Good use of new technology is made in the running of the school, and the administration systems helps ensure its smooth daily operation. Governors oversee the financial practice in the school, whereby the head and her administrative team seek best value for supplies and services with comparative tenders being sought for significant spending decisions. The headteacher and governors are prudent in making spending decisions and make best use of the budget to support educational priorities; during a period when they have been required to reduce a deficit budget they have held fast to the principle of supplying the best resources possible for the pupils. The recommendations of the latest audit report have been fully addressed.

57. Staffing in the school is satisfactory but the school should consider increasing the time and number of learning support assistants (LSAs) when the budget allows. The school has dealt effectively with a changing teaching force; this term there are five new teaching staff and a significant number are only in their second year at the school. Senior staff and governors are very aware of the problems of recruitment and retention and the school has experienced many staff changes in the last two years. Governors have investigated ways of improving this situation. The school operates as a cohesive team with the efforts of the office staff, lunchtime supervisors, kitchen and caretaking staff making their own very significant contributions to its success. Very good induction procedures for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and for staff new to the school allow staff to have half a term before they take up their responsibility posts in order to fully acquaint themselves with school systems. The school has good links with initial teacher training; student teachers are regularly in school, one student was about to start a main teaching practice in the week following the inspection and the school has recently hosted a 'Return to Teaching' course.

58. Overall teaching space is only satisfactory because of the limitations of the building. Though impressive, the design is not suited to the requirements of modern primary education. The high ceilings and windows, poor acoustics and the proximity of some classes to the hall combine to make the building a difficult teaching environment and it is to the credit of the staff that they use the building so well. The school is also hampered in that pupils have to walk across the road to access the large playing field and there are no immediate car parking facilities, on-street parking is time-limited and teachers have to walk a considerable distance from the hired parking spaces at the nearby cricket club.

59. The adaptation of the upper hall into a library and computer suite and the creation of a music/drama room has been very successful and both are well managed. the creation of the new entrance and administrative area and head's office has had a very positive impact on the school. Teaching space for the foundation stage is difficult to manage and the school has sensible plans to try and improve this. The accommodation is clean and tidy. The age of the building means there is a continuing need to deal with problems and general maintenance and the

caretaker demonstrates a good understanding of these problems. Classrooms are enhanced with displays that celebrate pupils' achievements and stimulate further learning.

60. External areas are managed as well as possible given the somewhat limited space and lack of green areas. Low level timber climbing equipment surrounded by rubber safety surfaces is well used as are shaded seated areas and a wide variety of good playground markings. Staggered breaktimes and lunchtimes relieve congestion and the upper hall is used to provide an excellent range of lunchtime activities for pupils. Every class has responsibility for a planted window box.

61. Learning resources are generally satisfactory but some subjects are better organised and resourced than others. Most subjects need more resources but the school has been bound by the financial constraints of the deficit budget. Photocopiers are easily accessible on both floors and a regular group of parent helpers are available weekly to help photocopy and to perform other supportive tasks. While most resources are well managed, better organisation and storage is needed in the resource room and in the library area where large boxes are perched on top of bookshelves. The computer suite is an asset with other computers in the classrooms but the school will need even more computers to match new requirements. The library is stocked with a good range of books but more are needed when funds allow. Good use is made of the Hampshire library service.

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

62. To build on the very good improvements already made and bring everything up to the same good level, the governors, headteacher and staff of Fairfields Primary School should:

- (1) Make it possible for pupils in year five to achieve as well in other year groups by:
  - setting challenging year group targets for the next two years which accept that current performance is more to do with the history of teaching than pupil's potential
  - setting individual targets which match these increased expectations
  - when funds allow, ensuring that in-class support is available in the afternoons as well as the mornings (Paragraphs 4, 9, 19, 73 & 77)
- (2) Bring standards in science up to those in the other core subjects and in art to those in the other foundation subjects by:
  - ensuring that all aspects of each subject are equally well covered eg. materials and their properties in science / shape and form in art
  - ensuring that examples of good work matched to national levels are available for teachers to use as exemplars and raise expectations
  - making best use of particular expertise in either subject by sharing teaching (Paragraphs 6, 16, 93, 95, 96, 98 -101)



- (3) Make much more of the opportunities presented by the presence of pupils from a rich range of cultural backgrounds and enable pupils reflect on their life experiences by:
- auditing the resource which these pupils and their families present and ensuring that all members of staff are aware of the possibilities this creates
  - looking for opportunities to include these elements when planning work in all areas of the curriculum (Paragraphs 26, 33, 34 & 42)

#### **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Weaknesses in handwriting and presentation limit standards in other subjects (Paragraphs 76, 77 & 84)
- The accommodation is very difficult to teach and learn in (Paragraphs 14, 48, 132 & 135)
- More classroom support is needed in the afternoons (Paragraphs 57 & 58)
- More computers are required (Paragraphs 61 & 118)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	13	41	22	1		
Percentage	3	16	52	28	1		

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 points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		396
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		101

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	94.9
National comparative data	94.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.6

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	36	32	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	31	34
	Girls	31	30	31
	Total	61	61	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (89)	90 (76)	96 (89)
	National	85 (84)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	34	31
	Girls	31	31	31
	Total	61	65	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (87)	96 (87)	91 (84)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	24	32	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	21	23
	Girls	28	18	25
	Total	49	39	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (93)	70 (75)	86 (95)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	21	21
	Girls	24	22	19
	Total	44	43	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (70)	77 (79)	71 (80)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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
323	2	
5	0	
2	0	
2	0	
1	0	
4	0	
3	0	
2	0	
5	0	
4	0	

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

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

Number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5
Average class size	28.4

**Education support staff: YR– Y6**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	205

**Financial information**

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	935557
Total expenditure	965671
Expenditure per pupil	2373
Balance brought forward from previous year	-30114
Balance carried forward to next year	-30446

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0

Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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

402

Number of questionnaires returned

98

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	42	3	1	
My child is making good progress in school.	48	45	5	1	
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	57	5		1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	55	15	4	
The teaching is good.	48	43	7	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	37	20	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	24	8	5	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	46	2		
The school works closely with parents.	34	43	19	4	
The school is well led and managed.	55	41	2		2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	46	3		
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	50	16	4	8

