

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHLEY INFANT SCHOOL

New Milton

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115855

Headteacher: Mrs Pauline Dukes

Lead inspector: Mr George Crowther

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th October 2003

Inspection number: 255375

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	192
School address:	Lower Ashley Road Ashley New Milton Hampshire
Postcode:	BH25 5AA
Telephone number:	01425 611321
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Martyn Travers
Date of previous inspection:	29 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ashley Infant is a medium-sized, community infant school for boys and girls who are 3-7 years old. It has 192 pupils organised in eight classes, including two Resourced Provision classes for 16 pupils who have severe learning difficulties, a few of whom attend part time. All the pupils work together, and the school ensures that those in the Resourced Provision classes are often included in other classes. The school is situated to the east of New Milton in Hampshire, and the pupils live mainly in the immediate area, with some coming from a distance for the special Resourced Provision. The school serves families from a range of social circumstances but, taken together, these are less favourable than found nationally. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is below that expected for their ages, though there is a wide range of ability within each age group that varies from year to year. Seventy-three pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, for a variety of learning and behavioural difficulties, and 14 have statements to outline particularly severe and complex learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils needing additional support is higher than in most schools. All pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds and none is learning English as an additional language. The school has gained three Schools Achievement Awards in the past few years for improved results in national tests.

The Resourced Provision classes

These form the special educational needs unit situated within the school. The Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classrooms provide an assessment centre for new admissions. Some outreach work (where staff work with pupils in other schools who have special educational needs) is carried out. The unit works actively towards the pupils' inclusion in the mainstream school. Pupils attending the unit are well below average in their communication and numeracy skills. Some pupils also have medical and emotional needs. All pupils receive part, and in some cases all, of their education in mainstream classes, with support when necessary. The school has asked that the evaluation of the Resourced Provision classes be woven into the rest of the report, rather than standing alone, because this reflects the school's approach.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18814	George Crowther	Lead inspector	English, art and design, music, physical education
9271	Selwyn Ward	Lay inspector	
21095	Lynn Adair	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum, geography, history, religious education, special educational needs
27058	Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	The Resourced Provision classes
33024	Kate Higgs	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Ashley Infant School is a good school. When pupils join the reception classes, standards are below those expected for their ages, and well below for many children's language skills. Pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are about average. The quality of teaching is good overall. Good leadership has ensured that pupils' achievements have improved over the past few years, particularly in writing. Pupils in the Resourced Provision classes (two classes for pupils who have severe learning difficulties) make very good progress and are an integral part of the school. The friendly, caring atmosphere around the school supports pupils' learning well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils' achievements have improved significantly over the past few years
- Teaching is good, but weaknesses in teachers' management of pupils' behaviour slow down learning in some lessons
- Teaching and learning for pupils in the Resource Provision classes are very good
- Strong leadership by the headteacher and key staff drives through improvements
- The curriculum provides a rich set of learning experiences
- A very strong emphasis on caring for the pupils ensures that all children are fully included in all aspects of school life
- Attendance is unsatisfactory because too many parents take their children on holiday in term time

Since the school was inspected in 1998, improvement has been good. Standards in national tests have improved, which has been recognised by three, government Schools Achievement Awards. All of the key issues identified in the previous inspection have been tackled. Standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) have improved through better planning of the curriculum and more rigorous assessment of pupils' skills and progress. Plans for improving aspects of the school's work are more thorough and involve both staff and governors.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	B	C	C	C
writing	D	D	C	C
mathematics	A	B	D	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Pupils' achievements are good. In the Foundation Stage (reception classes) pupils achieve very well because the wide range of well-planned activities stimulates their learning and adults provide very good teaching. However, a significant minority do not reach the goals expected nationally by the end of reception, particularly in communication, language and literacy. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is good in reading, writing, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 2, standards are average and have improved in writing since the 2002 national tests. Achievement in art is good, with many examples of work that are better than would be expected for pupils' ages. Achievement in ICT and religious education is satisfactory. Pupils in the Resourced Provision classes achieve very well, helped by the time they spend in mainstream classes. All pupils who have special educational needs do well. The school ensures that all pupils achieve well by paying attention to their particular needs and ensuring that they are fully involved in all learning opportunities.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Their personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are nurtured well. Pupils enjoy school. In many lessons, and around the school, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are good. In quite a few lessons, however, pupils' unsettled behaviour disrupts teaching and slows down their learning. The school provides lots of opportunities that develop pupils' social skills and it is a moral community in which pupils learn about right and wrong. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Very good teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is well planned and organised to provide a rich variety of experiences. Adults have high expectations of the children's achievements. They know just how to encourage and support the children, who are happy, confident and make very good progress in all areas of learning. Throughout the rest of the school, teaching is good, with strengths in detailed planning, methodical teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics, imaginative teaching methods in many lessons, and the good contribution made by teaching assistants. In over half the lessons observed, therefore, teaching was good or better and resulted in pupils working hard and making good gains in their skills. In a few lessons, however, there were weaknesses in the management of pupils' behaviour so they did not concentrate on the work and did not make enough progress.

