

INSPECTION REPORT

THORNHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thornhill, Southampton

LEA area: Southampton

Unique reference number: 132117

Headteacher: Miss J Greethurst

Reporting inspector: David Westall
2414

Dates of inspection: 16 – 19 June 2003

Inspection number: 248901

Full 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 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Byron Road
Thornhill
Southampton
Postcode: SO19 6FH

Telephone number: 023 8044 9595

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Joan Humphris

Date of previous inspection: No previous inspection (the school was established in 2000).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2414	David Westall	Registered inspector	Science Art and design	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
3349	Jacqueline Ikin	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Foundation Stage	
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English Special educational needs	
30618	Paul Story	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
15666	Kath Oram	Team inspector	Religious education	
19302	Chris Perrett	Team inspector	Design and technology History	Attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

There are 385 pupils on roll, aged between four and 11 years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average, and three pupils speak English as an additional language. Well over half of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is well above the national average. Ten pupils have statements of special educational need, and these are supported by a Learning Difficulty Resource Unit at the school. Thornhill is an area of high socio-economic disadvantage which has been granted significant funds as part of the New Deal for Communities from central government. Pupils' overall standards on entry to the school are generally very poor.

The school was formed from the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools in 2000.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school, due to the impact of very effective leadership and management by the headteacher and the commitment and shared determination of staff to succeed. Pupils are making sound overall progress in English, mathematics and science, usually from very low starting points on entry to reception or from when the school opened in 2000. Very good support is provided for pupils with statements of special educational need by staff in the Learning Difficulty Resource Unit, and the school is a caring community where pupils' personal development is fostered effectively. Pupils now have sound attitudes to learning and the vast majority of pupils behave well at all times. There is still much to do, particularly to address weaknesses in a range of subjects, but the school is well placed to secure the necessary improvements. Overall, it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management skills of the headteacher are very good.
- Teaching is good in Year 2, and is often good in Years 3 and 5.
- The Learning Difficulty Resource Unit provides very good support for its pupils.
- Good provision is made for pupils' moral and social development, and relationships between pupils, and between teachers and pupils, are positive.
- The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority.

What could be improved

- Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in their learning in a range of subjects, and statutory requirements are not met in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' standards and progress require improvement in many subjects.
- The attendance rate is well below the national average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been no previous inspection of this school. However, evidence from discussions with governors, staff and parents suggests that behaviour had been a major problem at the

junior school, prior to amalgamation. Current behaviour in the school, including in Years 3 to 6, demonstrates the sound improvements which have been made.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E*	E*	E	B
mathematics	E	E	E	C
science	E*	E	D	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
in the lowest 5% nationally	E*

The table shows the results of Year 6 tests in 2002 were well below the national average in English and mathematics, and were below the national average in science. However, these results were above the average results of similar schools in English and science, and in line with their results in mathematics. Inspection findings show that current standards in Year 6 are well below national expectations in English, mathematics and science, partly due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the Year 6 classes but also to gaps in their learning from their earlier years of schooling. When all factors are considered, pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science represent satisfactory achievement for this relatively new school. However, pupils underachieve in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT and religious education in Year 6, and standards are too low in these subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Sound overall. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about school. Negative attitudes are occasionally evident from a minority of pupils, usually in Year 6, but these are reducing.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory, overall. In most lessons, and around the school, pupils behave well. However, despite the school's strong promotion of its behaviour policy, there are a few pupils who find acceptable behaviour hard to sustain.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are good. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for routine tasks and carry these out reliably.
Attendance	Attendance is well below the national average but is slowly improving due to the rigorous procedures the school has adopted.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 88 of the 93 lessons observed during the inspection. Good, and occasionally very good, teaching was evident in 42 lessons mainly in Years 2, 3 and 5. The most effective teaching is in Year 2, where it is good overall, and the least effective is in Year 4 where it is just adequate. The teaching is enabling pupils to make sound progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and these are the subjects the school has sensibly given the highest priority. However, in a number of other subjects, particularly in Years 3 to 6, the teaching is not enabling pupils to achieve as well as they should. This stems mainly from weaknesses in teachers' planning, which mean that pupils' key knowledge and skills are not progressively developed, and sometimes from deficiencies in teachers' confidence and expertise in the subjects. In addition, teachers do not use sufficiently rigorous procedures for assessing pupils' standards and future learning needs in these subjects, and this also has a negative impact on pupils' progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is a weakness in the school and results in pupils' underachievement in a range of subjects. While sound overall provision is made for English, mathematics and science, planning for most other subjects requires improvement. As a result, pupils are not acquiring key skills and knowledge systematically in these subjects as they move through the school. Statutory requirements are not met in ICT and religious education. The school provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education, and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall, the school makes sound provision for these pupils. However, the ten pupils who are supported by the Learning Difficulty Resource Unit benefit from very good provision.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' moral and social development, and sound provision for their spiritual and cultural development.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is a high priority. However, the school's procedures for assessing pupils' academic standards and progress need to improve in most subjects.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has very good leadership and management skills, and these have enabled the school to make significant progress from its low starting point in 2000. Her energy, clear thinking and positive approach have had a highly beneficial effect. This is reflected in parents' views of the school, in teamwork among staff and in the school's clear sense of direction. Through her rigorous procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, she keeps her finger firmly on the pulse of the school and is able to identify the next stages for its development. The acting deputy headteacher makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school, and the subject leaders for English and mathematics are particularly effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school benefits from a committed governing body which makes a sound contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good, overall. The results of the statutory tests are analysed carefully, and the headteacher carries out very regular observations of lessons and provides teachers with useful feedback. She also works alongside some teachers and gives them ideas through her own contribution to lessons. In addition, the headteacher has regular discussions with pupils about their work and attitudes. Subject managers are developing their monitoring roles. The managers for English and mathematics have good procedures for checking their subjects, while others are developing their monitoring procedures soundly.
The strategic use of resources	The budget is analysed carefully, and funds are appropriately prioritised to support initiatives identified in the school development plan. Overall, the school makes sound use of its resources, and appropriate account is taken of the principles of best value when spending decisions are made.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Most parents believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the school is improving;• the school is well led and managed;• the staff are easy to talk to;• the school expects children to work hard and do their best;• teaching is good and children make good progress.	<p>Some parents would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• homework to be set more consistently.

Inspection findings generally support parents' positive views but show that teaching and progress are satisfactory overall, rather than good. The school accepts that there is room for improvement in the consistency of setting of homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the school, most children have very poor communication, language and literacy, and mathematical skills. They lack confidence and imagination, have limited social skills and little knowledge and understanding of the world. In the reception classes, sound teaching enables children to make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning except in their creative development, which needs more emphasis in the curriculum. The teachers work hard to raise children's attainment but overall standards are still very low on entry to Year 1.
2. The results of the standard assessment tests (SATs) in Year 2, in 2002, were well below the national average in reading and writing. These results were in line with the average results of similar schools in reading but were below the results of similar schools in writing. In Year 6, the SATs results in English, in 2002, were well below the national average but were above the average results of similar schools. Inspection findings show that current standards in Year 2 are below national expectations in reading and well below expectations in writing. In Year 6, overall standards in English are well below national expectations. However, pupils are making sound overall progress in relation to their very low starting points, and they often achieve well in Years 2, 3 and 5 as a result of the effective teaching they now receive. The high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties contributes to the low standards currently evident in Year 6, but evidence suggests that gaps in their learning in their earlier years of schooling have also had a significant effect, including on their confidence.
3. In mathematics, the SATs results in Years 2 and 6, in 2002, were well below the national average but were in line with the results of similar schools. Inspection findings reflect these results, and show that current standards are well below national expectations in Years 2 and 6. However, pupils are making satisfactory progress in mathematics, and standards are gradually rising as a result of the sound implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils are now motivated to learn, and are achieving well in Years 2, 3 and 5 where the teaching is good.
4. In science, the results of teacher assessments in Year 2, in 2002, were in the lowest five per cent nationally in relation to the percentage reaching the expected standard, and they were well below the average results of similar schools. In Year 6, in 2002, the science results were well below the national average but were above the average results of similar schools. Inspection findings show that pupils' achievement in science is satisfactory overall, given their very weak knowledge and understanding on entry to Year 1, and results from the sound teaching pupils generally receive. The best progress is made by pupils in Year 2, where the teaching is particularly effective, while slow and inadequate progress is made by pupils in Year 4, where teachers' expectations are too low. Overall standards are below national expectations in Year 2 and well below national expectations in Year 6. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are restricted by the high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties in the classes as well as by weaknesses in their educational experiences in their earlier years. In lessons observed in Year 2 during the inspection, pupils achieved well when learning about forces, and an analysis of their completed work shows they are making good progress over time. In Year 6, pupils' books and lesson observations show they are now making sound progress but will not make up for earlier lost ground. Their

knowledge and understanding of a significant range of scientific information remains limited, and their investigation skills are weak.

5. In ICT, standards are below average in Years 2 and 6, largely because key skills were not taught systematically until the current educational year. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in their ICT lessons but much of the time is taken up with the need to address gaps in their knowledge. While a computer suite is now established, there are no computers in classrooms and this restricts pupils' achievement.
6. Standards are in line with national expectations in art and design, design and technology and music in Year 2, and in physical education across the school, and represent mainly sound but sometimes good achievement. In music, in Year 6, although standards are below average, they represent satisfactory achievement, given pupils' starting points. However, in history, geography and religious education, across the school, and in art and design and design and technology in Years 3 to 6, pupils should be doing better. Standards are below expectations in these subjects mainly due to weaknesses in teachers' planning, which mean that key skills and knowledge are not developed systematically, and sometimes because teachers need to raise their expectations of pupils' potential achievement.
7. In common with other pupils, pupils with special educational needs and the very few for whom English is an additional language make mainly satisfactory progress in mainstream classes during their time in the school. Many pupils who have learning difficulties also have associated emotional and behavioural needs and are not able to sustain best progress or build systematically on previous learning. As a consequence, there are fluctuations in their attainment and progress both in regard to work related to the National Curriculum and to the targets outlined in their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are satisfactory, overall, but have improved significantly in recent times. However, pupils' attendance, although much improved, is still well below the national average. The school has invested much time and effort in the management of behaviour, and this and good relationships both play a significant part in the improving attitudes, behaviour and relationships throughout the school. Although there are still a large number of exclusions from school, the vast majority from Year 6, these are reducing as a result of the effective procedures in place for dealing with conflict.
9. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are generally enthusiastic about school life. The parents say that the school promotes caring attitudes with lots of interaction between the older and younger pupils. Parents also commented on the good way pupils were helped to develop their social skills, and the constructive help that staff give them to solve any problems. This is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Talking to Year 6 pupils revealed that they thought the caring way teachers listened to them and helped them resolve their problems was a major factor in their improving attitudes. Pupils respond well to any efforts teachers make to raise their self-esteem. For example, in a Year 6 class, the teacher constantly reassured pupils that they were capable of completing the task, and praised their efforts so that eventually they all achieved success. During singing practice in Years 1 and 2, the pupils sustained very good concentration and, as a result of the enthusiastic approach of the teachers, sang and played instruments with pride. They listen very attentively to stories in literacy sessions, because the teachers read aloud to them well and with good expression. However, there are many pupils who appear tired and find concentrating in whole class

sessions difficult. On occasions, teachers have to work hard to cope with the negative attitudes presented by a small minority of pupils who have low concentration spans and are unwilling to listen to others. Educational support assistants ably provide good consistent academic, emotional and behavioural support, and assist teachers very well.

10. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. In the dining hall, and during morning and lunch breaks it is generally good. In these situations, there are good levels of effective adult supervision. All staff apply the good procedures outlined in the behaviour policy consistently, thus ensuring a successful approach to behaviour management, even with the most difficult pupils. In most lessons, pupils also behave well. There are, however, a minority of pupils, particularly in Year 6 and Year 4, who have underdeveloped social skills and find acceptable behaviour hard to sustain.
11. Appropriate emphasis is placed on pupils' personal and social development throughout the school. As a result, pupils are developing an understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils use a circle of friends to help them see the other point of view, and social issues are discussed in personal and social education lessons. Pupils enjoy carrying out routine jobs and older pupils help in the playground by putting out and clearing away apparatus, and assist in the office during lunch times.
12. Relationships are good. Pupils feel secure and valued, and this has a positive impact on their enthusiasm for school. Parents feel that the school displays mutual respect for all members of its community, and staff listen well to pupils to enable them to have a chance to explain their difficulties. The pupils interviewed painted very glowing pictures of how much the staff were appreciated.
13. Levels of attendance are well below national average and unauthorised absences are above national average, but both are slowly beginning to improve. Nearly all pupils arrive in good time for lessons at the start of the day and in some classes teachers make very good use of registration time by using self-registration procedures.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 88 of the 93 lessons observed during the inspection. Good, and occasionally very good, teaching was evident in 42 lessons, mainly in Years 2, 3 and 5. The most effective teaching is in Year 2, where it is good overall, and the least effective is in Year 4 where it is just adequate. The teaching is enabling pupils to make sound progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and these are the subjects the school has sensibly given the highest priority. However, in a number of other subjects, particularly in Years 3 to 6, the teaching is not enabling pupils to achieve as well as they should. This stems mainly from weaknesses in teachers' planning, which mean that pupils' key knowledge and skills are not progressively developed, and sometimes from deficiencies in teachers' confidence and expertise in the subjects. In addition, teachers do not use sufficiently rigorous procedures for assessing pupils' standards and future learning needs in these subjects, and this also has a negative impact on pupils' progress.
15. In the reception classes, the teaching is satisfactory overall but there is also evidence of some good teaching, particularly in relation to the development of children's communication, language and literacy skills. However, teachers need to provide more opportunities to promote children's creative development, and to help them to take responsibility and make choices.

16. In English, the teaching is satisfactory overall but is often good in Years 2, 3 and 5. As a result, pupils are making mainly sound progress in the subject and sometimes achieve well in lessons. Teachers' planning is generally effective, and pupils benefit from well-informed guidance in the best English lessons. On occasions, however, there are weaknesses in teachers' use of questions, and pupils require more focused feedback to help them to understand how to improve.
17. In mathematics, the teaching is satisfactory overall but is variable. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in Years 1 and 4, while the teaching was consistently good in Year 2 and sometimes good in Years 3, 5 and 6. A strength often evident in the mathematics teaching is the range of methods teachers use to capture pupils' interest. For example, in Year 2, the teacher became Mrs Wobble the waitress, over-filled her teacups and spilled water over the pupils. This immediately captured their attention and helped them to see the purpose of being able to measure capacity accurately. The teacher then gave a very good demonstration of how to measure using litres and millilitres, and provided opportunities for pupils to measure capacity for themselves. Unsatisfactory mathematics teaching is evident when there is a lack of clarity in explanations and tasks are not sufficiently matched to pupils' learning needs. Taken as a whole, the teaching enables pupils to make sound progress in mathematics.
18. In science, the teaching is also satisfactory and results in pupils making mainly sound progress in their learning. In the most effective lessons, in Year 2, teachers have good subject knowledge, use skilful questions to probe pupils' understanding, and ensure that pupils use the correct scientific language in discussions. In Year 4, however, scientific vocabulary is introduced but is not sufficiently reinforced, and questions need to be used more effectively to judge pupils' grasp of ideas. Although teachers' planning for the subject is broadly adequate, there is scope for improvement since the scheme of work is not always used well to guide the work which is set and some tasks are not well matched to pupils' learning needs. In ICT, the teaching is satisfactory overall, and is sometimes good. However, much of the teaching time is taken to rectify gaps which have occurred in pupils' learning earlier in their schooling, and the lack of computers in classrooms also restricts their progress.
19. The teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning in Years 1 and 2 in art and design and design and technology. In music, good teaching is evident in Years 1 and 2, while teaching in Years 3 to 6 means pupils make sound progress. However, the teaching is not enabling pupils to do as well as they should in history, geography and religious education, across the school, and in art and design and design and technology in Years 3 to 6. Although there are sometimes weaknesses in teachers' knowledge in these subjects which restrict pupils' achievement, the key reason for the unsatisfactory progress made in these subjects stems from deficiencies in planning.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes is at its most effective during literacy lessons when pupils benefit from additional adult support within the classroom, or when some of the pupils are able to join a small group to work with the teacher in the Learning Difficulty Resource Unit. On most occasions, class teachers or learning support assistants in mainstream classes support these pupils effectively on tasks related to the National Curriculum or to the National Literacy Strategy. However, evidence shows that mainstream staff are not always fully aware of the individual targets outlined in pupils' individual education plans, and some of their learning needs are therefore not always addressed systematically. Furthermore, there is variation in the quality of pupils' individual education plans, some of which do not set out targets which are sufficiently precise or challenging. Pupils with emotional and

behavioural needs benefit from the special provision offered by learning support assistants qualified in emotional literacy, and also, on some occasions, from support within the Resource Unit. In both these contexts, they are given good quality support which helps them to manage their own behaviour and resume their learning within mainstream classes. There are three pupils who speak English as an additional language and one in the early stages of English language acquisition. These pupils cope well in mainstream classes, receive additional support each week from a teacher employed by Southampton Education Authority, and make satisfactory progress.

21. Across the school, lessons are characterised by positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Teachers have secure classroom management techniques, usually identify clear learning intentions for their lessons and ensure pupils are aware of these objectives. However, individual lessons do not always form part of a coherent series of lessons to promote pupils' learning in some subjects. In the best lessons, very effective use of questions is made to check pupils' understanding, and teachers have good knowledge of the subject they are teaching. The quality of teachers' marking is too variable across the school, and marking often provides pupils with little guidance about how to improve. In addition, teachers need to ensure that homework is set more consistently in order to benefit pupils' learning.

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

22. Children in the reception classes are provided with a curriculum that is planned satisfactorily to reflect the areas identified for learning in national guidance for this age group. It places suitable emphasis on the numeracy and literacy goals. However, there are insufficient opportunities for reception children to develop learning through creative play. The prescribed nature of many tasks does not often allow children the opportunity to make their own choices or develop independence as learners. The limitations of the outside play area further restrict this process.
23. Overall, the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 has sufficient breadth but lacks balance. Sufficient time is allocated for literacy and numeracy, and this time is soundly utilised so that pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning in English and mathematics. Effective use has been made of the literacy and numeracy strategies to provide medium term guidance for teachers' planning. This ensures pupils progressively develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in these subjects. However, there are weaknesses in the design of much of the rest of the curriculum that contribute to pupils' low levels of attainment. With the exception of music, physical education and, to a lesser extent, science, the topic approach that was adopted following the amalgamation of the schools has led to a dilution of planning for the sequential development of subject skills. It has also resulted in an imbalance in time allocations and lack of clarity about the key elements of subject knowledge. The school has a strong desire to make learning meaningful, exciting and relevant and has drawn on elements of national and local authority guidance. A mix and match approach to the selection of topic content, however, results in uneven coverage of subjects, and restricts pupils' achievement. In religious education and ICT, statutory requirements are not being met. Insufficient time is currently being allocated to religious education to ensure coverage of the expected programme of study in the locally agreed syllabus. Problems with resources means that ICT is not yet being used to support learning across the curriculum, and control and modelling are not yet features of the work planned for older pupils. The school has appropriately recognised the need to address these weaknesses and has plans to review the way in which the curriculum is planned and the guidance it provides for teachers in its documentation. It should ensure that

revisions contain detailed exposition of the essential elements of coverage for each subject and age group, expected levels of achievement and supportive guidance on possible methods of delivery.

24. There is a good commitment to equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils in the school's provision. Booster classes for literacy and numeracy and catch up programmes for literacy are being used to raise standards and improve pupils' access to the curriculum. Setting for numeracy and ability grouping in literacy help to cater for pupils of different abilities and support those with learning difficulties. All pupils have equal access to sport and out of class activities and those with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. In common with other pupils, those with special educational needs and the few for whom English is an additional language enjoy sound or better provision for literacy, numeracy and science, but make more spasmodic progress in most other subjects, due to weaknesses in planning.
25. Pupils' personal, social and health education has a high profile in the school, and appropriately covers sex and drugs education. Professional instructors, teachers and volunteers provide a good range of clubs and activities. These include the Breakfast Club, art and reading clubs, together with competitive sports and coaching in football, netball, basketball and cross-country running. There is an annual residential visit for Year 6 to France.
26. Good links with the local community, particularly as a result of the New Deals for Communities programme, are well used to support pupils' learning. Local shops donate items and the county cricket club provides coaching in cricket. Pupils also benefit from good links with other schools. Teachers from the local secondary school are working alongside teachers to raise standards in art and design and similar links are being explored to support work in physical education. Pupils regularly mix with others at sporting fixtures, and the school works closely with the partner secondary school to ensure that pupils' transfer to the next stage of their education is managed effectively.
27. The school makes sound provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, and good provision for their moral and social development.
28. The good relationships that exist between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves provide a sound foundation for pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies, links with the church and with members of the clergy provide regular opportunities for pupils to consider spiritual matters and to empathise with others. In a class assembly held during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were encouraged to reflect on the inspirational qualities of Joan of Arc and Martin Luther King, both of whom in their different ways stood up for their beliefs against tremendous odds. Shortly afterwards, pupils were given an opportunity to consider what they might do to change their own world for the better in some small way. Candles are lit during assemblies to create a focus and a sense of reverence, and hymns and songs are used to reinforce spiritual themes. In the wider curriculum, teachers are encouraged to seize appropriate moments to raise pupils' awareness of the wonders of the natural world. For example, during a woodland walk, pupils in Year 1 stood silently beneath a pine tree to listen to the cracking of the cones. Pupils in the same year group were also encouraged to marvel at the unique features of the hedgehog brought in by a visitor. Sometimes, however, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' understanding of the deeper meanings of life, and the teaching of religious education does not have a secure enough place in the curriculum.

29. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is effective and is reflected in the good behaviour of most pupils. A positive ethos is generated through the very caring attitudes modelled by the headteacher, the governors and the staff and is underpinned by the school's behaviour policy. This policy sets out clear guidance for the promotion of good behaviour and also for behaviour management, anger management and the raising of pupils' self-esteem. Two 'emotional literacy' support assistants (ELSAs) work effectively with some pupils on anger management, social skills and counselling and also play a useful role each lunchtime by leading co-operative play activities. Pupils with learning difficulties associated with emotional and behavioural needs are supported well, with behaviour plans and programmes for those who need them. Circle-time activities provide a forum for the promotion of good attitudes and behaviour and for bringing an end to any bullying or name calling. 'Circles of friends' give a few pupils much needed opportunities to sustain friendships. Recommended procedures and practices related to agreed systems of sanctions and rewards are applied consistently by all staff and are having a significant impact, not only on pupils' behaviour, but also on their developing understanding of social responsibility. Older pupils are further encouraged towards social responsibility by taking an active role in the running of the school, for example, by showing visitors round and by manning the main school office at lunchtime, while younger pupils take responsibility for jobs related to the smooth running of classrooms. During lessons, pupils are encouraged to work together whenever possible, and further opportunities for social interaction are provided through clubs, extra-curricular team sports, visits and links with the wider community, for example, through concerts and through the activities of the school choir.
30. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' cultural development. Pupils are taught about their own cultural heritage and, to a limited extent, also about other cultures, in geography, history, English, art and music, during assemblies and in religious education lessons. For example, the texts used in English show pupils examples of good quality literature by contemporary writers and by authors and poets from the past. In art, a gallery of paintings on loan from the City Art Gallery presents pupils with images of the sea by adult artists, while pupils in Year 5 explored a painting by Van Gogh and responded to it by painting in a similar style. In music, pupils learn about instruments from different countries and cultures and listen to many different kinds of music. Some pupils learn the art of African drumming from visiting musicians, while the school choir is a mainstay of school concerts and community events. Pupils in Year 5 learn about the Aztec civilisation in history, while pupils in Year 1 learn about life in a Masai village in Africa through the adventures of 'Barnaby Bear'. However, although there are clearly some examples of good work designed to promote pupils' cultural development and to prepare them for life in a multicultural society, many opportunities are missed. This is because some key subjects such as geography, history, art and religious education are not securely embedded in the curriculum or do not receive sufficient curriculum coverage across the school as a whole.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. Thornhill is a school where there is a clear understanding that pupils' ability to concentrate and learn depends on them feeling secure and valued. Consequently, the school places a high priority on providing sensitive and well-directed support for its pupils. This is particularly evident in the very good provision given by the ELSAs. They have become trusted members of the community to whom all pupils feel confident in talking about concerns at school or at home, and their planned programme of support, to develop social skills and anger management, is addressing the barriers to learning that some pupils experience. All adults in the school are good role models in their relationship with pupils and treat them with respect, encouraging them and nurturing

their self-esteem. Learning support staff are well briefed about pupils' needs in lessons and liaise effectively with the other pastoral care staff to promote a consistency in their practice. Lunchtime support staff are sensitive and caring in carrying out their duties, and the presence of the ELSAs on playgrounds encourages children to play happily with each other. Their availability to act as mediators in disagreements ensures that upsets are promptly dealt with, bullying is minimal and pupils do not brood on their worries when they are in afternoon lessons.

32. Arrangements for child protection are well established and all adults in the school are aware of the required procedures to report and record any concerns. Because the time taken up with attendance at case conferences is substantial, the headteacher is wisely involving other trained staff to deputise for her when necessary. Care is taken to ensure that all adults who might come into contact with pupils on the school site, or on visits, are properly vetted. The teacher specifically designated to look after the interests of pupils not living with a natural parent has appropriate training and carries out her duties assiduously. The popular before school Breakfast Club serves the needs of those parents who may have work commitments, and ensures pupils have a good start to the day.
33. The school takes every opportunity to promote the importance of good attendance and this is beginning to have an impact on those pupils whose attendance regularity is unsatisfactory. Parents are always contacted during the first morning of absence if no notification has been received, and parents are then reminded of their obligations to keep the school informed if their children are unable to come to school because of sickness. This good practice not only stresses the value of good attendance but also gives the school the opportunity to check whether there are other concerns relating to pupils. The computerised registration system is well used to monitor attendance, and the staff work closely with the education welfare officer to follow up those families where there is significant cause for concern. Individual attendance targets are set and praise given where these are achieved. Pupils are keen to win the weekly award for the best attending year group, announced in the celebration assembly. Pupils arriving late are appropriately recorded and punctuality is also now improving. Although attendance levels are still well below national average, this comprehensive package of arrangements is steadily having an impact and is helping parents to appreciate the importance of their children not missing schooling unnecessarily.
34. The school makes good provision for personal, health and social education, being particularly careful to cover aspects that might have particular relevance to pupils' own circumstances. Coverage of drugs and sex and relationship education are sound, and road, rail and water safety are regular included. Good use is made of outside visitors such as the community police and the school nurse to support these programmes. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss aspects concerning their personal development and feelings; this helps them articulate any worries and learn about the views and feelings of others. During the inspection, girls in the oldest year group, who are significantly outnumbered by boys, had special lessons designed to develop their confidence and self image. This should help them to transfer to secondary school with more confidence in their own capabilities.
35. There are sound procedures to introduce new children and their parents to school, allowing for a gradual build-up to full-time attendance during the first term. The useful home visit to each family before the child starts not only enables good relations to be established with the parents, but also enables any particular needs to be shared and suitable support for pupils to be planned.

36. There are very clear and effective procedures in place to encourage high standards of behaviour and these are consistently practised across the school. Consequently, pupils know what is expected of them and the vast majority are keen to try their best. Their efforts are recognised and praised in the weekly celebration assembly. The exclusion rate is falling but is still high, the majority involving pupils in the oldest class where a significant proportion have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Strategies such as individual behaviour plans and planned withdrawals from lessons for additional ELSA support are well managed and combine well with the sensitive pastoral support given to those with difficult home circumstances. Incidents of bullying in school are not common and are quickly reported, because pupils are confident that their concerns will be listened to and dealt with effectively. Consequently, school is seen as a safe and caring environment where pupils can build up positive relationships and develop feelings of self-worth.
37. The school has satisfactory procedures for accidents, emergencies and medicines and maintains appropriate supporting documentation. Parents are always informed if their child suffers any accidental injury during the day. Regular fire practices are carried out to ensure speedy evacuation from the school but fire exit signage needs to be increased in the older part of the buildings. The health and safety policy is implemented through day-to-day monitoring by the site manager and there are termly checks by staff. However, recent changes to the governing body mean that at present there is no governor involvement in these inspections. Risk assessments before visits are carefully completed and the school always ensures that there are plenty of adults to supervise pupils when they are off-site. The buildings are clean, tidy and reasonably well maintained.
38. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory overall. There are sound procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment in English and mathematics, but assessment in all other subjects is generally underdeveloped. The school is aware of the deficiencies, and has plans to address the weaknesses. Pupils are assessed in English, mathematics and science at the ages of seven and 11, in accordance with national requirements. In addition, pupils are regularly tested every half term in English and mathematics, and these results are used to set pupils targets to improve their work. These procedures are well established in English, so teachers have a clear picture of standards, and they provide useful information relating to the overall performance of the school and the progress made by individuals. Procedures in mathematics are newer, so there has been insufficient time for them to become embedded into current practice. Assessment in science has begun but there are no rigorous systems, in any other subject, to give teachers a clear picture of standards and to monitor pupils' progress. There are systems to check pupils' skill acquisition in ICT and physical education, which are helpful indicators as to what pupils can do, but these assessments are not linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and do not indicate the level at which pupils are working.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to build up an effective partnership with parents. Parents are unanimous in their view that the school is improving and praise the efforts of the headteacher and staff in fostering trust and confidence in the school. Parents' positive views of the school have a beneficial effect on their children's attitudes to learning.
40. Documentation about the school is clear and friendly, and gives a sound indication of its expectations on matters such as behaviour and homework. There is some information

about the curriculum in the school brochure and this is supplemented at the beginning of the year with details of the topics to be studied. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed about school activities and forthcoming events, and are written in a style that promotes the school and pupils' achievements in a positive way.

41. Parents have planned opportunities each term to discuss their children's progress, and attendance at these sessions is good. Parents also value the chance to talk to staff about matters of concern before or after school and find them easy to talk to. Annual written reports give sound indications of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics but reporting on other subjects is less specific.
42. Parents are supportive of the school and most help with their children's learning at home. A good number of parents come to the weekly handwriting session in reception to encourage their children. Some have recently completed a course, run by the local further education college, to promote literacy. Participants were very enthusiastic about the chance to learn alongside their children and to understand how the subject was taught. Its success is leading to further opportunities for parents to increase their own skills in areas such as ICT. These initiatives should serve to strengthen the partnership still further and ensure that children acquire a desire to learn from their parents' own involvement in learning.
43. The school works hard to establish a constructive working partnership with all the parents of pupils with special educational needs. The majority of the parents value the school's efforts on their children's behalf and do their best to help, for example by supporting them with work at home and by sharing approaches to the management of behaviour. The services of a translator/interpreter employed by the education authority have helped staff to establish good relationships and appropriate communication with the parents of the few pupils for whom English is an additional language.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The headteacher has very good leadership and management skills, and these have enabled the school to make significant progress from its low starting point since its creation in 2000. She took up her post to lead a new primary school which had been formed through the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools which shared the site but appeared to have limited communication with each other. Evidence from discussions with governors, staff and parents suggests that pupils' behaviour had been a major problem at the junior school and this presented an immediate challenge to staff in the new primary school. In addition, the very high turnover of staff experienced by the junior school continued in the first few terms in the primary school, where there were very few staff with experience in senior management or as subject leaders. The energy, clear thinking and positive approach of the headteacher have had a highly beneficial effect, and the school is now well focused and is providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. Behaviour is much improved, and is good in most lessons, and the staffing is more settled with teachers developing their skills in leading and managing areas of the curriculum. Parents have noticed the improvement in the school, and believe its reputation is growing. There is still much to be done but the clear sense of direction provided by the headteacher, which is reflected in the strong teamwork among staff and their shared commitment to common goals, means it is well placed to improve further.
45. A particular strength in the headteacher's leadership is her ability to maintain a balanced and positive approach, and to deal with issues in a wise and pragmatic manner. This helps everyone, including the pupils, to feel secure. The headteacher

leads not only through communicating her ideas very effectively through discussions with staff, parents and pupils, but also through the role model she provides as an effective teacher who clearly enjoys working with pupils. The headteacher's very good management skills are evident in her rigorous procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing the work of the school. She carries out very regular classroom observations, and provides teachers with useful feedback which recognises their achievement and identifies pertinent areas for development. She also works alongside some teachers and gives them ideas through her own contribution to the lessons. There is clear evidence that these procedures have had a beneficial effect on the quality of teaching in the school. The results of statutory tests are examined carefully, and the headteacher has regular discussions with pupils about their work and attitudes. All of the above help to ensure she keeps her finger firmly on the pulse of the school and is able to identify the next stages for its development.

46. The headteacher is fully aware that, while sound provision is now made for pupils' learning in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, weaknesses in some other subjects need to be addressed as the next priorities, and these are identified in the action plans of subject managers. All managers are enthusiastic about their subjects, provide useful guidance for their colleagues, and audit and organise resources carefully. They have benefited from well-focused support from the headteacher, including regular meetings, and from guidance from the local education authority. A considerable number of managers are still relatively new in their roles, and some need to develop more systematic procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. However, all have made a promising start, and the leadership and management of English, mathematics and music are particular strengths. The pertinent issues identified in the action plans of subject managers demonstrate their sound awareness of the strengths and areas for development, and augur well for further improvements. The acting deputy headteacher makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school, and is particularly effective in helping its day-to-day operation to run smoothly.
47. The school development plan is well organised and is a useful management tool. Individual initiatives are carefully planned, and include details about key objectives, those involved, timescales, costings, monitoring procedures and success criteria. The plan is properly focused on important priorities, and is having a beneficial effect on school improvement.
48. The school benefits from a committed governing body which makes a positive contribution to the life of the school. The chair of governors visits very regularly for meetings with the headteacher, to talk to teachers and pupils and to fulfil her role as governor with particular responsibility for special educational needs. The governor with responsibility for literacy has observed the literacy strategy in operation in the school, and has also taken the trouble to observe a 'leading literacy teacher' in another school to increase his awareness. He has discussed provision with the subject manager for English, is well informed, and recognises the improvements that have been made in recent terms. The numeracy governor has only recently taken on her role, and has yet to begin increasing her understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy in operation. The chair of governors and chair of the personnel and finance committee participated in a planning day with staff to discuss priorities for the current school development plan, and progress on its implementation is appropriately discussed at governors' meetings. The governors have a sound awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, have developed a good relationship with the headteacher, and are not afraid to ask probing questions to hold her to account. The school budget is analysed carefully, and the headteacher and governors take appropriate account of the principles of best

value when making spending decisions. Overall, the governors make a sound contribution to the leadership and management of the school, despite statutory requirements not being fully met due to weaknesses in the provision for ICT and for religious education.