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

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

63. Two reception classes are taught in a semi open plan classroom, well equipped and arranged with a variety of work and play areas. However, an intrusive semi circular wall, of no particular use, currently inhibits the imaginative development of the whole area and restricts the available useable space. Outdoor areas are easily accessed but the use of wheeled vehicles and other large equipment is restricted, as they are stored some distance away. The school is currently addressing both the above issues and this will enhance both the team teaching and the quality of the curriculum provided. Pupils enter the school in September, with those born up to the end of December being full-time, while those born in the spring and summer attend mornings or afternoons only until half term, when they attend full time. A well-planned programme introduces the new children and their parents to the school and ensures that positive relationships are quickly forged with families. Links with the local playgroups, from which most children come, are well developed. The local authority baseline assessment indicates that children's attainment on entry to the school, while varied is overall average. The strengths noted during the inspection were in children's personal and social development and in their speaking and listening skills. The early years co-ordinator provides very clear leadership to the teaching team, which includes experienced teaching assistants, and together they are rapidly, and very successfully, establishing routines, both in working together in a new team teaching arrangement and in settling children into the school.

64. The quality of teaching, described as 'variable' at the last inspection is now consistently good, with some very good lessons, a significant improvement since the last inspection. The recently introduced team teaching is working very well and when fully embedded has the capacity to become very good. Teachers have high expectations, and the range of experiences provided motivates children to work hard and maintain concentration. Planning is very thorough and teachers are good at challenging the children to extend their knowledge and vocabulary through effective questioning, seizing every opportunity to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers use their learning support assistants effectively to support group and individual children's learning. They are always well briefed and know how to guide and encourage the children. The curriculum is securely based on national guidance for the foundation years and children are on course to reach and in many cases exceed the expected early learning goals by the appropriate age. This represents a good level of achievement.

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

65. Children enter the school showing generally good levels of personal and social development. They are happy and, in such a short time, have settled very quickly into the class routines and quickly learned the rules and conventions associated with the classroom and school life. This area of development is well taught and teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what pupils should do for themselves. For example, children find their name and move it on the 'activity board' to indicate their choice and know to put their name card next to their clothes when they dress and undress for physical education. Children often sit in a circle for short times at the start of sessions and this contributes to their development by providing structured opportunities to share views and experiences such as when discussing 'My special book' in religious education. They play and work happily together and know the rules associated with taking turns, tidying up and listening to others.

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

66. Although the intake is broadly average, within the group there are a wide range of abilities

in communication, language and literacy. While most pupils recognise their names and many can write it well, only a very few have any sight vocabulary. Teachers provide many purposeful activities, which make a valuable contribution to this area. For example children recount their news and learn to sing a large repertoire of rhymes, which helps them to practise putting words into sequence as well as their pronunciation. They are starting to copy words. Most follow text, making plausible guesses at covered words and letters and are beginning to know initial letter sounds and letter names. Boys and girls follow, predict and retell the sequence of a story when reading 'The Three Bears'. They appreciate the rhythm and repetition of the story and contribute actions to enhance the story as the teacher reads. Comments in children's home school reading journal indicate a sound level of support and encouragement of reading. They enjoy books and the older ones currently delight in taking them home to share with their families. Boys and girls handle the books carefully and understand that print is read from left to right. They talk enthusiastically about the pictures. Their imagination and language are developed through role-play as, for example, the imaginative role-play area; currently set up as a Post office for 'The Jolly Postman'. They are beginning to recognise many clearly presented captions and display notices in the classroom. Teachers take every opportunity to reinforce communication skills and reading and writing play a big part in lessons.

### **Mathematical development**

67. To encourage children's development of mathematics, teachers use day to day number games effectively. Children have a very wide range of ability in number recognition with some pupils unable to identify any numbers, while others are confident with numbers to 10. They enjoy the range of mathematical activities, such as ordering the bears in size and colour and numbering the houses for the Jolly Postman to deliver his letters. These activities give children a range of experiences to consolidate their understanding. Number songs and daily routines are used to reinforce counting activities and, as a result, children learn quickly and make good progress so that they attain the early learning goals by the age of five.

### **Knowledge and Understanding of the World.**

68. Children are gaining good understanding of the world in which they live through a range of activities. They go on a 'Bear Hunt' and discover the main features around the school. When making the Three Bears breakfast they read the recipe, use the microwave and observe the change that take place in the ingredients. Children using the computer suite and the computers in their classroom to match chairs and beds to the bears and to make drawings show developing 'mouse' control. Boys and girls have good opportunities to use a variety of construction kits to make their own models. Good teaching enables children to have a good balance of formal investigation and guided play. This helps them to 'discover' new knowledge and make good progress based on their prior attainment. In religious education they look at special books in preparation for understanding The Bible as a special book for Christians.

### **Creative development.**

69. Teachers organise the curriculum well and provide children with regular planned opportunities for music, play dough, paint and a range of materials. They explore colour and shape using an art program on the computer to experiment in making lines and filling colour. Children use paint to make the cover for their special book and develop their three dimensional skills when making furniture for a three bears collage. In music, children explore pitch and timbre of voices when creating different voices for the three bears. They know a variety of rhymes and jingles and are beginning to develop a sense of time and rhythm.

### **Physical development.**

70. Children have many opportunities to develop fine motor skills as they handle small tools such as pencils, crayons, paintbrushes, glue sticks and scissors. They frequently put together and take apart construction materials and work with jigsaws and other tabletop equipment. Regular planned times in the hall provide a structured time for responding to music through dance, and using floor space and apparatus to develop their large physical muscle skills. They use small apparatus for throwing and catching. Boys and girls have other opportunities for physical development using the wheeled vehicles and other apparatus in the outdoor area. These activities are making a significant contribution to their physical development.

## ENGLISH

71. Standards in English are above the national average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection in 2000. The school has put a high emphasis on developing speaking skills and writing skills and this has had a positive impact on learning. Achievement is good. All pupils are making good progress because of good teaching and the additional support from government initiatives such as the Additional Literacy Strategy for pupils in Year 3 and 4, the Early Intervention strategy for pupils in Year 1 and booster classes. Training is underway for support staff to implement the initiative 'Further Literacy Support' for pupils in Year 5. Very experienced support staff have implemented these initiatives very effectively. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language also make good progress because tasks are planned very well to meet their specific needs.