The curriculum is very well planned and provides a good range of activities. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress are good and ensure that teachers know exactly what pupils need to learn next. Procedures for tracking the progress of pupils across the school and for setting targets for which they can aim are effective. The school provides very good care and support for its pupils and has created a very good partnership with its parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership of the school is good. The headteacher is a very strong, purposeful leader who has seen through a number of improvements in the work of the school successfully. She has a very clear view about what still needs to improve and, along with senior staff and governors, is firmly committed to raising standards. The deputy headteacher provides a very good example through her teaching and has developed areas of the school's work such as assessment. Subject leadership is also strong. The governing body is knowledgeable, well organised and plays a significant part in formulating school policies and monitoring how well the school is doing. Its strong support for the school, coupled with a determination that the school can do better, is an asset.

Management of the school is good. The school runs smoothly, and management has a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve. The school improvement plan is a good document, which focuses correctly on a number of priorities. There are, however, some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that have not been fully dealt with. Measures to ensure that staff continue to develop their skills are very good, as are procedures for the induction of new staff.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school. The great majority feel that their children are making good progress. Pupils say they like school, find lessons interesting and fun, and have to work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Ensure good management of behaviour in all lessons so that pupils benefit from good teaching
- Improve pupils' attendance

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievements are **good** overall. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in the Resourced Provision classes achieve very well. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is good. As many children start school with below average levels of attainment, a significant minority do not reach the standard expected for their ages by the time they join Year 1. By the end of Year 2, however, standards are similar to national averages.

Main strengths

- Children get a very good start to school in the reception classes
- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science
- The Resourced Provision classes enable pupils to achieve very well
- Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs achieve well
- Achievement in art and design is good
- Pupils' achievements have improved significantly since the previous inspection

Commentary

National test results and other performance data

1. The school's results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have improved significantly over the past few years. In recognition of this success, the school received three Schools Achievement Awards between 2000 and 2002. Not surprisingly, it was difficult for the school to continue this improvement in 2003, given that the ability of each group of pupils varies from year to year. Results in reading were average, both compared with all schools and with similar schools, which maintained the standards from the previous year. Results in writing were also average, which was an improvement on the previous year and reflected considerable work done by the staff to raise standards. In mathematics, the results fell significantly to below average, both compared with all schools and with similar schools. Looking at all the test results, more pupils reached the expected Level 2 of attainment than the previous year, but fewer gained the higher Level 3, which reflected the composition of the year group. The current Year 2 has a higher than usual proportion of pupils who have special educational needs so next year's test results are likely to be below average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

NB The results of pupils in the Resourced Provision classes are included, which lowers the school's average score

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.0 (16.0)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	14.5 (13.4)	14.8 (14.4)
mathematics	16.0 (17.0)	16.4 (16.5)

There were 62 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Given that many pupils start school with below average attainment, these results, and the standard of work seen in pupils' books, represent good achievement. Pupils' attainment is tracked as they move through the school and records show that, of last year's Year 2, about a third of the pupils made better than expected progress since the beginning of Year 1. Very few pupils made less than the expected progress. The school's leadership is focused on ensuring that all pupils' achievements are good, so staff are also determined that pupils should do as well as they can. A well-planned curriculum, good teaching, and a strong emphasis on continually improving provision ensure that most pupils reach the standard of which they are capable.

Foundation Stage (reception classes)

3. Children achieve very well in the reception classes, particularly in their personal and social development, their language development and in their growing knowledge and understanding of the world. They make very good progress because the curriculum is well planned to meet their needs and adults teach new skills very effectively. The positive environment for learning in these well-organised classes results in the children being happy, confident and productive. For example, the children gained a lot from a number of lively sessions observed where a new skill was introduced by the teacher, followed by a time when some children chose from a variety of 'jobs' to be done, whilst others worked closely with adults to consolidate the main learning for the lesson. By rotating the activities, all the children made very good progress. Many pupils are well on course to reach the standards expected at the end of the reception year, although only a very small proportion will exceed them.

Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2

4. Pupils' achievements are good in Years 1 and 2 because the curriculum is well organised and the teaching is effective. In English, pupils achieve well in all aspects of their work. Teachers provide lots of opportunities in lessons for pupils to strengthen their speaking and listening skills. Reading is taught methodically, particularly the ways in which pupils' can use sounds and other clues to read unfamiliar words. Spelling, handwriting and punctuation are taught systematically and are strong features of pupils' writing by the end of Year 2. The content of many pupils' writing, however, does not show the variety of sentences and imaginative use of language often seen by the end of Year 2. In mathematics, pupils achieve well, particularly in their number work. In science, pupils' factual knowledge develops well. By Year 2, they are beginning to carry out simple experiments, with support, though this is an aspect of pupils' attainment that the school is working to improve. Pupils achieve well in art and design because teaching is supported by a very good scheme of work that introduces pupils to a wide range of techniques and media. As a result, there are many examples of pupils' art work that are of a higher standard than normally seen for their ages.

Pupils in the Resourced Provision classes

5. The school provides education for 16 pupils who have severe learning difficulties. Some of their time is spent in the Resourced Provision classes, but it is the school's aim that they should spend as much time as possible learning alongside pupils in the mainstream classes. These pupils achieve very well. They develop their social skills rapidly, and this is effectively promoted through well-managed sessions at the beginning of each day. Their communication skills develop very well through the teachers' effective use of Makaton (a type of signing) and picture exchange systems (where pictures are used to communicate) and, from the earliest age, pupils begin to take responsibility for their self-registration and timetables. All pupils have an individual learning programme, based on the recommendations of their Annual Review, and designed to fully reintegrate them into mainstream lessons, as appropriate. They spend playtime and lunchtime with all the pupils, and are completely at home playing with their friends.

6. Pupils achieve well in many aspects of their skills. They develop their handwriting skills, learning how to hold and control a pencil. By the end of the reception year, some pupils are able to trace or copy their names. By the end of Year 2, from an early stage of counting and pattern matching, they progress to counting aloud and adding and subtracting numbers to 10. More able pupils begin to work accurately with higher two-digit numbers. By the end of Year 2, pupils who were previously unable to follow or trace a curved line are able to write their own name and numbers up to 10. During lessons, the pupils develop their collaborative skills, such as working together in science, where they share practical tasks. In mainstream lessons, these pupils actively participate in music and physical education, which promotes their teamwork skills. The school has done very well to maintain the very good achievement that was noted at the last inspection.

Pupils who have special educational needs

7. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in most lessons and towards the targets set for them. For example, these pupils consistently achieve the well-defined targets set

out in their individual education plans, within the time identified, which results in good progress over a longer period. Short-term targets, such as to moderate calling out in lessons, are also met well. In lessons, teachers make sure that these pupils are fully involved. Tasks are usually appropriate to their needs but, when they are required to do the same work as other pupils, they are usually well supported by the teacher or well-trained teaching assistant. For example, in a good English lesson for Year 2 about non-fiction books, the teaching assistant sat with a group of pupils who have special needs during the teacher's introduction, which kept them focused on the discussion. The subsequent group activities were well chosen to meet these pupils' needs and the teaching assistant sat with them, explaining what they needed to do and monitoring their work. The school does very well to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Improvement since the last inspection

8. At the previous inspection, pupils' achievements were satisfactory overall, but unsatisfactory in writing and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' achievements are now at least satisfactory in all the subjects inspected and good in most. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection underpinned by strong leadership and better teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is **good**. As a result, pupils enjoy school and behave well in the playground and around the school. Behaviour and attitudes in lessons are **satisfactory**, but not all teachers have established well ordered classroom routines. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school
- Pupils do not always make as much progress in lessons as they could because they fuss and are slow to settle
- Behaviour in the playground is good
- There is good provision for pupils' personal development
- Attendance is unsatisfactory with levels below the national average