49. There is a strong culture of inclusion throughout the school which is successfully put into practice by the use of specialist teaching and support for pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. Overall, the school makes sound provision for pupils with special educational needs. From a very low point when the new school opened in 2000, much has been done to set in place appropriate policies, procedures and practices and to ensure that the ongoing support for pupils enables them to make satisfactory progress in their learning. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) assumed responsibility for the overall day-to-day management of special needs provision in September 2000, and has subsequently benefited from ongoing support from advisory staff working for the authority's special needs inspectorate. With their help and with the continuing support of the headteacher, she is growing into her role and now has a good appreciation of what remains to be achieved. However, she retains only very limited documentary evidence of her own work and of provision related to individual pupils. Learning support assistants are deployed appropriately and make a good contribution to pupils' attainment and progress in lessons. Measures to assist the accurate identification of pupils with special educational needs are being introduced. For example, care is now taken to ensure that the special needs of pupils can be distinguished from more transitional learning difficulties associated with emotional and behavioural needs, and also from learning difficulties which arise primarily as a result of young pupils' lack of experience. Teachers have assumed responsibility for drawing up pupils' individual education plans in consultation with the SENCO. However, evidence shows that some plans do not fully reflect Code of Practice requirements, and some targets are vague rather than 'smart', as intended. There are sound arrangements for liaison with the parents of pupils with special educational needs, and constructive links with external agencies engaged in special needs work. Plans are now in hand for the SENCO to hold regular, more formal reviews of pupils' targets with key staff such as learning support assistants, the teacher attached to the Learning Difficulty Resource Unit and the ELSAs. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored satisfactorily through a tracking system in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, through standardised reading tests and through statutory and non-statutory national tests. However, more use could be made of the results of such assessments to plan work for these pupils, and also to inform the setting of group as well as individual targets.
50. Procedures for the performance management of staff are good and newly qualified teachers benefit from effective induction. There are sufficient teachers and, collectively, they have the expertise and experience to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. All have secure knowledge in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but some would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge and to raise their expectations of pupils' potential achievement in a range of other subjects. There is good provision of learning support staff and they make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. The office staff help the day-to-day organisation to run smoothly, and the caretaking staff ensure the building is kept in clean condition.
51. Overall, the school's accommodation is good. Classrooms provide sufficient space, and recent building work has enhanced the provision, including space for a computer suite. There is a good sized music room and very generous school grounds. However, the enclosed outside play area for reception children is small and uninviting.

Learning resources are satisfactory, overall, but, while there is a computer suite, there are no computers in classrooms and this restricts pupils' progress.

52. This is an improving school, due to the impact of very effective leadership and management by the headteacher and the commitment and shared determination of staff to succeed. Pupils are making sound overall progress in English, mathematics and science, usually from very low starting points on entry to reception or from when the school opened in 2000. Very good support is provided for pupils with statements of special educational need by staff in the Learning Difficulty Resource Unit, and the school is a caring community where pupils' personal development is fostered effectively. Pupils now have sound attitudes to learning and the vast majority of pupils behave well at all times. There is still much to do, particularly to address weaknesses in a range of subjects, but the school is well placed to secure the necessary improvements. Overall, it provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. In order to raise standards, the headteacher and governors should include the following issues in the school's post-inspection plan.
- (1) Ensure that pupils make better progress in their learning in art and design and design and technology in Years 3 to 6, and in geography, history and religious education in Years 1 to 6. This should be achieved by:
 - i. the implementation of improved planning for these subjects, so that pupils develop key skills and knowledge systematically as they move through the school;
 - ii. providing teachers with well-focused in-service training to raise their expectations of pupils' potential achievements, and to increase their subject knowledge;
 - iii. developing assessment procedures so that teachers can judge pupils' standards accurately, and can use the information to inform their planning;
 - iv. ensuring that sufficient time is allocated for religious education, so that statutory requirements are met.(see paragraphs 6,19,23,97,101,103,105,106,107,109,112,113,115,116,135,138)
 - (2) Ensure that pupils make more use of ICT to support their learning across the curriculum, and that statutory requirements are met by providing opportunities for control and modelling work. This will require improvements in planning and in resources. (see paragraphs 5,23,118,119,122)
 - (3) Continue to implement rigorous procedures to improve attendance.
(see paragraphs 13,33)
54. In addition to the key issues above, the headteacher and governors should consider the following, less important, issues for inclusion in the action plan:
- (1) ensure that more effective use is made of homework to support pupils' learning;
 - (2) provide more opportunities for reception children's creative development and for them to take responsibility and make choices;
 - (3) improve assessment procedures in science and ensure that the scheme of work is implemented more consistently so that pupils make less spasmodic progress.
- (see paragraphs 15,21,74,75,95)

THE LEARNING DIFFICULTY RESOURCE UNIT

55. The designated unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties provides very good support for ten pupils with statements of special educational needs. Through the expertise and very effective teaching skills of its teacher, it also makes a strong contribution to special needs provision and to the management of behaviour across the school as a whole.
56. Pupils with placements in the unit are fully integrated into mainstream classes. The teacher attached to the unit works closely with class teachers when they plan work for these pupils, and also devises suitably modified teaching plans for those lessons when the pupils return to the unit to work with her or with a learning support assistant. Most of the intensive support provided in this context is designed to improve pupils' literacy skills, although pupils in Year 4 also receive support for numeracy. Sometimes, by mutual agreement, class teachers and the unit teacher decide to reinforce learning in other subjects that pupils are finding difficult by creating a withdrawal group. Arrangements for teaching and learning are flexible, changing to accommodate pupils' identified needs and progress, but always with due regard for the principles of inclusion.
57. The teaching in the unit is very effective. The teacher has high expectations, a very good understanding of what each pupil needs to learn, and very good questioning skills. Pupils are made fully aware of their own targets and these, combined with highly structured activities, help them to make good progress during lessons. Skills and concepts are broken down into accessible steps by the teacher, and very effective use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning. For example, computer images provided visual cues to help pupils in Year 6 to recall significant events from the story of Joan of Arc, while a word-processing program allowed the teacher to record the pupils' version of the story, to question them closely about how it might be improved, and to address more routine matters such as sentence structure and punctuation. Feedback to pupils rightly commended their efforts and achievements, but also made sure they know what they need to work towards next.
58. The teacher who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the unit is very effective in her role. The pupils in her charge have individual education plans which are of good quality, with challenging but accessible targets. Pupils' progress is monitored closely. Good liaison between the teacher in the unit and other staff, including mainstream teachers and learning support assistants, ensures that provision for the pupils is coherent and promotes progression in their learning, most significantly in literacy. The unit is very well organised, with a wide selection of suitable resources, and ICT is used to good effect to maximise the impact of teaching and to secure progression in pupils' learning. The pupils in the unit whose learning difficulties are made more complex by emotional and behavioural needs are given appropriate support within a calm and purposeful learning environment. Where necessary, they have appropriate behaviour plans or programmes and benefit from access to behavioural support more widely available in the school, for example through the work of support assistants qualified in emotional literacy.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	93
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	10	32	43	5	0	0
Percentage	0	11	36	48	6	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

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)	n/a	385
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	164

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	221

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	28	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	23	27
	Girls	13	13	15
	Total	37	36	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (74)	75 (79)	88 (74)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	24	20
	Girls	14	12	11
	Total	37	36	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (78)	75 (80)	65 (76)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	38	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	23	30
	Girls	13	15	20
	Total	37	38	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (31)	64 (41)	85 (78)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	21	21
	Girls	10	12	12
	Total	28	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (31)	56 (40)	56 (55)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	359	41	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	12	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	440

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002-3
	£
Total income	1,069,950
Total expenditure	1,087,868
Expenditure per pupil	2,900
Balance brought forward from previous year	84,757
Balance carried forward to next year	66,304

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	23

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	377
Number of questionnaires returned	83

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	42	4	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	48	47	2	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	31	12	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	47	16	2	5
The teaching is good.	65	28	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	30	11	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	23	6	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	35	1	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	40	16	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	60	33	2	4	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	42	6	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	40	4	4	7

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

59. Children are admitted to the reception classes in the September of the school year in which they become five. There are good arrangements to introduce children and their parents to the school. These include visits to the children's own homes and opportunities for parents and children to visit the school and spend time in the reception classrooms. This builds positive links with parents at an early stage and helps children settle into school successfully.
60. The reception classes are housed in a large shared area in a new purpose built block. They have their own small, enclosed outdoor play area. However, it is bleak and uninviting, lacks any shelter from the sun and rain, provides insufficient opportunity for the large physical movement that young children need and little opportunity for exploration of the natural world.
61. Although a few children enter the school at the level expected for four-year-old children, the majority have very poor communication, language and literacy, and mathematical skills. Many lack confidence and imagination, have very little experience of the world around them and have underdeveloped physical skills.
62. The teaching that the children receive is satisfactory overall, although some good teaching was also seen in the course of the inspection. Teachers have to work hard to raise children's attainment from the very low levels on entry. The curriculum for children in the reception classes is satisfactory overall. There is an appropriate emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and planning for children's overall development is sound. However, there are not enough opportunities for creativity and for children to initiate and develop their learning through well-planned activities involving play and talk. The teaching assistants and the bilingual support assistant give satisfactory support to the children who need additional help and, as a result, they make sound progress because they are fully involved in lessons.
63. Procedures for assessment and keeping track of children's progress are satisfactory overall, although more needs to be done to assess children's learning during the course of practical activities.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. On entry to the school, many children are very unsure of themselves and have few social skills. By the time they leave the reception classes they are developing confidence and many are able to concentrate satisfactorily when their interest is engaged. However, their personal and social development is below the level expected because too many children are still over-dependent on adults to do things for them and they find it difficult to play together. This is partly because there are not enough opportunities for children to learn the skills of choice, responsibility and independent learning. In addition, many children do not have the language that they need for social interaction. For example, they do not know what to say when they want to share equipment in the outdoor area or when they wish to negotiate roles and responsibilities in the role-play area. When they enter the school many children do not yet know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The high expectations of behaviour that the teachers have of the children are consistently reinforced and, as a

result, the children learn the rules which make for harmonious groups and generally behave well.