72. By the end of Year 2 speaking skills are better than expected for their age, although listening skills are average. Pupils are keen to answer questions and contribute sensibly to discussions. In Year 1 pupils were well able to retell the story of the Gingerbread Man and a group using a listening centre were engrossed in a story. In Year 2 one pupil clearly explained the meaning of 'template' and most pupils listened to her explanation attentively. Good use is made of role-play and drama to support the development of speaking and listening skills. For example, in a drama lesson in Year 1, pupils took part in an activity relating to the story 'Peace at Last' with the class divided into sleepers and noises.

73. In Year 6 speaking skills and listening are above average. Listening skills remain average in the current Year 5. Pupils in Year 6 are mature and confident talkers who speak out frankly and express themselves fluently. They talk about the work they have done in considerable detail. For example, during a religious education lessons pupils in small groups confidently discussed extracts from the New Testament to determine facts and opinions about Jesus. In a drama lesson pupils were well able to discuss aspects of bullying from several points of view. Pupils in Year 3 were able to give clear explanations about fiction and non-fiction text, while in Year 5 pupils are beginning to express their views and feelings about a range of poems. Good use of drama and role-play activities is having a positive impact on standards.

74. The attainment of pupils in reading by the end of Year 2 is well above the national average. Most pupils use a good range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and express their enjoyment in reading, and in many cases having books read to them at home. They confidently join in reading together during the shared text sessions, using plenty of expression. Most show good awareness of the use of punctuation when reading. For example, in Year 1 pupils knew that the teacher was speaking loudly because there was an exclamation mark in the text. They are well able to read for different purposes. Pupils in Year 2 knew how to read a set of instructions for making a puppet. The school has decided to have a separate daily guided-reading session, outside the literacy hour, which enables teachers to focus on one group each day. This strategy, together with a greater emphasis on developing pupils' recognition of letter patterns and sounds, is supporting the development of their reading skills effectively. Library skills are good.

75. Standards in reading by the end of Year 6 are well above average. Most pupils are extremely competent readers and show an understanding of a wide range of challenging texts. Many identify key features, themes and characters in their responses and select sentences, phrases and relevant information to support their views. Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their reading skills during focused guided reading sessions. Older pupils in Year 6 have weekly reading targets, which provide them with a wide range of reading material, and specific tasks, which supports learning very effectively. There are also good opportunities for pupils to choose books from the school library. Year 4 pupils work in pairs, using an extract from a description of events at Queen Victoria's coronation, to describe the main characters. Year 5 pupils compare two poems, giving their points of view and feelings about each one. All classes



use the library weekly and many pupils have good library skills.

76. Pupils' writing is above average by the end of Year 2. It is well organised and they are beginning to adapt their writing for different readers. For example, pupils in Year 2 confidently rewrite the story of the 'Tortoise and the Hare' and some above average pupils also write a set of instructions for winning the race. Many are beginning to show an appropriate awareness of punctuation and to spell keywords accurately. Below average pupils are able to structure some phrases and simple statements using recognisable words to communicate their ideas. In Year 1, pupils also retell stories and write letters and poems. There is a high emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills and to encourage them to write freely and this is impacting well on standards. However, handwriting skills are less well developed.

77. Standards in writing are above the national average by the end of Year 6. Many pupils' writing is varied and interesting, conveying meaning clearly in a range of forms for different readers. Pupils in Year 6 prepare a modern-day version of Cinderella and produce work of a good standard. In Year 3, pupils begin to collate information in note form and Year 5 pupils record their feelings about the poem 'Mercy' using evidence from the text. Standards in Year 5 are not as good as in the rest of the school. This is as a result of several changes in teachers during the last few years and the behaviour of a small number of pupils in the year group. The current teachers are beginning to effectively establish a work ethos amongst the pupils. By the end of Year 6 pupils are using interesting, adventurous and varied vocabulary in their writing. The use of paragraphs is developing well and pupils have a good awareness of the use of punctuation. Handwriting is usually neat and joined but this is not consistent across the school.

78. Teaching and learning is good overall, very good in Key Stage 2, and pupils achieve well. The monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinator has been effective and the quality of teaching is continuing to improve. Teachers are more confident in using the literacy strategy and as a whole school are beginning to adapt their teaching methods to meet the needs of the pupils. For example, guided reading sessions are more focused and extended writing sessions have been introduced. This gives pupils more opportunities to write freely and creatively over a longer period. Lessons are well planned and teachers plan effectively together to ensure continuity across each year group. Learning objectives are shared at the start of most lessons. Behaviour management is good and very good use is made of support staff, particularly to work with pupils who find learning difficult. However, when literacy is taught in the afternoon with no additional support in the classroom, learning suffers for pupils with a low attention span. Some lessons lack pace and as a result teachers have to work hard to keep the interest of the pupils. Marking is informative and usually tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

79. Where teaching is very good or excellent, teachers set challenging activities and a very good range of teaching strategies is used very effectively to support pupils' learning. For example, Year 6 pupils took part in a role play activity to stimulate their interest in the story of Cinderella in preparation for writing their own version. The teachers' enthusiasm and excellent support enabled all pupils to make excellent progress in their learning during the lesson.

80. Assessment procedures are very good and are used well to guide planning and to set tasks to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Individual targets are set and pupils' progress carefully tracked. Teachers are beginning to use assessment information to predict pupils' individual levels of attainment by the end of the following year. They are working hard to gain confidence in deciding a National Curriculum level of attainment for samples of pupils' writing. Assessment is used very well to identify pupils who need extra support for literacy and as a result additional support is given to these pupils wherever possible.

81. Thanks to the last co-ordinator, management has been excellent and as a result standards are continuing to rise. Excellent monitoring has identified individual and whole school training needs that have been addressed extremely well. The coordinator has shared her enthusiasm for literacy with both staff and pupils and this greatly improves learning. Resources have improved and are good. The library is satisfactorily resourced and is used well to develop pupils' library skills. Visitors during book week, workshops and theatre visits enhance pupils' learning well.

## MATHEMATICS

82. Evidence obtained during the inspection from lesson observation, talking to children and analysis of work shows that standards in mathematics of both 7 and 11 year olds are above the national average. This is an improvement since the last inspection (2000), when standards in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 were satisfactory, except for standards of work on 'shape' in the juniors, which were below the expected level. The school is working hard to address this relative weakness and have identified it as an area for development. Inspection evidence, mainly through discussions with pupils, indicates that although standards achieved in shape, space and measurement in Key Stage 2 are below other areas of the maths curriculum, they are similar to those expected nationally. Boys and girls achieve equally well and this year there is little difference between achievement in mathematics and English.