Commentary

9. Pupils and parents express very positive views about the school. Parents are particularly pleased by the way that the school encourages their children to become mature and responsible. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and they like their teachers. Many complain though that behaviour is not always good and several told inspectors they were unhappy about how noisy other children could be in lessons. Inspectors agree. Although behaviour around the school, at lunch and in the school playground is good, pupils are not always as well behaved in lessons. There have been just two temporary exclusions over the past 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	190	2 (one child)	
White – any other White background	2		

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

10. Where teachers are not successful in establishing orderly routines, such as the need to put up your hand to answer questions, learning is slowed and pupils make less progress than they could. This is because pupils call out answers, which stops the teacher from checking that all the pupils,

and not just the eager few, understand what is being taught. In these lessons, pupils often fuss when organised into group work and they can be slow to settle to tasks set by the teacher. Where classes are noisy, the pupils make less progress in their speaking and listening skills because they do not readily listen to each other's contributions in class discussions. By contrast, in lessons where teachers manage their classes well, including in the reception classes, children are attentive and get more done because they get on quickly with what they are asked to do.

11. Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. There are satisfactory opportunities for reflection in *Circle Time* discussions (where pupils gather in a circle and take turns to listen to each other's views), and in work in some subjects, such as science. In the assemblies observed there were some opportunities for reflection. Social and moral development is fostered strongly through the opportunities that pupils have to take on responsibility. Particularly successful is the school's *Buddy* system, where older pupils help organise activities at playtime and befriend younger children who do not have anyone to play with. Although the children are all from similar cultural backgrounds and none currently come from ethnic minority families, the school has taken care to broaden pupils' experience by introducing them to music, dance and religious festivals from other cultures.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.5

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

12. The level of attendance in the school is unsatisfactory. There is a small number of pupils with very poor attendance and with whom special effort has been made, in some cases with the support of the local Education Welfare Officer. A high proportion of absences, however, are caused by parents keeping their children off school because they have booked family holidays in term time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, but evidence from pupils' work last year and the progress pupils make over time shows that it is normally better than this. The curriculum is well planned and provides a good range of experiences both in lessons and for clubs and visits. All pupils benefit from this, with very good arrangements to ensure that pupils in the Resourced Provision classes and those in the rest of the school gain from working together. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. Pupils are cared for very well and the school has a good partnership with parents, other schools and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and in the Resourced Provision classes. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work and progress is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception classes make very good gains in learning
- Teaching for pupils in the Resourced Provision classes is very effective
- Detailed planning for lessons makes it clear what pupils should learn
- Basic skills in English and mathematics are taught well
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning
- In many lessons, pupils try hard and work well in pairs and groups
- In too many lessons, teachers' management of pupils' attitudes and behaviour was not good enough
- In a few lessons, work was not matched well enough to pupils' existing attainment, so it lacked challenge
- Assessment systems are good, and the information is used increasingly to manage pupils' progress

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	7 (18%)	14 (36%)	14 (36%)	3 (8%)		

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. Very good teaching in the Foundation Stage (reception classes) is based on effective routines for learning, and monitoring the children's progress carefully so they are encouraged to take the next step in each aspect of their development. For example, in a very good session building skills in mathematics, the teacher's planning identified tasks for children of differing levels of ability. A very clear whole-class introduction used dolls in a hoop to show how a set of objects can be counted, separated and re-counted, laying the foundations for calculation. Subsequent activities were very well organised, with some children choosing their own tasks from a range of 'jobs' the teacher had prepared. This enabled the adults to give maximum support to children completing the mathematics work. In this way, the children gained a lot from a rich range of experiences and from the adult support. Adults have high expectations of how quickly children can learn and teaching methods are both imaginative and effective.

14. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the Resourced Provision classes. Lessons are focused and very well structured to retain and extend the pupils' concentration and interest. In a lesson where the teaching was excellent, very effective planning allowed for consistent

reinforcement of the work by helping the pupils to learn through a variety of strategies matched to their individual needs. As a result, their interest was sustained and they learnt a lot. Pupils are introduced to problem solving, such as how to record how many bean-bags went into the bin and how many missed the target. This is very well managed by staff, who encourage the pupils to work out the solution themselves. Skilled adults provide very good support in group and one-to-one situations, making very good use of the pupils' individual learning targets. Very close co-operation with outside specialists ensures that the pupils' needs are met. Teaching assistants also provide high-quality support when pupils move to work in mainstream classes, which helps the pupils to be fully involved as part of their peer group and encourages their social interaction and personal development.