Communication, language and literacy

65. Teaching in the reception classes gives appropriate emphasis to the development of children's communication, language and literacy skills. As a result of this, the children make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points on entry although the majority do not achieve the standards expected by the end of the reception year. Children do, however, enjoy listening to stories, which are often very well told. For example, one teacher told the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears with tremendous expression, often using props and involving the children to act out the main points. The children were totally engaged and listened with rapt attention, often predicting what would happen next and showing tremendous empathy for the feelings of the baby bear as he discovered that his porridge had been eaten and chair broken. As a result of these experiences, the children become interested in storybooks and readily share them with adults. Some are able to tell their versions of the stories using their emerging knowledge of words and clues from the illustrations. A few can read simple stories independently. Phonic skills are appropriately taught and this results in the children making good progress in linking the sounds that they hear to letters of the alphabet.
66. There is a wide range of opportunities for children to listen to adults and, although initially quite reticent, most gradually develop the confidence to answer questions and pass comments. There are fewer opportunities for the children to develop their spoken language through working and playing collaboratively with each other. By the end of the reception year, most children are beginning to use the correct words to name objects and can retell their experiences in simple terms when asked to do so. However, they have a limited vocabulary and many still have difficulty in pronouncing words correctly and speaking in grammatically correct sentences. Children's skills in using language for thinking are well below the level expected. They do not readily commentate on their own actions, and make little use of language to describe what they see, to create roles, develop their own stories and interact imaginatively.
67. The children are actively encouraged to make their own attempts at writing from an early stage. All their early attempts at making marks are valued and, as a result, the children gain an early understanding that print carries meaning and that writing can be used to record their personal ideas. They are formally taught how to form their letters correctly, and parents assist with this on a regular basis. However, many children do not transfer these skills when writing for different purposes and many are still at the emergent writing stage at the end of the reception year. Opportunities need to be developed to encourage children to write independently in the course of everyday activities, including play.

Mathematical development

68. As a result of the sound teaching they receive, children make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points on entry to the school, although the majority do not achieve the standards expected by the end of the reception year. However, higher attaining pupils confidently use numbers as labels and for counting, for example when playing number games. They make satisfactory use of the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting in practical activities, and use words such as 'more' or 'less' to compare numbers. They are also beginning to relate addition to combining two or more groups of objects, and subtraction to 'taking away'. The majority of children are

beginning to be aware that the last number in the count is the same as the number in the set, and are gaining a very early awareness of addition and subtraction through singing songs such as 'Ten Green Bottles', which they act out using large plastic bottles of water.

69. The higher attaining children begin to use simple mathematical language with confidence when talking about quantities, for example, 'more and less', when balancing lentils, and 'big and small' in relation to the size of the three bears. They demonstrate an awareness of the language of position, such as 'in front of' and 'behind' in the course of formal physical education lessons. Some can talk about and create simple patterns with adult guidance, for example, they have painted patterns on paper butterflies and folded them to make symmetrical patterns. Opportunities to make models from Lego and large blocks, as well as used cartons, contribute to children's understanding of three-dimensional shapes. Play activities that involve the use of sand and water are used appropriately to help develop children's learning about measures. However, there is a need to incorporate more opportunities for children to develop their mathematical ideas through play and talk and to help them to develop the language that they need to discuss their mathematical ideas.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. When children enter the reception class many have had little experience of the world about them and they have limited incentive to explore it. Teachers plan some very worthwhile formal experiences to help extend their knowledge. For example, the children have visited a farm where they saw cows being milked, fed a goat and were able to hold chicks. In addition, children have developed their knowledge of the natural world by planting bulbs, watering them and watching them grow. Children's knowledge of the physical and material world is developed through activities such as working with large magnets to see which objects are attracted to them, and selecting items from a range of materials with different textures, in the course of making mobiles. Children are beginning to become familiar with computers as a result of regular opportunities to use the computer suite, and are beginning to develop the skills they need to control images on screen. For example, they have drawn pictures of teddy bears using the programme 'Dazzle'. However, the lack of computers in the classroom limits the further development of this kind of work. Teaching ensures that children develop the skills that they need to use scissors correctly, although children find it very difficult to use glue sticks and are still learning simple techniques to fold and join materials. Teachers draw pupils' attention to the passing of time, for example, by comparing the differences between old and new toys, such as teddy bears.
71. Overall, however, children's knowledge and understanding of the world is weak at the end of the reception period. They are insufficiently skilled in identifying the features of the world about them, noting similarities and differences, and asking questions about why things happen.

Physical development

72. Satisfactory teaching ensures regular opportunities for children to take part in formal physical education lessons and this enables children to make satisfactory progress from their very low starting points on entry to the school. For example, by using small games equipment on the field children are taught how to throw and catch a ball and to develop their hand/eye co-ordination. Whilst working in the hall, children learn to move safely and develop an awareness of their own space and that of others. Although some opportunities are provided for children to ride bikes outdoors, the outdoor play area is

barely adequate in size and has not been developed to a sufficient extent. As a result, children do not get the regular opportunities they need to explore and refine their large-scale movements. For example, there are no safety surfaces to allow for climbing and no slopes for children to experience the differences that these make to their movements. This prevents the children from catching up on their physical development and many do not reach the standards expected by the end of the reception year.

73. There are opportunities for children to develop their manipulative skills when using construction toys and when drawing and cutting, for example. They are also taught how to hold pencils and scissors correctly and this supports their work in other areas of learning. However, more opportunities need to be provided to help children develop their physical dexterity in the course of learning through play.

Creative development

74. Many children find it hard to use their imagination when they enter the school. Some opportunities are provided for children to make up their own imaginative stories when using the role-play area, puppets and small representations of the real world. For example, the role play area is currently set up as the three bears' cottage. However, the children do not make the progress that they should in developing their own imaginative ideas and stories in the course of their work and play. There is, therefore, a need to extend provision so that they can develop their ability to visualise and think through their imaginative ideas and to practise their use of language in different situations.
75. When given the opportunity, children enjoy painting and drawing and, with encouragement, respond to opportunities to record what they see. For example, they have drawn chalk pictures of sea shells. However, more opportunities need to be provided for children to record their imaginative ideas through painting and through working with malleable materials such as clay and playdough.
76. The children readily join in with well-known songs, which they know by heart, and they sing with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Formal music lessons are used appropriately to help the children to express their imaginative ideas in response to the music that they hear. For example, one child said that the music 'Morning' from Pier Gynt, made him feel 'like a bird flying right up to the clouds'. Opportunities to move in different ways and to play simple percussion instruments develop a growing awareness of different musical patterns. Overall, however, children's creative development is well below average at the end of the reception period.

ENGLISH

77. The communication, language and literacy skills of most pupils entering Year 1 are very poor. In 2002, the school's results in the national tests in reading and writing for pupils aged seven were well below the national average. In reading, the results matched those of similar schools, but the results for writing were lower. In the national English tests for pupils aged 11 in 2002, the school's results were well below the national average. Nevertheless, the results for that year were the best ever achieved by pupils in Year 6 and showed an outstanding improvement on the results for the previous year. Overall, the results were better than those of similar schools. At the same time, the percentage of pupils whose results exceeded the expected standard for their age was not only in line with the national average, but was also well above the average results of similar schools. There has been no significant difference in the achievements of girls and boys over the last three years.

78. Inspection findings show that pupils of all ages make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Overall, the standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 are below average in reading and well below average in writing. In Year 6, standards are well below average in all aspects of English, although, following a trend which has emerged nationally, pupils tend to do better overall in reading than in writing. The school has a much higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties than is the norm. In the current Year 6 classes there are also significant numbers of pupils whose learning difficulties are made more complex by emotional and behavioural factors. As a consequence, many pupils lack confidence in their ability to learn, and their progress over time has been spasmodic, leaving them with many gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding. It is therefore not surprising that the school anticipates significantly lower results in the national tests in English for pupils aged 11 in 2003 than were achieved in 2002.
79. The few higher attaining pupils in each year group attain appropriate standards for their ages in speaking, listening, reading and writing. In the case of other pupils, irrespective of age, relative strengths and weaknesses in performance bear the same general characteristics. For example, most pupils listen attentively and have learned the social conventions associated with turn-taking. However, when responding to instructions or when answering questions, it is clear that they have not always fully understood what they have been told or what they have been asked to do. Most pupils enjoy talking informally, whether to their friends, to staff, or to visitors. They work co-operatively with others when invited to do so, and they talk in a constructive way about the tasks they are given, helping one another as best they can. They gradually develop the confidence to address larger groups than their own class, for example, through drama and in assemblies. However, few pupils find it easy to find the right words or to express their ideas clearly. Many pupils have a very weak general vocabulary and are largely unaware of the differences between their own spoken language and Standard English. They often struggle to get words in a 'right order' to convey their meaning. As is to be expected, weaknesses in pupils' spoken language also affect pupils' writing. For example, pupils often use inappropriate words and patterns of grammar from their spoken language when they write. Sometimes, they leave words out; sometimes, they repeat things they have already written; often, sentences are poorly constructed and extended pieces of writing have little coherence; and spelling and handwriting are weaker than they should be, most evidently in Year 6. From Year 1 onwards, pupils are taught - and progressively acquire - a suitably wide range of reading strategies for their respective ages and capabilities. By the ages of seven and 11, higher attaining pupils read fiction appropriate for their ages accurately, fluently and expressively, know how to use dictionaries and thesauri, and can read information books competently to find things out. By the age of 11, pupils of average and lower attainment can generally work out how to pronounce unfamiliar words and read texts suitably matched to their capabilities accurately, if not always completely fluently or expressively.
80. While most pupils show a good understanding of the events in the stories they read, only the higher attaining pupils understand hidden meanings, and very few understand figurative language. Because many lower attaining pupils have a poor general vocabulary and weak comprehension skills, they often get simply the gist of what they read but miss out on the finer detail. Few pupils in the school read widely. By the age of 11, few can name many favourite authors or talk with understanding about different kinds of fiction, and, although most pupils know how to find books in the library and locate information in the books themselves, very few have developed the ability to make coherent but concise notes in their own words when they read to find things out.

81. The teaching of English is satisfactory overall, but is often good in Years 2, 3 and 5. Only on one occasion was teaching judged to be unsatisfactory. A good scheme of work underpinned by detailed medium term plans and good quality resources means that all teachers are presenting pupils with appropriate activities that have the potential to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. In the very best lessons seen, this potential is fulfilled because teachers focus not simply on the planned activities, but very specifically on pupils' own use – and misuse – of language, whether read, spoken or written. These teachers have a very good understanding of what pupils need to learn and how best to help them. They have high expectations, are confident in their approach, and use questioning very skilfully. The ongoing evaluation of pupils' work is central to their teaching, and they are able to assess and respond to significant areas of weakness in pupils' performance whenever or wherever they arise. At all times, they make sure that pupils engage actively with language, for example by requiring them to use new terms as they are introduced, to practise skills that have been introduced, to use the resources – such as word-banks, dictionaries and thesauri – made available to them, and to apply what they have been taught on previous occasions. The feedback they give - to individuals, to groups and to the class - shows pupils very clearly how to improve their work. Most significantly, the best teaching gives praise only where praise is due, whether for effort or achievement, and thereby helps pupils to understand the standards they should be setting for themselves. Weaker and unsatisfactory teaching is characterised, to varying degrees, by: low expectations; too narrow a focus on the learning objectives planned for a specific lesson; weak questioning; attention to the planned activities but not to the quality of pupils' language; and, too little feedback of a kind likely to help.
82. The literacy co-ordinator demonstrates very good leadership qualities and, in the short life of the school, has already done much to set in place appropriate policies, procedures and practices. With the strong support of the headteacher and with the help of advisory staff from the Southampton Education Authority, she has trained staff, given ongoing support to those who need it, devised and implemented a good scheme of work and introduced appropriate assessment procedures. Through her own monitoring of planning and of pupils' work, and informed by the monitoring of teaching, she is very well appraised of strengths and weaknesses in provision and in pupils' performance. For the past year, she has been 'shadowed' in her work, and assisted in her deliberations, by a teacher who is to assume the role of co-ordinator at the beginning of the new academic year, but who will then be 'shadowed', in her turn, by the current co-ordinator. Both teachers are good practitioners with very good understanding of the subject requirements. They have a very clear view of what remains to be done to raise standards and to improve the quality of teaching, and they are well qualified and well placed to bring about the changes that are necessary.