83. The National Numeracy Strategy has been well implemented and has brought necessary rigour to the planning and a proper progression to the development of the subject throughout the school. Through its successful introduction and the commitment of the staff to raise standards, pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now making good progress and are achieving well. As pupils progress through the school their understanding, knowledge and skills of mathematics are increased and refined. Pupils in Year 1 count forward and backwards in whispers to 20, emphasising the odd numbers. Typically they represent number stories as a number sentence, using the appropriate operation and symbol, such as + - and =. In Year 2 pupils identify the largest and smallest number that can be made by four given digits. By the age of 7 pupils use different strategies to subtract two numbers and have a basic knowledge of fractions such as  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$ . They recognise shapes, for example squares, triangles, circles and hexagons and interpret and construct bar charts and graphs.

84. Year 3 pupils list the properties of 3D shapes, such as sphere, cuboid and pyramid, by identifying the number of faces, edges and vertices each has. By Year 4, pupils are developing strategies to halve quite large numbers in their head, (eg  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 592 = 296,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 500 = 250,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 92 = 46,  $250 + 46 = 296$ ). In problem solving, Year 5 pupils are recognising the importance of 'thinking a problem through' and identifying patterns or trends. In the oldest classes pupils can find equivalent fractions and use these to order fractions. They are able to use their knowledge of shapes to identify the external angle of regular shapes, such as pentagon and octagon and apply this knowledge to their work in ICT. The quality of presentation and the way pupils record their work is generally satisfactory. However in some classes work is poorly presented and set out in a fairly haphazard way. Stronger emphasis needs to be placed on establishing good work habits to ensure pupils record and set out their work appropriately, and that this is consolidated and built on as they pass through the school.

85. Achievement in mathematics is generally good. Most pupils establish good work habits and try hard. Their ability to use appropriate mathematical language is developed from reception onwards. They improve their understanding of mathematical operations and their ability to use different methods of working out a problem in their head. During lessons pupils are becoming increasingly self-reliant when faced with a problem. They are able and willing to ask for help when needed and are motivated to improve.

86. Pupils' attitude to mathematics is good. They are nearly always fully engaged in their work, interested and work hard. Boys and girls respond enthusiastically, particularly to mental maths and are eager to volunteer answers or explain the strategy they are using. Pupils apply effort, work well on the task and generally listen attentively. Very occasionally they become distracted because the work is not well enough matched to their ability. Pupils respect the feelings of their classmates and spontaneously show their appreciation when others share their work or give a correct answer.

87. The quality of teaching in mathematics in both key stages is good. In all the lessons observed the teaching was at least satisfactory and in most good or better, especially in years three to six. Where teaching is better the pace of lessons is brisk, planning is closely linked to previous lessons with clear learning objectives and questioning is skilful and challenging. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory the work is not as well matched to the ability of the child or class management is weaker, with the result that some pupils' work habits are not sufficiently

developed. Teachers have secure and sometimes good subject knowledge. Planning is now thorough and systematic with learning outcomes clearly identified in each lesson. Teachers give pupils the opportunity to explain their strategies and methods. For example, Year 4 pupils were encouraged to explain their method of halving large numbers in their head. Appropriate resources and equipment are used effectively to ensure understanding. In mental maths the use of different resources, such as number sticks, number boards and number cards makes it possible for every child to answer and so be fully involved.

88. The mental maths session is used effectively to give a clear start to the lesson. In nearly all lessons observed the plenary was well used to draw together what had been learned in the lesson and to highlight key facts or ideas that need to be remembered. Analysis of work indicates satisfactory use is made of practical activities to reinforce concepts and skills. Questioning is well used to extend and challenge pupils' thinking and to assess knowledge. Pupils are generally well managed and clearly know what is expected of them. Some teachers set time limits to ensure learning is productive and pacy. Pupils are further encouraged to try hard by praise and the school's reward systems. In most classes work is appropriately matched to the ability of the pupils by the provision of work at three levels. Teachers ensure activities are well chosen to involve all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs. Teaching is very well supported by Learning Support Assistants who provide invaluable support to ensure all pupils are able to participate fully in the lesson

89. Evidence from lessons observed shows pupils work purposefully and try hard and the quality of learning is also good. They learn to use correct mathematical vocabulary as they move through the school. Their understanding of mathematical operations develops, as does their ability to use different methods of working out a problem in their head. They willingly ask for help when needed and are motivated to improve. Learning is often consolidated and extended by the judicious provision of practical activities in lessons. Appropriate work is set to be completed at home and often extends or complements learning in class.

90. The curriculum is now based on the Framework for the Numeracy Strategy that provides a wide-ranging curriculum, ensuring progression and continuity as pupils move through the school. Work is selected from a variety of sources to ensure it is suitably matched to the ability of all the children. The school recognises the need to reduce the number of work sheets used in some classes. Pupils are taught in mixed ability classes, although the school plans to reintroduce ability sets in the oldest classes after Christmas to make teaching even more effective. The availability of a computer in each classroom gives pupils the chance to consolidate their learning by using programs containing maths-related activities during lessons.

91. Assessment arrangements are good. Following baseline assessment on entry, information obtained from National tests (SATs) in Years 2 and 6, Non statutory SATs in Years 3, 4 and 5 are carefully analysed to assess standards and identify trends and weaknesses. This information is used to set class or year group targets, while teachers set individual targets once they know the class well. Work is scrutinised and teaching observed by the Headteacher and former subject manager, although the present manager has not had the opportunity to observe teaching as yet. Alongside these more formal assessments on-going teacher assessments are made indicating the progress of pupils matched against the learning objectives. Day-to-day assessments are made and kept in the teachers' mark books or file. However the way on-going assessment is collected and used is inconsistent and could be more effectively used to track pupils' progress, reset targets and influence planning. Pupils' work is regularly and consistently marked but rarely includes constructive comments to help the pupils recognise how well they are doing and how they can improve.

92. The mathematics manager is new to the post this year although she 'shadowed' the previous manager during the last academic year. Her enthusiasm is already having a positive impact on the development of the subject. Well-targeted training to raise subject knowledge and the monitoring of teaching and learning are already helping to raise standards. The school's well developed improvement planning ensures resources are targeted at agreed priorities. Resources for mathematics are good, with enough equipment etc to properly resource the full implementation of the Numeracy Strategy. Suitable cross-curricular links have been established with other subjects, particularly ICT, science and geography.