15. Teachers plan work for the term methodically and each lesson in some detail. Plans include a clear statement about what the pupils should learn during the lesson, which helps to keep learning on track, and is usually shared with the pupils so that they know exactly what they are trying to accomplish. For example, in a good English lesson for Year 1, the teacher planned to use the book '*Suddenly!*' by Colin McNaughton to teach the pupils about the range of clues they could use to read unfamiliar words and to follow the plot. Because the teaching was well focused, the children learnt rapidly how the pictures, letter sounds and context could all help them to be better readers. Most lessons are equally well planned.

16. In English and mathematics, basic skills are taught well because teachers have a good knowledge of these subjects, they assess pupils' existing skills accurately, and they know what pupils need to learn next. For example, each pupil has a book to read at home or at school, intended to develop their reading skills. These are well matched to pupils' level of ability and provide just the right challenge to help them improve. Reading activities seen in English lessons also developed pupils' skills effectively. Handwriting, spelling and punctuation are taught well, which leads to good achievement in writing. In a good mathematics lesson for Year 1, pupils improved their skills in adding numbers because the teacher used a wide range of strategies effectively. Groups of pupils put on character hats, and everyone had to add the different groups. This enabled the teacher to hammer home vocabulary such as, "How many altogether?" and "Make sure you count them all!". Good teaching of basic skills helps pupils to do well in English and mathematics, and supports work in other subjects effectively.

17. Teaching assistants sometimes help a pupil who has particular special needs, or sometimes provide support for a group of pupils. These assistants make an important contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Year 2, a less able group of pupils made good progress because the teaching assistant used good questioning, which challenged them to think carefully about how best to add three two-digit numbers. Assistants who work with pupils who have special needs keep them focused on the lesson and provide invaluable support when these pupils are tackling activities. Teachers play their part by making sure that the assistants know what to do and valuing the part they play in pupils' learning. The combined efforts of the staff ensure that the quality of teaching is good for pupils who have special needs.

18. When they are fully engaged by the teaching, pupils try hard with their work and get a good amount done. For example, in a good art lesson, Year 2 pupils were fascinated by patterns on plates, which the teacher used to generate ideas. Their enthusiasm was carried through into their own pattern making so that, by the end of the lesson, most were well on the way to completing their own paper plate designs.

19. In the lessons that were unsatisfactory, or in satisfactory lessons where there were weaknesses, it was most often the teacher's weak management of pupils' behaviour that slowed the learning. Pupils were unsettled from the start of the lesson and the teacher did not set expectations for good behaviour clearly enough or manage the unsatisfactory behaviour firmly enough. Difficulties occurred most often in whole-class sessions, with pupils being generally inattentive, restless, and calling out answers. Some of these whole-class sessions lasted too long. Pupils were usually more settled when engaged in group or individual activities. In most cases, teachers followed the school's policy for managing behaviour, but they were not consistent enough, for example accepting answers

from pupils who called out. When pupils were coming and going from other groups and activities, it posed additional problems for the teacher.

20. In a few lessons, particularly in mathematics, tasks were not matched well enough to the existing attainment of some of the pupils, especially the more able, so they did not make the progress of which they were capable. The management of the school is well aware through its own monitoring that there are some weaknesses in teaching and is tackling them through its performance management systems. The quality of teaching is similar to that found at the previous inspection, but it is now more effective because pupils' achievements have improved.

21. At whole-school level, there are very good procedures for evaluating the standards pupils are reaching and for identifying areas for improvement, as seen in the current focus on raising standards in pupils' writing. As a result, the school keeps a careful check on pupils' progress and can predict the standard they should reach by the time they leave the school. At classroom level, assessment procedures are good. Teacher's marking of pupils' work is thorough, positive, and the best identifies what pupils need to do next to improve. Where work in lessons was not well matched to pupils' existing attainment, however, information from assessment had not been used well enough to guide planning. Teachers, pupils and parents are involved in setting targets for improvement, for example in writing. The use of these targets is not yet fully embedded in day-to-day work in the classroom because both pupils and teachers rarely refer to the targets on a day-to-day basis.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum offers a **good** range of opportunities for pupils to develop their learning and achieve well. Enrichment activities provided outside lessons are **good**. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improving and refining the curriculum has contributed strongly to raising pupils' achievement
- A very good personal, health and social education programme develops pupils' attitudes and values effectively
- The school day is not always organised effectively to minimise disruption to pupils' learning
- The positioning of outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage creates some barriers to children's learning