MATHEMATICS

83. On entry to Year 1, the mathematical knowledge and understanding of most pupils are very weak. The results of the SATs in mathematics, in Years 2 and 6 in 2002, were well below the national average but were in line with the average results of similar schools. Inspection findings show that current standards are also well below average in these year groups, and that weaknesses in the quality of the learning experiences of the Year 6 classes, before 2001, have contributed to the low standards. However, standards are gradually rising across the school. Inspection evidence suggests that standards, teaching and learning were at an extremely low level when the school was first amalgamated. There is now an improving picture which is a result of the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and better teaching. Overall, pupils now make satisfactory progress. In Years 2, 3 and 5, where teaching is good, pupils

make good progress. Pupils do not achieve as much as they should in some lessons in Years 1 and 4 because the management of behaviour is not yet fully secure and there are weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge.

84. By the end of Year 2 about half of the pupils have a sound understanding of the basic mathematical terminology for number and number operations. Average and higher attaining pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory knowledge of mathematical facts, such as addition, subtraction and multiplication up to 50. Their ability to count in a range of different ways contributes to accuracy of their calculations when solving simple problems. For example, they can correctly calculate how many sweets each child will get if 50 sweets are shared amongst ten children, by using their knowledge of the five times table. In Years 3 and 4, average and higher attaining pupils develop their knowledge of number beyond 100, and this supports the development of their understanding of fractions and percentages in Years 5 and 6, where they have a satisfactory understanding of number facts up to and beyond a thousand. Where pupils achieve below the standards expected for their age it is because they do not always understand the meaning of mathematical questions, are unable to adopt a systematic approach to problem solving and find it difficult to record their calculations. This is because their skills in searching for pattern, in logical reasoning and in explaining their work are insecure.
85. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measure are below the level expected throughout the school because, until the relatively recent introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, it was not systematically taught. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now acquiring a factual knowledge of common two and three dimensional shapes and, with support, can give simple descriptions of the differences between shapes, for example in the number of sides and angles. Older pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop this knowledge further in their work with more complex shapes and, in Years 5 and 6, combine this knowledge with their knowledge of length to calculate the area and perimeter of rectangular shapes. Pupils demonstrate an increasing understanding of data handling in Years 2 and 3. However, it is not yet developed to a sufficient extent in Years 5 and 6. This is, in part, linked to insufficient use of ICT to support learning in mathematics. The lack of computers in classrooms, to support the learning that takes place in the new computer suite, contributes to this.
86. The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment as a result of work that is usually matched to their needs, and the support that they receive from classroom assistants. More able pupils make satisfactory progress as a result of the school's setting arrangements. However, there is scope to develop a greater degree of challenge for these pupils as their confidence improves.
87. When the school was amalgamated, one of the main barriers to pupils' achievement and progress was their poor behaviour and attitudes to learning. Good behaviour management strategies are now in place and are effective in the majority of classes. However, they are still not consistently applied in Years 1 and 4, and this limits the learning that can take place in lessons. Under the guidance of the headteacher, the school has worked extremely hard to win the trust and respect of pupils. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Year 6 where the teachers have succeeded in motivating them to learn. Much of this success is due to the good relationships that the headteacher and her teaching team now have with pupils. However, many lower attaining pupils still genuinely feel that they are 'not as brainy' as their higher attaining classmates and are reluctant to tackle work at a higher level. They think that if they do, they will fail, and so they don't even try because at least they can't then fail. The school

recognises this problem and know that work still needs to be done to improve pupils' confidence and belief in themselves as learners. A good example of where they are beginning to do this is in Year 3. The teacher constantly challenges his pupils to tackle 'big' numbers in enjoyable and interesting ways. He celebrates success by creating 'champion' learners and shares with the pupils the difficulty of the work that they are doing – 'this is high level Year 4 work'.

88. The quality of teaching in mathematics varies between year groups but is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 2, 3 and 5. Some good teaching was also seen in Year 6. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in Years 1 and 4. A particular strength of teaching is the range of methods that the teachers use to help pupils who learn in different ways have access to learning. Wherever possible, the teachers emphasise the usefulness of mathematics in real life situations and this helps pupils to see the purpose of what they are learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 have designed an adventure playground and, as part of their work in mathematics, have drawn scale diagrams and costed the equipment. In the best teaching, good planning results in well-structured and interesting lessons which help pupils to build upon what they already know. Where lessons are most successful, the teachers draw on their own good mathematical knowledge to respond flexibly to pupils by asking questions which overcome misconceptions, encourage pupils to think for themselves and help them to develop their mathematical ideas. The use of ongoing assessment to plan work which closely meets the needs of all pupils is also a feature of good teaching. Where teaching is not satisfactory it is because weaknesses in subject knowledge lead to a lack of clarity in explanations and work which is not sufficiently matched to the different needs of pupils. Throughout the school, more attention should be given to marking work so that pupils know what they have to do to improve. There also needs to be greater consistency in the setting of homework.
89. Mathematics is very well led and managed by the subject leader who has a high level of subject expertise and sets a very good example by the quality of his own teaching. He has been supported extremely well by the headteacher and a great deal has been achieved in the two years that the subject leader has been in post. He helps his colleagues with their planning, has audited resources, led training days and introduced effective systems for assessment and for the recording of pupils' progress. He analyses test information carefully and has also observed teaching alongside the local authority adviser. As a result, he has a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses of subject and uses this information effectively to inform future improvements.

SCIENCE

90. On entry to Year 1, pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding are usually very weak. The results of the statutory teacher assessments in Year 2, in 2002, were in the lowest five per cent nationally in relation to the percentage reaching the expected standard, and were well below the average results of similar schools. No pupil achieved above the expected level. The overall results of the Year 6 SATs in 2002 were below the national average but were above the results of similar schools.
91. Inspection findings show that pupils' progress in science is satisfactory overall and results from the sound teaching they generally receive. However, there is scope for improvement, since pupils' achievements are sometimes restricted because weaknesses in planning mean that tasks are not consistently matched to their learning needs. The best progress is made by pupils in Year 2, where the teaching is the most effective, while slow and inadequate progress is made by pupils in Year 4, where

teachers' expectations are too low. Overall standards are below national expectations in Year 2 and are well below national expectations in Year 6. These represent an improvement on standards in 2002 in Year 2 but are lower than last year's standards in Year 6 due to the very significant proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in the current Year 6 classes. Evidence strongly suggests that weaknesses in the quality of pupils' educational experience, before 2001, have also contributed to the very low standards achieved in Year 6 in science.

92. In Year 1, pupils can identify the main external parts of the human body but make little progress when completing inappropriate worksheets which require them to label parts of the eye, including the tearduct. They know there are a range of sources of light and sound, and understand that we experience the world through our senses. However, pupils demonstrate very limited skills when describing common materials and, in a lesson observed during the inspection, needed more focused teaching to encourage them to describe the appearance of the roots, leaves and flowers of plants. In Year 2, pupils progress well when beginning to develop their understanding that some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes. They are aware that a range of appliances use electricity but there is no evidence of drawings to show their work in creating simple electrical circuits. Pupils' books suggest that too much time has been allocated for them to record simple facts about a range of insects, including butterflies, spiders, beetles and ants, and opportunities have been missed to encourage them to conduct investigations; for example, to discover whether different creatures are found in different habitats in the school grounds. In lessons observed during the inspection in Year 2, effective teaching enabled pupils to make good progress when learning about forces. They understand that pushes and pulls are forces which can make things speed up or slow down, and can change the shape of some objects.
93. In Year 3, pupils can correctly label diagrams with the names of the main parts of plants, but their understanding of the functions of leaves and flowers is very limited. Consequently, worksheets which require pupils to label the carpel and stigma are poorly matched to their learning needs. Year 3 pupils make sound progress when learning about the need for a healthy diet and know it is important to look after their teeth. However, they would benefit from learning more about the different types of teeth and their functions, rather than completely unnecessarily complex worksheets about the structure of the tooth. In a lesson observed during the inspection, Year 3 pupils made sound progress when learning about magnetism but found it difficult to devise simple investigations to test the strengths of different magnets. In Year 4, there is too little science work recorded in pupils' books, and expectations for pupils' potential achievement need to be raised. Much of the work is completed only superficially and teachers' marking does not give pupils sufficient guidance about how to improve. The more advanced learners in Year 4 mark time when identifying light sources and, while they have measured the length of shadows during the day, they have made no attempt to record their ideas about why the measurements vary. In a lesson observed in Year 4 during the inspection, pupils' progress was only just adequate because they required more focused questioning to probe their understanding, and opportunities for practical investigations were missed.
94. In Year 5, pupils have made satisfactory progress when learning about electrical circuits; and know that food must be handled hygienically and stored carefully because micro-organisms grow and can be harmful. They know that the Sun, Earth and Moon are spherical, and that the earth orbits the sun. However, their understanding of the reasons for day and night are not consistently secure. Year 5 pupils are given opportunities to test whether the surfaces objects travel over affect the distances they move, but their skills in presenting results and in drawing simple conclusions are below

average for their ages. In a lesson observed in Year 5, pupils made sound progress when learning to use forcemeters to decide whether the weight of objects change when they are submerged in water. However, their understanding that more than one force can act on an object is at an early stage of development. In Year 6, pupils' books and lesson observations show they are now making sound progress but will not have made up for lost ground in their earlier years by the end of their final year at the school. Their knowledge and understanding of a significant range of scientific information remains limited, and their investigation skills are weak. In a lesson observed during the inspection, many found it difficult to plan a simple investigation, had little understanding of the principles of fair-testing and could not record their results clearly and systematically.

95. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory across the school. All teachers have positive relationships with their classes, identify clear learning intentions for their lessons and ensure that pupils are aware of these objectives. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and most include appropriate scientific vocabulary in their lessons. In the most effective lessons, in Year 2, teachers make every effort to ensure that pupils practise using the correct scientific language but in the Year 4 lesson observed during the inspection appropriate terms were used by the teacher but not expected in responses from pupils. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers' expectations are clear and they provide sound advice and guidance to pupils as they work. However, feedback to pupils through marking is rather limited, and particularly requires improvement in Year 4. Although the teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory overall progress in their scientific learning, weaknesses in planning for the subject mean that progress is often spasmodic. The scheme of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is used to guide many lessons but its implementation is too inconsistent to provide secure continuity in pupils' learning. Too often, teachers chose to teach some elements of the units of work suggested in the scheme but ignore important tasks which could be used to reinforce and extend pupils' understanding. Instead, pupils are sometimes given inappropriate worksheets which are poorly matched to their learning needs, and mark time when spending too long on unchallenging tasks which stem from the generalised focus of topic work. At present, planning for science is just adequate but requires improvement. This is recognised by the school. In addition, procedures for assessing pupils' progress and standards in the subject are underdeveloped, and this means that teachers have limited information to inform their science planning.
96. The subject leader took up her role last September, and has worked hard to increase her own knowledge about science. She has benefited from good support and guidance from the headteacher, and has made a promising start. The subject leader has collected samples of pupils' science work, from across the school, to develop her overview of standards, and has started to address weaknesses in planning and in elements of assessment. For example, she is providing useful outline planning guidance and will shortly be introducing a sensible assessment procedure for judging pupils' achievement in scientific investigations. The subject leader now requires opportunities to observe science teaching in the school, and this is recognised by the headteacher who plans to train the teacher to conduct these observations. Resources for science are sound, and have been carefully audited and organised by the subject leader.