## SCIENCE

93. The standard of attainment in science of seven and eleven year old pupils is broadly average. Compared with the school's performance in English and maths, science standards are not as good. Sensible steps have been taken to make this improvement, basing all work on scientific enquiry as was recommended in the HMI inspection of November 2000. A combination of comprehensive in-service training in June 2002 and the appropriate policy, guidance and monitoring of the subject are already having an impact on the quality of teaching of science, which should then improve attainment. There is a growing emphasis on scientific enquiry and pupils have a clear understanding of fair testing. Where teaching is good, there are signs of improvement which could impact on this year's national testing.

94. Pupils in Key Stage 1 undertake practical investigations. In a year one class, they were taken on a 'five senses' walk where they smelt the air outside, felt the wind and the warm tarmac. The teacher's good use of questioning and the practical nature of the task elicited responses from the majority of the class and contributed to the increase of the pupils' scientific understanding. In a year two lesson pupils learned about food groups, what constitutes a healthy diet and how the body needs exercise and the right food to fuel that exercise. The practical nature of this session helped develop their understanding of how their bodies work and why exercise will make them hot and thirsty, and scientific enquiry was well emphasised, developing the links with literacy. Coverage is satisfactory throughout the attainment targets but better in the form of scientific enquiry and in the study of life processes and living things. In class sessions pupils are encouraged to explain their predictions carefully. They are not so confident in recalling previous scientific work or in using the appropriate vocabulary for that work; the written explanations that accompany their work have little detail.

95. In Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils worked co-operatively in threes when testing materials for absorbency. They demonstrated their understanding by explaining the task and their methodology, and the teacher was able to give a 'Best Company Award' for co-operation, discussion and use of scientific vocabulary. In a year five class pupils discussed the way muscles enable movement in the body. They were then asked to prepare a short television-style presentation that explained how leg and arm muscles move, this was performed enthusiastically and competently, making a good contribution to literacy. In a year six class, pupils used appropriate vocabulary to explain the stages in various food chains. They were able to explain how animals have adapted themselves to improve their feeding techniques and go on to create imaginary food chains, demonstrating the correct use of scientific vocabulary and sound knowledge of the links in the chains. From work seen from the last year, the attainment is satisfactory but more thorough explanation of the scientific processes investigated is needed.

96. During the inspection six lessons were observed and more than half of these were good. The subject knowledge of teachers is at least satisfactory, and year group planning and a useful scheme of work ensure that the science curriculum is systematically covered. Pupils are enthusiastic in science lessons and they enjoy practical investigations such as when year four pupils investigated the relationship between various body parts such as their height and arm span. Discussion and questioning are well used to develop pupils' thinking. When available, support assistants provide good support for lower attaining pupils. In both key stages, pupils recall with interest a limited range of previous scientific work. However, these discussions demonstrated the need to improve the use of correct vocabulary and indicated a need for better coverage the areas of materials and their properties and physical processes.

97. The areas for improvement identified in the last inspection have been addressed through a recent range of professional development, supported by local authority advisors. This is beginning to improve attainment in the school. Science has clear areas for development in the school improvement plan. Subject leadership has been good and the new co-ordinator is very aware of the emphasis needed to make the necessary improvements in this subject. Resources are satisfactory with costed plans for future acquisitions but storage needs to be improved so that staff and pupils can have quick and easy access for all units of work.

## ART AND DESIGN

98. Overall standards in art and design are unsatisfactory and there is insufficient breadth and balance in the art curriculum. This area has seen the least development since the 1998 inspection. In the face of many other priorities, the school has established some reasonable guidance and a simple scheme of work but not enough opportunities are taken to develop pupils' work. Some use is made of artists' work but the limited range hampers pupils' development. Good teaching was observed during the inspection and skills are taught with care in some classes which is a good sign for the future. The artwork seen in the lessons observed was satisfactory, but overall standards in the Key Stage 2 classes are below national expectations. This was particularly evident in the scrutiny of work from the last academic year.

99. In a year six lesson, pupils looked at the landscape work of Constable to make exploratory sketches for landscape work taking account of the elements of composition. Pupils would benefit from input from a wider range and could use a selection of sketching pencils. In year five, pupils used Monet as the means of developing their use of paint and brush strokes. They experimented in sketch books and then, using postcards mounted on A4 paper, extended the painting making careful choices in colour and the use of different brushes. Year four pupils examined line in a study of leaves, but they were reliant on using leaves to outline their work rather than increasing sketching skills by working freehand. Some effective use of colour pencils was made, but in discussion, opportunities were lost to extend pupils' ability to analyse and evaluate their work. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1. In year two pupils used clay satisfactorily to make numbered plaques for houses linking to their geography project, but they had not previously had the opportunity to manipulate clay and explore its possibilities.

100. Sketch books from the upper years of Key Stage 2 show a range of work but do not demonstrate any real consolidation or progression of skills. Work in a subject portfolio also fails to demonstrate sufficient breadth in the curriculum. There was very little evidence of three-dimensional work, work in textiles or printing. Resources are available but not always fully used. Different kinds of art, craft and design are not sufficiently investigated, though research is done on the web and some artefacts and prints are used. No significant visits or visitors have been utilised in the recent past.

101. Art has had a low profile in the school. In order to improve, more use could be made of arts and crafts from other cultures and from contemporary artists; real progression of skills needs to be taught and more work should be attempted that demonstrates creativity and imagination. The recently departed coordinator established an overview and a scheme of work that is now being used and should help to develop the subject. The school acknowledges the deficiencies in the subject and has booked future training and identified the need for in-house staff development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

102. Previously standards in the school had been below the national average and expectations were low. No lessons were timetabled during the inspection, though in a year one art session pupils made clay plaques for houses linked to the geographical study of the Isle of Struay from the Katy Morag stories. Judgements on pupils' achievements are based on discussions with pupils, a scrutiny of work and teachers' planning. These show that pupils now cover all the required areas and that standards are generally satisfactory with strengths where teachers have particular expertise.

103. The school has adapted national guidance into its scheme of work and units of work are undertaken at specific times of the year. Throughout the school, teachers introduce pupils to a balanced experience of designing and making articles. During last year's environmental week, working in groups, pupils designed and made a number of attractive large-scale robots, these were shown to the rest of the school and the work was celebrated with an effective display in the school foyer.

104. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils make good preparation for their projects and achieve good outcomes in the making of puppets. Planning involved the measuring of materials to ensure the puppets would fit the hand, selection of appropriate material and thread, and the construction,

resulting in a pleasing range of puppets. Simple flags were also planned and made. Pupils had a good understanding of the suitable materials for different uses, explaining why it is appropriate to have plastic containers for drinks taken on a school trip.

105. In Key Stage 2, a good range of projects includes the designing and making of a range of vehicles using wooden wheels, cotton reels, paper and wood and the making of Egyptian dresses for a historical project. This work demonstrates satisfactory progression of skills. A year six project undertaken in the second half of the summer term focused on fairground rides: careful designs were made, skills in the methods of joining were developed and cams, motors and other systems were used to make a range of attractive working models.

106. The coordinator has established a clear scheme of work with a variety of units available for staff, giving a good range of coverage. The school has benefited from input by the local authority advisor and teachers' subject knowledge and confidence have improved. A good range of resources are well managed though there is a need to increase the quantity of tools.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

107. Too few lessons were seen during the inspection for a judgement to be made on teaching, but from these lessons, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with the coordinator and pupils, by the end of years two and six standards and pupils' achievements in geography are satisfactory. However, there is a lack of study in depth, particularly for the more able pupils. No absolute judgements were made in this subject in the last full inspection but coverage and standards are likely to have improved significantly with much improved planning and monitoring.

108. Year two pupils are beginning to describe and compare the physical and human features of different localities, showing an awareness of places beyond their own locality. They compare the weather in different parts of the world with that in Basingstoke and discuss appropriate clothing. Most are beginning to develop their mapping skills by identifying features on a map of the Isle of Struay.

109. In a year three lesson pupils use the immediate locality to plot buildings on a map, identifying their use, and use a key with appropriate symbols. They discuss issues sensibly and behaved well. Discussions with year six pupils indicate a satisfactory coverage of the subject, although studies of rivers in year five was patchy due to staffing difficulties. Pupils remember the significant facts relating to the development of tourism in St Lucia and can describe the main feature of a rain forest. They know a great deal about their own locality and will use this to contrast locations on their residential visit to Osmington Bay. Pupils have a good understanding of the use of OS maps and can plan the journey to Osmington Bay using a road atlas.

110. They use information and communication technology to support their studies through the use of data handling and presenting their work, and research information through the Internet and Encarta. Some pupils have used e-mail to communicate with pupils in other schools and countries. The subject also makes a valuable contribution to their personal, social, health education and citizenship through work on the many environmental issues that are planned.

111. The coordinator is recently in post and has a clear improvement plan that includes the development of a 'levelled' portfolio of pupils' work. Planning, based on national guidance realistically adapted to the local circumstances of the school, gives good coverage of the subject and includes fieldwork, and teachers regularly assess pupils' work.

## **HISTORY**

112. From the few lessons seen, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils, by the end of years two and six standards are sound and pupils are achieving well.

Only two lessons were seen during the inspection so no overall judgement on teaching can be made. Many improvements have been made to provision for History since the last full inspection and standards are much more consistent across the school.

113. Year two pupils show a developing sense of chronology, and a knowledge and understanding of aspects of the past beyond their living memory. They study the Great Fire of London and understand the main reasons for its rapid spread and look at pictures and photographs to discover the main changes in the seaside at different points between 1800 and 1990. Significant figures in history such as Florence Nightingale give pupils an insight into how individuals contribute to change.

114. By year six pupils have studied many significant periods in history, and where possible are well supported by local visits or visitors to the school. In discussion with older pupils they remember enthusiastically events such as the Roman visitors to the school, with their armour, the visit to the Victorian classroom, Hampton Court and the Tudor banquet in school. These events and the study of ancient Egypt and Greece give pupils a broad historical knowledge. In the lessons seen, year four pupils used short written accounts to compile notes on the life of poor people in Victorian times, while in a year five lesson pupils questioned a visitor on life in a classroom in the 1950's to enable them note the changes that have taken place.

115. Information technology is used to present pupils' work and as a research tool, and links with other subjects include designing and making Egyptian costumes. Some texts used in the Literacy Hour are of a historical nature and pupils write extended pieces of writing on subjects such as Greek Heroes. The subject also contributes to pupils' personal and social development through opportunities to reflect on issues of poverty and homelessness.

116. The coordinator gives a sound lead in the subject and has a clear development plan that includes the development of a 'levelled' portfolio of pupils' work. Planning is based on national guidance, which gives good coverage of the subject and includes a range of visits and visitors to the school; and teachers regularly assess pupils' work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

117. Since the last full inspection in 1998, there has been a substantial improvement in both provision for and attainment in ICT. Throughout the school pupils are learning well and making good progress. Attainment is building as pupils move from class to class and in the younger classes, in Key Stage 1 and the younger juniors, attainment is now average. However, although the 11 year olds have made similar good progress in a very short time, they have had insufficient time to reach the demanding standards expected for their age. Given the present and planned provision for ICT in the school, and the drive and energy of the leadership, it is anticipated that attainment of 11 year olds will rise in future.

118. This is very good improvement on the last full inspection which said 'In Key Stage 1 pupils make unsatisfactory progress and attainment is below average; in Key Stage 2 progress is poor and attainment is well below average.' Nearly all the issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed. The school, through its Governors and Headteacher, has made a major investment in successfully improving the ICT resources and further improvements in curriculum, planning, teaching and leadership have had a very positive impact on the development of the subject. However the school recognises that, despite this investment and the improvements made, present resources fall short of current recommendations. Plans to provide a new, fully networked computer suite will allow the 15 computers presently in the suite to be redistributed around the school and so address the shortfall in provision.

119. As pupils move through the school they successfully refine and build on their ICT skills. In Reception, they learn to use a mouse to select items on a screen, such as teddy's clothes. Pupils in Year 1 are able to select text from a word bank, change the size of a given text and give instructions to a programmable toy, roamer, to move around the room. The oldest infants use

Colour Magic to draw Katie Morag's island and then give instructions to roamer to move around the island on screen. Pupils in Year 3 are beginning to collect and store information in an organised way by setting up and using a database. They define the fields and input information relevant to those fields. In Year 4, pupils use their computing skills to write a report based on their extended writing on fairytales from the literacy hour. Pupils use Talking First Word and import WordArt and put it into text boxes. In Year 5 pupils use a simple spreadsheet to total a series of figures. By the age of 11 pupils can control logo to draw a variety of regular shapes, such as pentagons and octagons, and begin writing simple programs by teaching the computer how to draw the shapes. Year 6 pupils send and receive e-mails, for example to correspond with a class in New Zealand.