Commentary

22. All statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. The positive features of the curriculum at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and weaknesses identified in literacy and numeracy planning have been effectively overcome. One way in which this has been achieved has been through some very effective curriculum development, such as planning more specifically for teaching key skills across subjects. This has created more opportunities for pupils to apply and practise their skills. For example, pupils' writing skills are now developed well as part of their work in subjects other than English. The school also plans work using themes that provide learning in familiar contexts for the pupils and make links between different subjects and areas of learning. First hand experiences are often planned to make learning more enjoyable. For example, during the inspection, a visitor brought live birds to show to the children as part of their studies and this engaged and motivated the pupils to want to find out more.

23. In addition to football and recorder clubs, in which many pupils are keen to take part, other enriching activities also take place. Visits in the locality, such as the local church as part of their work in religious education, and visitors, an example of which is described above, form an important part of school life.

24. The approach to planning the curriculum shows that the needs of different groups of pupils and individuals are well considered, although the organisation of some sessions means that time is sometimes wasted in regrouping pupils with different teachers in different parts of the school. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their academic and personal

development is well supported through clearly set out individual plans, groupings and deployment of staff. Some effective work is taking place in analysing the behaviour of those causing concern so that short-term targets for improvement can be set. The needs of pupils with a statement outlining their particular requirements are well met, and their annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement.

25. The school has a very good programme of support for pupils' personal development, which is specifically defined and taught, and also woven effectively into other parts of the curriculum. For example, in English, pupils are encouraged to write about their feelings and emotions.

26. The accommodation is spacious indoors and attractively enhanced with some eye-catching displays. Attractively designed outdoor play areas help to ensure productive play at break times. Recent re-siting of the mixed-age reception and Year 1 class does mean that not all Foundation Stage children have immediate access to outdoor provision. This limits the number of opportunities for these children to work on a larger scale. A wide range of good quality resources supports learning, including a well-sited library for ready reference by pupils, and banks of computers to assist learning in a range of subjects.

27. The school has a good level of teaching and support staff who have a good depth as well as breadth of experience and are well-trained. For example, pupils have access to a specially trained counsellor who is able to deal with any personal concerns. A special area, called the 'Panda Room', is set aside for confidential discussions. A close partnership between teaching staff and assistants helps to support pupils effectively.

Care, guidance and support

The support and care for pupils is **very good**.

Main strengths

- Very effective procedures are in place to ensure pupils' health and safety, care and welfare
- Care and support for those pupils in the Resourced Provision classes are very good
- The school consults with pupils and they feel their views are valued

Commentary

28. As at the last inspection, the school continues to ensure that there are very good systems in place for child protection and to provide for the safety and welfare of pupils. There is a consistent approach among all staff, including those who look after children during the lunch hour, which ensures that pupils are made to feel secure and confident that they can approach adults and ask for help if they have any worries or concerns. Teaching assistants have had specific training in counselling and the school has a special room that pupils know they can go to for help, if they feel unhappy or have any problems.

29. Pupils are also made to feel their views are valued. Issues are raised and discussed by pupils in class *Circle Time* sessions and, where there is an issue of common concern, classes appoint a pupil to represent their views to the headteacher. For example, this happened when children raised concerns about the use of apparatus in the playground. Pupils are also encouraged to help one another, for example through the *Buddy* system (where children have responsibility for befriending others during play times).

30. Arrangements for recording and keeping track of the personal development of pupils in the Resourced Provision classes are extremely good and this contributes strongly to the high quality of provision from which the pupils benefit. There are similar, satisfactory systems for pupils in other classes, though these are not as extensive. Pupils benefit from positive feedback for behaving sensibly and with maturity, for example through being awarded certificates for acts of kindness.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has developed a **very good** partnership with parents, and there are **good** partnership arrangements with other schools and the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept well informed about school activities and how well their children are doing, and they are encouraged to support their children's education
- Parents have very positive views about the school and many offer help in the school and classrooms
- Good links have been fostered with the local community and pre-schools and this helps children settle into school
- Too much schooling is missed because parents take their children on holiday in term time

Commentary

31. The school has further improved on the good partnership with parents that was reported in the last inspection. In their questionnaire responses, parents expressed very positive views about almost all aspects of the school, although a few felt they were not kept well enough informed about how well their children are doing. Inspectors found school reports to be helpful and informative, with useful targets in them that guide parents on what children need to do to improve their skills. In addition, parents are kept well informed through parents' evenings and opportunities to meet their child's teacher early in the school year. Parents have also been invited into school for themed open days to look at mathematics and science activities. These initiatives, along with newsletters that list upcoming topics that are due to be taught, enable parents to support effectively their children's continued learning at home.