ART AND DESIGN

97. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory overall progress in art and design, and their standards are broadly average in Year 2. However, in Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress is

too uneven and is unsatisfactory overall. As a result, pupils underachieve and standards are below average, including in Year 6.

98. In Year 1, pupils make adequate progress when creating pencil drawings of pieces of wood, painting interpretations of toys, and making collage pictures. However, their skills are generally below average, and much of their work is typical of what is usually achieved by older reception children. In Year 2, pupils' progress increases, and is mainly good. As a result, overall standards are in line with national expectations at the end of the year. Year 2 pupils benefit from discussing the work of famous artists and, during the inspection, learned about pointillism and the work of Georges Seurat. They have used the artist's technique very carefully when creating their own abstract pictures, and these demonstrate good achievement. Pupils' bold pictures of Queen Elizabeth I show their good progress in collage work. In drawing, pupils' progress in Year 2 is broadly satisfactory and their interpretations of African drums are reasonable for their ages. However, much of their drawing demonstrates skills which are barely average and shows pupils do not look closely enough when they draw from direct observation.
99. In Years 3 to 6, there is some evidence of satisfactory achievement, including when Year 5 pupils are encouraged to use images created by Van Gogh as a stimulus for their own artwork. However, pupils' drawing and painting skills are not adequately developed, and they also make very limited overall progress in developing skills in collage, printing and three-dimensional work. For example, the collage picture made by Year 5 pupils by sticking small squares of paper onto a large sheet of paper, shaped into a dragon, represents considerable underachievement; and the very simple masks, made in papier-mâché by Year 6 pupils, show limited creativity and poor making skills. Pupils' sketchbooks in Years 3 to 6 provide secure evidence of a lack of progression in the development of drawing skills, and of low standards.
100. Taken as a whole, the teaching across Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and enables pupils to make sound overall progress in art and design. However, there is variation in the year groups, with satisfactory teaching in Year 1, and evidence of good teaching in Year 2. In Year 1 pupils sometimes need clearer guidance about how to improve their work, and teacher expectations could be raised. In Year 2, teachers have secure subject knowledge, motivate their classes well and provide pupils with well-planned tasks to raise their standards.
101. In the older classes, the teaching was satisfactory, overall, in the lessons seen during the inspection, and enabled pupils to make adequate progress. However, a careful analysis of pupils' completed work provides clear evidence that the teaching does not enable pupils to make sufficient progress in the subject, over time. Teachers' expectations of pupils' potential achievement are too low, and evidence suggests teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge in the subject. In addition, there are weaknesses in planning which mean that there are no coherent strategies for developing pupils' skills and knowledge in the subject as they move through the school. There are no common assessment procedures to judge pupils' achievements and future learning needs, and this also has a negative effect on the standards achieved in the subject.
102. The subject leader took up her role last September, and is conscientious and enthusiastic. She has already developed a sound overview of the subject and has identified the need to improve standards and teachers' confidence and expertise. Although she is at a fairly early stage of developing her role, she has made useful links with the nearby comprehensive school, resulting in specialist art teachers sometimes

working with pupils at Thornhill, and has started to advise her colleagues about planning. In addition, the subject leader has audited and reorganised resources, and these are now satisfactory. She recognises there is much work to be done in the subject, and has sensible plans to secure improvements.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations in Year 2, but they are below expected standards in Year 6. By the age of seven pupils have learned sufficient skills to enable them to use a range of joining techniques to make vehicles and felt puppets. Pupils are beginning to design their products and evaluate the finished result. All pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs. However, older pupils do not build on and develop the skills learnt in Years 1 and 2, so by Year 6 the achievement of pupils is unsatisfactory.
104. Although the current Year 6 has many pupils with special educational needs, one of the main reasons for this unsatisfactory achievement is lack of teacher expertise. The subject is not planned with enough rigour to ensure that the pupils progressively develop specific skills for the subject. Design and technology is often planned as an incidental part of a topic, and so insufficient emphasis is put on the specialist skills that are needed for the subject. Skills are not taught through the use of focused tasks, so when pupils embark on a project they have little idea of what skills are required. For example, in Year 4, pupils were aiming to make a model house using a wooden framework, but instead of learning how to cut and join wood they spent time joining straws with plasticene. As a result, a lot of time was used practising irrelevant skills. Insufficient emphasis is placed on the design element of the subject, so by the time pupils reach Year 6 they are unable to draw accurate plans for their models showing measurements, and they do not list step-by-step instructions as to how to make the model. Pupils in Year 6 have a low level of skill, and have little idea how to join materials successfully, as their experiences have been very limited. The evaluating strand of the subject is weak, and pupils are not encouraged to look at their work critically to see if the finished product is fit for the purpose it was designed for, and, if not, how improvements could be made.
105. No design and technology lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2, so it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the teaching in these year groups. However, it is clear that it enables pupils to make satisfactory overall progress. In Years 3 to 6, although there were some good features seen in the lessons observed, the teaching is unsatisfactory overall, and results in pupils' slow progress and the underachievement which is evident in much of their completed work. Teachers often lack confidence and knowledge, and inconsistencies in planning mean pupils have erratic exposure to the subject and do not develop key skills progressively. These weaknesses have a negative effect on pupils' confidence, and they are often dissatisfied with their achievements.
106. The subject is managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She has worked hard to produce a detailed scheme of work for the subject. When this is consistently used by all staff it will ensure that standards rise. Resources have been audited, and are now stored centrally so all staff are aware of what is available. These are satisfactory overall, but there is a lack of a range of commercial construction apparatus to enable pupils to explore structures. There is a dedicated food technology area where pupils can handle food in hygienic surroundings. There are no formal assessment procedures, and pupils currently are inexperienced at critically evaluating their own work. The co-ordinator is aware that teachers lack confidence, and has arranged some training for them to increase their subject expertise. The use of ICT is underdeveloped, and the school has no equipment at present for the older pupils to use to control their models.

GEOGRAPHY

107. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in geography, and standards are below average in Years 2 and 6. Current arrangements for planning integrate geographical studies into broad topics, often with a scientific or historical focus. This results in a spasmodic approach that does not place sufficient emphasis on the sequential and progressive development of pupils' geographical skills, knowledge and understanding.
108. A desire to build on pupils' experience has meant there is a strong emphasis on the use of fieldwork in the subject. Visits to the locality are used to support this and the school plans to extend this further. By Year 2, pupils are developing their knowledge of where they live and beginning to consider the characteristics of their locality. Pupils in Year 1 have looked at the streets around the school, noting where they live and their house type, and have used a graphics program to make street plans. By Year 2 they are beginning to record the details of their classroom and the school pond on their own plans. Weak literacy skills clearly limit their recording. Most bring very little knowledge of their very immediate locality and this also restricts learning. Techniques like the 'Barnaby Bear' diaries provide opportunities for broadening this, but insufficient emphasis is placed on what other areas look like or the lives of people who live there.
109. A lack of clear curricular guidance, prior to the school's amalgamation, has meant there has not been a strong tradition of geography teaching and, in Year 6, the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding are very marked. They have some understanding of the features of rivers, have noted some of the major rivers in Great Britain and Europe and have named countries bordering Greece as part of their history work. Their knowledge of what lies beyond their estate is generally poor and, in a lesson seen during the inspection, few were able to suggest facilities and features in Southampton that could be compared with those in Le Havre. Their mapwork skills are also limited with most work based around street plans or freehand maps. Pupils in Year 5 have a little knowledge of the effects of hurricanes, the parts of a volcano and how life is different in St Lucia. In atlas work, the limitations of their knowledge and understanding were apparent with many unable to differentiate between county and country and unsure of the countries of the British Isles.
110. Some teachers make use of secondary sources to help pupils appreciate the differences that exist in a locality and this was evident in the Year 4 work on Swanmore. Pupils were, however, unable to draw on previous work on Bitterne and Broad Windsor to explain the main features of a village. Pupils in Year 3 had produced well-presented booklets, containing street plans with keys showing the main features of the estate and explaining the use of key buildings. Overall, the limited examples of pupils' work seen do not generally suggest either pride or interest in the work set and few, apart from the booklets in Year 3, are well presented. Far too often they are in basic note form with little care taken in their formulation. However, in the lessons seen, pupils generally engaged with the practical tasks with enthusiasm, working well with their partners or groups and using materials carefully.
111. Geography was not being taught in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection and it is not therefore possible to reach a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in those year groups. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 was satisfactory or better in the lessons seen. However, pupils' work shows that, although there is a strong emphasis on practical activities, they are not developing an understanding of the physical features of the world and man's impact on his environment. When planning their lessons, teachers do not take sufficient account of what pupils of their age should be able to do or always clearly

establish what pupils already know, understand and can do. As a result, the teaching does not enable pupils to achieve as well as they should, across the school.

112. Co-ordination of the subject is at an early stage of development and the school has recognised the need to review its curricular documentation in the subject action plan. Resources have been reviewed and will need to be developed in the light of new arrangements. The use of ICT is too limited. To raise standards and develop learning in the subject the school will need to ensure that:
- teachers have the necessary skills and understanding to deliver the planned curriculum;
 - curriculum plans provide clear guidance on expectations for all year groups, fully meet National Curriculum requirements for the subject, and develop pupils' skills and understanding in a sequential and progressive manner;
 - assessment procedures are developed to provide a clear view of how well pupils are doing and to inform teachers' planning;
 - teaching and learning is monitored to identify strengths and areas needing development.

HISTORY

113. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are below those expected nationally. Timetabling arrangements meant that it was only possible to observe two history lessons during the inspection. However, a careful examination of pupils' completed work shows the subject is not taught in enough depth for pupils to make sufficient progress throughout the school.
114. By the age of seven pupils are developing a sense of chronology when they look at old and new objects. They learn about Grace Darling and begin to appreciate why she acted as she did, but other historical skills are insufficiently developed. By Year 6, pupils have some knowledge of periods of time, such as the Tudors, and the ancient Greeks. This knowledge is superficial because insufficient time is allocated to studying history, as it often only occurs incidentally through a topic. For example, Year 2 pupils learned about Grace Darling as part of their sea topic, rather than learning about a period of time and the influence of important people who lived then. This results in pupils having no clear perception of when Grace Darling lived and what impact her life had on historical events. However, when sufficient time is devoted to an historical topic, such as when Year 5 studied the Aztecs, pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of the period.
115. Insufficient lessons were observed to give a firm judgement on the quality of teaching, but the scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that too few opportunities are given to enable pupils to make satisfactory progress. As many topics do not have a history focus, there are long periods when no history is taught. Pupils do use books often enough to find information, and there is only limited evidence that older pupils use the internet for work in history. Often, when information is discovered, it is generally just copied down with no real purpose. Planning for the subject is based on a topic approach and does not give enough emphasis to the progressive development of skills. For example, similar tasks are set for Years 1 and 3 when pupils sequence objects from the oldest to the newest, showing no real development of pupils' skills. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to compare and contrast differing periods of time, and to discover distinctive contributions that the period makes to history. Evidence suggests teachers would benefit from well-focused in-service training in history to increase their knowledge about teaching the subject.