120. Pupils are achieving well, are enthusiastic and concentrate hard during IT sessions. They work well independently and show initiative and resourcefulness in dealing with any difficulties that arise. Most explain the purpose of their task and are happy to make suggestions or volunteer answers. Occasionally poor behaviour by a few slows the pace of learning for the rest. Sometimes this is a direct result of lack of challenge in the work provided.

121. Overall teaching of ICT is good. Of the lessons observed most were good but one lesson was unsatisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is nearly always satisfactory and in many instances good, strengthened by the focused training. This is an improvement on the last full Ofsted inspection which said low expectation was due to 'weaknesses in teacher expertise'. Lesson planning based on the school scheme is clear, with specific learning outcomes well identified. In the lessons where teaching was good, concise explanations were provided leading to challenging work. In the lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory the teacher's subject knowledge was not secure and insufficient challenge was provided for the range of abilities leading to some restlessness among the pupils. As a result learning was slow. During the initial teaching input, when all the children are clustered around one monitor, it is often quite difficult for the children to see the screen well enough. The provision of a projector to show the monitor's enlarged image onto a screen would help all the class to see comfortably.

122. Resources for ICT are much improved, but by present day expectations are only satisfactory. Classes have weekly time-tabled slots in the computer suite, which includes 15 computers. In addition there is one computer in each classroom to support learning in other subjects as well as ICT. Each of the computers in the suite has Internet access and although this resource is well used by pupils to access information, at present they have limited opportunities to send and receive e-mails. The school hopes to remedy this situation once all the children have their own individual e-mail address. The school has two control boxes, two digital cameras and two scanners. This year the school has developed its own web site and is aware that this will need improving over time and also recognises that the resources for both simulation and modelling need to be strengthened. A weekly computer club and lunchtime clubs further enrich the provision.

123. ICT is well led by a suitably qualified subject manager, who is committed to developing the subject. She has strong subject knowledge and provides very good support to her colleagues. As well as being a nationally recognised trainer she has also obtained the RSA Certificate and Diploma in teaching primary ICT. Since the last inspection the school has adopted and phased in the introduction of the national scheme of work at a level appropriate to the skills of the children. This covers all strands of the National Curriculum Programme of Study and identifies a suitable progression of computer skills to be covered by each year group. This is already helping to raise standards. Good cross-curricular links have been established with other subjects, for example last year in design technology, the oldest pupils made moving fairground rides, using control technology to run them. Computers are also used to find books in the school and to log books in and out of the library.

124. Work is regularly scrutinised and teaching observed. Lesson plans are monitored and the subject manager keeps a portfolio of pupils' work matched to National Curriculum levels. Assessment arrangements are good. The school uses a levelling document to assess pupils' attainment against level descriptors and has set itself the target of 85% of 11 year olds achieving level 4 and above, and 90% of 7-year-olds achieving level 2 and above.



## MUSIC

125. In 1998, 'very little music took place during the inspection', there was 'no whole school singing in assemblies or other occasions', and no 'provision for the peripatetic teaching of music nor for extra-curricular clubs.' In short, hardly any music was going on, staff confidence was very low and pupils' standards poor. Since then the school has invested a great deal of time, effort and precious funding to put things right. A structured music programme is being taught throughout the school with half the classes being taught by a part-time music specialist and the other half by class teachers after observing the parallel lesson being taken by the specialist. A music room has been set up in a spare classroom for these lessons to take place collecting together all the school's music resources. More than 20 pupils are joining in with ensemble work with the Musician in Residence from the local church, most of whom are learning orchestral instruments in school with peripatetic teachers. Singing in assemblies and collective worship is confident, enthusiastic and tuneful and the school choir takes part in local festivals. This represents a massive improvement in provision and standards but pupils in the older classes missed out on music in their early years in school so, although they are making good progress, absolute standards in the older classes are still lower than in most schools.

126. Boys and girls in year two however, are up to speed which they demonstrated in a lesson taken by the specialist teacher. As in all lessons, they sat round in a circle containing a selection of instruments and joined in confidently with the chorus of a song about a train learned the previous week. Continuing the train theme, pupils then worked in groups to make different train sounds, listened together to 'Winter Bonfire' (Russian train music) identifying instruments. They then used chosen percussion instruments to keep a steady beat and make it faster, slower, louder and softer. Throughout, pupils were kept interested and involved by the teacher's confident delivery, assured control and generous praise for pupils' attempts.

127. Good progression in expectations was observed in lessons in Years 4,5 and 6. In Year 4, pupils were asked to build up complex rhythms in 6/8 time using a range of percussion instruments. A good feature of this lesson was the fact that it related both to the current history topic, the Victorians, and to mathematics through fractions. When playing together, pupils were very intent and concentrated with 'wood blocks' playing on the beat, drums playing the first and fourth beats, and tambours playing the first, third, fourth and sixth. Year five build on previous work on 'London's Burning' involving a drone and ostinato moving on to constructing chords using thirds. With good class management ensuring that all pupils had a regular 'go' at playing, a lively class stayed focused and busy despite all the possible distractions. Most pupils showed that they could hear the major chord as a pleasant sound.

128. In a good example of a class teacher taking a lesson after watching the music specialist, a year six teacher built on previous work to construct an accompaniment to 'Portsmouth' by Mike Oldfield. By frequently moving the instruments around the circle, pupils had a variety of opportunities to play different parts of the accompaniment in turn. As they did, performance levels improved and with the teacher giving sharp, aware instructions and coaching, pupils' enjoyment and involvement increased. However, actual performance levels were below those seen in many similar schools.