116. The subject is managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who has an enthusiastic approach to the subject, and was responsible for her year group winning a national competition for their work on the Aztecs. However, she is aware of the need for improvements in overall planning for history, so that pupils make better progress in their learning as they move through the school. There are no formalised assessment procedures to help teachers have a clear picture of what pupils know and understand, and for them to check if pupils are working at the correct level. Resources for history are satisfactory and are supplemented through the use of the museum service.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. Overall standards in ICT are below average in Years 2 and 6. This is because, prior to the current academic year, ICT skills were not being systematically taught and developed. Matters have begun to improve with the recent creation of the ICT suite and the raising of staff confidence and expertise through training provided by the New Opportunities Fund. With further developments planned in subject guidance and resources, the school is well placed to move forward.
118. During the inspection, teachers and classroom assistants were observed working with groups of pupils in the suite, often on tasks linked to other subjects of the curriculum. Although pupils often make good progress in these sessions, their overall level of understanding, experience and expertise are below those expected. Pupils are well aware of their own limitations. Many do not have access to computers out of school and, for most, the relatively short sessions in the suite are insufficient to make up for their lack of experience.
119. The school is trying to provide its pupils with experience of the different subject strands including word processing, graphics, internet usage and data handling but there are few examples of recorded work. The school does not meet statutory requirements in the subject since there is limited use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum and control and modelling are not planned for older pupils. Much of teaching time is taken up with the constant need to address gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and develop their skills base. The lack of classroom computers further limits opportunities for pupils to use ICT.
120. Throughout the school, pupils are beginning to log on, select programs and use the toolbar and drop down menus to choose options with growing confidence. All are developing the use of the mouse to control, select and confirm choices but many, including older pupils, are not confident in their use of the keyboard. In Year 2, pupils hesitantly typed what they had seen when investigating pushing and pulling forces on a prepared proforma. Few completed more than a very few entries in the time available. Examples of their stored work showed they had experimented with changing fonts, sizes and colours to display their names.
121. Year 6 pupils have begun to learn how to combine text with digital photographs and images imported from clip art. They made good use of these techniques whilst working on their Power Point presentation about the Battle of Hastings. They selected images from a folder, combined these with their chosen headings and some showed good recall of detail in their narration. Year 5 pupils' folders contained examples of entries on a prepared spreadsheet and a presentation about the Aztecs. Year 4 pupils selected and placed borders and headings, and created text boxes in preparation for inserting their digital photographs of different habitats, linked with their science work.

122. Pupils clearly enjoy their ICT sessions and work well, either on their own or with a partner. They listen carefully to instructions, maintain concentration for extended periods and are eager to complete the tasks set. Overall, the teaching in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, and some good and very good lessons were seen in Years 3 and 6 respectively. In the better lessons, teachers were careful to provide brisk explanations that quickly allowed pupils to engage successfully with the task and provided good ongoing support. In the most effective practice, seen in Year 6, the teacher made very good use of questioning and intervention to guide the pupils to their own solution of the problem. All teachers were careful to remind pupils at the outset of what they already knew and most linked this well to what pupils would be doing in the next session. However, in most lessons, the constraints of time meant that the ending was rushed with insufficient time left for checking of understanding or indication of the next stages of learning. The teachers, the teaching assistants and the technician all provide a high level of support for pupils in these sessions so that all groups, including boys and girls and those with special needs, achieve equally well. The only use of ICT outside the suite was in the special educational needs unit where it was being effectively used to reinforce literacy skills.
123. The enthusiastic co-ordinator provides good leadership in the subject, manages developments well and provides good support and guidance for his colleagues. He has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has produced a well-structured action plan. This identifies the need to raise standards, to improve resources, to develop assessment procedures, and to increase the use made of ICT to support learning in other subjects.

MUSIC

124. There is an improving picture throughout the school in music. This is due to the hard work of the very-well-qualified subject leader who has developed a good scheme of work to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum, progression in learning and clear guidance for teachers. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 to achieve standards that are in line with those expected. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Although standards are below those expected for Year 6 pupils, this represents satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are fully included in lessons and make similar progress to their classmates.
125. Pupils throughout the school thoroughly enjoy their singing, both in lessons and assemblies. During the inspection, good singing was heard during a Year 1 and 2 singing practice. Pupils had good diction and pitch control and this enabled them to communicate the feelings and moods of the music to the listener. Pupils' developing knowledge of the musical elements helps them to make their work more interesting when working together to create musical effects. For example, pupils in Year 2 composed their own graphic scores and then practised and performed their compositions in which different sea creatures were represented by fast and slow, or loud and soft sounds. In Year 6, pupils represented their ideas about the Battle of Hastings by layering the different sounds made by the instruments. Overall, they develop their skills well when investigating, selecting and combining their musical ideas and they are beginning to perform with increasing confidence and control. A small number of pupils in Years 3 to 6 are learning to play the recorder and the keyboard, and are beginning to learn musical notation. They demonstrate an increasing control of their instruments as a result of the good tuition they receive. Opportunities for pupils to perform their work in the course of assemblies is proving effective in promoting greater interest in music throughout the school. Pupils listen to music from different cultures.

For example, they have all attended a performance by an African drum player and some older pupils have participated in a workshop. There are well-established plans for pupils to listen to Asian music and take part in Indian dancing.

126. The quality of teaching in music is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. Lessons are well planned and structured so that pupils increase their understanding through a variety of musical activities that combine performing, composing and appraising. There are good opportunities for pupils to work independently, in various sized groups and in whole class situations. As a result, pupils throughout the school enjoy music and participate with increasing enthusiasm in all aspects of the subject. Music makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
127. The subject is very well led and managed by the subject leader who sets a very good example by the quality of her own teaching. She has worked effectively to improve and support teachers' planning and their skills and confidence in teaching the subject. She monitors the subject well and, as a result, has a clear plan for its future development which includes the improvement of assessment procedures. The school benefits from its own music room. Resources for music are good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Overall standards in physical education in Years 2 and 6 are average and represent pupils' sound progress in the subject. All aspects of the subject are planned, including outdoor and adventurous activities. As they progress up the school, pupils are developing both their physical stamina and their skills. In a Year 1 dance lesson, pupils responded well to the music with several different interpretative movements. By Year 2, pupils have developed an increasing awareness of space and work in groups to refine their extended sequence of movements well. They conveyed the desperate plight of the shipwrecked sailors and portrayed Grace Darling's daring rescue with imagination. Their teacher made very good use of encouragement, demonstration and coaching to ensure improvement. Pupils in Year 2 practised relay changeovers, gradually increasing the speed and accuracy with which they passed the baton. Teachers' coaching and demonstrations extended and improved their technique.
129. Teachers make good use of paired and small group work to maintain pupils' interest and provide focused opportunities for practice and improvement. Year 3 pupils work closely with partners during the inspection to refine a sequence that conveys reactions to sounds and situations on their 'journey'. They were encouraged to use facial expression and mime to convey approval or dislike. In a games session observed, they improved their throwing, catching and fielding skills through partner work.
130. Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence varies from class to class and this has a direct impact on the quality of pupils' work and their learning. A Year 4 games lesson did not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their batting and fielding skills. Pupils waiting to participate in the game became inattentive, adversely affecting the pace of the lesson. However, in a Year 5 gymnastics lesson, pupils made rapid progress through the high quality coaching and evident expertise of the teacher. They improved the style of their sequence through interaction with their partners, by concentrating on start and finish positions and incorporating specific moves such as shoulder stands and arabesques.
131. Year 6 pupils worked hard to improve and enhance their group's street dance routines through repeated practice until they were satisfied with the timing and the quality of their

work. Encouragement, explanation and questioning by their teacher motivated and refined their approach. In athletics, other Year 6 pupils worked hard to improve their hurdling, running styles and personal times. Pupils in Year 4 have the benefit of swimming sessions at the local leisure centre during the year. They make good progress, developing their confidence and safety in water. By the end of the course, at least half are able to swim the expected 25 metres with many going beyond this.

132. Throughout the school, there is good attention to safety. Teachers ensure that pupils warm up at the start of lessons and cool down at the end. However, lengthy sessions on the field, particularly on hot days, are not conducive to learning or efficient use of time. Pupils know about the beneficial effects of exercise and are enthusiastic about their physical education lessons. They usually try hard to improve and, apart from some occasional inattention by small groups or individuals, pupils listen carefully to instructions. When given opportunities to work in pairs or small groups they make suitable suggestions, take turns, try to improve and listen to their classmates and partners.
133. Overall teaching is satisfactory but ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Teaching is most successful when:
- activities that reflect the needs and abilities of pupils are carefully planned and prepared;
 - introductions remind pupils of previous work and lesson content builds on this;
 - clear explanation and suitable demonstration maintains pupils' interest and ensures a brisk pace to learning;
 - coaching corrects errors, improves performance and increases the level of challenge;
 - learning support assistants provide good encouragement and support.
- Unsatisfactory teaching is evident when poor use is made of time, pupils receive insufficient guidance and some lose interest in the lesson.
134. The subject is enthusiastically co-ordinated and the action plan appropriately recognises the need to develop assessment arrangements. Equipment is in good condition and regularly replenished. The large well-cared-for hall and extensive grounds are further valuable resources. A range of after school clubs including football, netball, karate, and basketball enhances the provision, and pupils have opportunities for competitive events with other schools.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Evidence from lessons, discussions with pupils and staff, scrutiny of planning, previous work and displays indicates that, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils have skills and knowledge below those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Overall, their achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory in developing appropriate levels of understanding. This is because too little time is spent on the subject and lessons do not systematically build on pupils' previous learning. There are plans in place for religious education, which show coverage of the subject. However, because there is little allocated time, teachers choose the topics they and the pupils like, and this leads to discontinuity and slow progress. In the lessons seen, pupils showed a developing understanding of religious ideas and beliefs but also revealed gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
136. By the age of seven, pupils are aware of events and festivals in the Christian calendar. They also know about the stories told in the Bible about Jesus and the disciples. They know about the events that take place in church and some of the features of the

building. They are less familiar with the characteristics of other religions. In Year 1, they know that everyone is special and have considered what makes them special. Older pupils in the school are able to talk about beliefs and why they are important to people, particularly when considering the life of Martin Luther King. Pupils in Year 4 have an opportunity to talk about the personal qualities that certain passages in the Bible are promoting, and how they should try to develop these for themselves. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have some knowledge about signs and symbols and stories of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism.

137. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was generally satisfactory across the school. In a Year 6 lesson, good links were made with a recent assembly to remind pupils about previous discussions on discrimination and how to deal with it. This set the scene for talking about respect for the religious ideas and beliefs of others. At all times, the pupils showed respect and thoughtfulness about the views of others. In Year 3, both teachers worked imaginatively together to tackle the difficult topic of understanding that Christians believe that God came to earth as a man. In this lesson, pupils responded with thoughtful questions to ask 'God', who was played by a teacher. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are able to talk about visits to places of religion and how different ceremonies take place, such as baptism and weddings. In a Year 1 class, pupils drew on their memories of an assembly led by the vicar about special people. Teachers have high expectations of the behaviour of pupils and use a range of strategies to keep them interested in the lesson. Relationships with staff and with other pupils are good. Pupils are supportive of each other and celebrate each other's efforts and successes.
138. The headteacher recognises that there is work to be done on developing a coherent and workable scheme of work for religious education. The outline plans show how the agreed syllabus will be taught to cover all the elements. However, the allocation of three per cent of curriculum time to religious education means that this cannot be achieved in the time available. In practice, the curriculum for religious education does not meet statutory requirements. There is little assessment of pupils' progress in religious education, beyond informal feedback during lessons. Resources, including artefacts, have been increased to a good level and are organised into topic boxes for ease of use.