129. A key element of the current teaching arrangement is the in-service training that class teachers are receiving by observing and modelling their teaching on good practice. This is helping to ensure that the hiatus that followed the loss of a music specialist prior to the last inspection will not happen again and that all teachers can contribute to their pupils' musical education. Music has been well led and managed and real sustainable improvements made.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. Although only lessons in games, gymnastics and dance were observed during the week of the inspection, evidence from teachers' planning and discussion with pupils shows that boys and girls now take part in all aspects of the physical education (PE) curriculum. This is an improvement on the last full inspection (1998) when 'pupils did not receive their full entitlement to

all the programme of study'. The deficiency in the provision of swimming in the juniors has been fully addressed. The school has worked hard to overcome the inherent difficulties in accommodation but the problems encountered in teaching in such 'cramped' conditions, along with the deficiencies in equipment, resources and curriculum planning in the past, have had a negative impact on teaching and learning. As a result, although pupils are making good progress throughout the school and boys and girls in the infants and younger juniors are achieving expected levels, pupils in the older classes are still catching up with work missed in previous years and standards in some areas of the curriculum are below those seen in most schools. For example, in a Year 6 gymnastic lesson, although pupils tried really hard the quality and range of their movements were fairly basic, restricting their overall performance level.

131. In a gymnastic lesson, Year 2 pupils recognise that exercise can make you strong and healthy and are able to perform a variety of rolls appropriate to the task. Younger junior pupils demonstrate their ability to control a ball using hands, feet, bats and racquets. In a dance lesson, Year 3 pupils move in time to music showing good appreciation of rhythm while focusing on the quality of their movements. Year 4 pupils work in pairs to produce good sequences including matching balances. Older juniors attempt to be imaginative and creative when performing their movement on the apparatus in gymnastics.

132. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Nearly all participate fully and enjoy the opportunity to take part in physical activity. They work hard and show obvious pleasure during their PE lessons. Usually, pupils enter the hall in good order, quickly become engaged in purposeful activities and respond vigorously to warm-up exercises. Behaviour is almost always good, although in the Year 2 class observed the behaviour of a few slowed the pace of learning. Pupils share the use of apparatus fairly and co-operate well in team games. Pupils learn well and make the best use of the limited space in the cramped and noisy hall but opportunities for vigorous movement are severely limited by its size.

133. Teaching of PE is good. Pupils are encouraged to improve and refine skills at a good pace and with suitable expectations of their performances. Lessons have appropriate challenge and enable pupils to consolidate and extend their previous ideas and experience. A good feature of most lessons is the use of demonstration to share pupils' work and to illustrate where the work is good or, indeed, needs improving. In this way pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and other pupils' performance. Teachers use language specific to PE when talking about the pupils' work. Where the teaching is good, the lesson is well structured and has a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to practise and explore movements, demonstration is used effectively and the lesson moves along at a good pace.

134. All six areas of activities identified in the National Curriculum are now covered. Additionally the school provides a good range of extra curricular activities at different times through the year including gymnastics, football, netball, cricket, rounders, athletics, hockey and aerobics. The school's football, rugby and cricket teams participate fully and successfully in local tournaments and competitions. The oldest children have the opportunity to participate in some additional sporting activities during the residential school trip to Osmington Bay. All children have equal access to the subject including those with special educational needs.

135. The subject manager is fairly new to the post and is keen to further develop the subject, particularly by integrating TOPS dance and outdoor and adventurous activities into the curriculum. Accommodation for PE is unsatisfactory. The school has a spacious grass area across the road and a large hard area adjacent to the school, which, despite the lost time going to and from the field, are more than sufficient. However the hall is very small, poor acoustically and has classrooms immediately next to it. Inevitably there are times when pupils need to pass through the hall interrupting teaching. At lunchtime it is the main dining area and though the school makes light of these difficulties, it is clear the problems inherent in the building have a negative impact on learning. The provision of good quality fixed PE apparatus in the hall has greatly improved pupils' learning opportunities. Otherwise resources for PE are generally satisfactory, although some of the 'consumable' resources need replacing. The new outdoor climbing apparatus on the playground is of high quality and is very well used during playtimes and lunchtimes.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

136. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress in their learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection in 1996, when standards had dropped and progress was unsatisfactory.

137. By the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to have a clearer awareness of the beliefs of two of the world's major religions. For example, pupils in Year 1 know how a Muslim family will celebrate the birth of a baby in their family. They know some of the other significant religious celebrations associated with Islam through stories about Ahmed, a Muslim boy. In Year 2, pupils understand that Muhammad is a very special person to Muslims and reflect on why he is so important to them. They also know some of the important stories for Christians, taken from the bible and the significance of Christmas and Easter to them. They can sequence the events of the last supper that Jesus had with his disciples. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are beginning to compare the religious beliefs of others with those of their own satisfactorily.

138. Year 6 pupils know and understand in more detail, the practices and beliefs associated with Christianity, Judaism and Islam. For example, in Year 3 pupils discuss what gift they would give to baby Jesus and the significance of the celebrations of Shabbat to Jewish people. They also sequence events that took place, prior to the death of Jesus on the cross. In Year 4, pupils think about rules to keep themselves safe both at home and in school linking them to the Ten Commandments. They reflect sensibly on the passing of time and what it means to them. In Year 5, pupils investigate the main religious features of rituals related to birth and death in Judaism and Islam. They compare the Creation story from the bible with one from the Viking culture. Year 6 pupils use selected extracts from the New Testament to give facts and opinions about Jesus. Some pupils decided that Jesus was 'a miracle maker' while others suggested 'the Son of God'. Many pupils are able, by the end of Year 6, to make satisfactory comparisons between religions and are able to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others.

139. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This has improved significantly since the last inspection. Lessons are appropriately planned using the school's scheme of work, which is based on the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved since the last inspection because of recent in-service training and support from the previous co-ordinator. Evidence from lesson observations indicates that teachers' subject knowledge is now more secure although some still lack confidence to teach religious education. Many teachers question skilfully both to promote discussions and to assess pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. Classroom management is satisfactory but the pace of lessons is often slow and as a result teachers sometimes struggle to keep pupils interested. Where teaching is good the teacher is confident, pace is good and questions are challenging. The teacher has a sensitive approach and values all pupils' contributions to discussions. This impacts well on learning and pupils achieve well.

140. Assessment procedures are being developed effectively to support teachers in their planning but assessment is not sufficiently linked to the targets in the locally agreed syllabus. Management is satisfactory. Effective monitoring by the headteacher has successfully identified training needs and as a result standards are improving. Resources are satisfactory. The good links with the local church and visits to the synagogue satisfactorily enhance pupils' learning.