32. As parents themselves confirm, the school is approachable and responsive to parents' views. In turn, parents are very supportive of the school. Good use has been made of the school's generous accommodation by providing parents with a room where teachers can leave jobs for volunteers to take on. Many come in to help, for example in preparing teaching materials for use in lessons and in listening to children read. Too many parents, however, are responsible for their children missing school because they take their children on holiday in term time.

33. There are good links with the local community, including local churches. Pupils go out to visit local old folks' homes to sing for them, and they regularly raise money and Harvest Festival contributions for local charities. Visitors from the community also help to enhance the curriculum on offer to pupils, for example soccer coaching provided by Southampton Football Club.

34. Because the school has effective links with local playgroups, which include teachers and other staff visiting them and sharing expertise, the transition from pre-school to the reception year is a smooth one. This contributes to the good start that children get off to in their reception year. There are sound links with the junior school to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 2. Again, induction arrangements smooth the transition, but there are relatively few links between the teachers to ensure that the schools take a similar approach to learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership, particularly in identifying and pursuing aspects of the school's work that can improve. Governance, and the management of the school, are both **good**, with some very strong features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership provides a clear vision and direction for school improvement
- The school plans very well to meet the needs of each pupil and ensures they are fully included in all aspects of school life
- The governing body is knowledgeable, well organised and involved in all aspects of the school
- All staff are equally committed to fulfilling the aims of the school
- Management of the Resourced Provision classes is very good
- The school places considerable emphasis on the professional development of the staff
- Remedying weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning has not been seen through rigorously enough

Commentary

35. The headteacher is a strong, purposeful and very effective leader who has seen through a number of improvements in the work of the school successfully. She has a very clear view about what still needs to improve and, along with senior staff and governors, is firmly committed to raising standards. The headteacher anticipates areas in which the school's work can improve and utilises initiatives that are in sympathy with its aims, for example achieving Investors in People status and currently working towards a Healthy Schools Award. These initiatives ensure that provision continues to improve and have played a significant part in raising standards. The school is involved in the Hampshire Index for Inclusion as a school exemplifying good practice. Staff are fully supportive of these initiatives and, by working together as a team, they remain motivated with raised aspirations.

36. The deputy headteacher sets a very good example for others through her good teaching and her leadership of a number of areas of the school's work. As the assessment co-ordinator, she has established a clear focus on identifying precisely how well pupils are doing, by carefully and regularly measuring the standards they attain and tracking their progress. As a result, subject leaders fully understand their responsibility to ensure that provision in each subject should enable pupils to make the best possible progress. Subject leadership is strong. The delegation of responsibilities is appropriate, and subject leaders are given guidance on how to carry out their duties effectively, in order to ensure that there is a clear educational direction in their subject. Subject leaders manage and monitor their subjects well. They have time released from teaching their classes to observe teaching and learning, look at teachers' planning and evaluate samples of pupils' work, in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their subject and plan improvements.

37. All staff are encouraged to contribute to the development of the school and this has resulted in an effective and hard working team, equally committed to fulfilling the aims of the school. Relationships are very positive and there is a strong sense of team spirit, which creates a very good capacity for future development.

38. Management of the Resourced Provision classes is very good. Policies are well considered and consistently implemented, which ensures that the pupils' individual requirements are met effectively. Very good communication between staff in the Resourced Provision classes and other teachers plays a significant part in ensuring that the strong emphasis on including the Resourced Provision pupils in mainstream classes, and vice versa, is successful. The Resourced Provision classes have maintained the very good standards reported in the last inspection.

39. Leadership of the school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision

and has developed a clear and relevant action plan to address perceived shortcomings. Management is good, as shown in the training and support provided for all teaching assistants and in the close monitoring of provision. The co-ordinator has correctly identified the need for closer tracking of individual pupils to assess the impact of provision on their daily routines and quality of work.

40. The governing body is knowledgeable, well organised and plays a significant part in formulating school policies and monitoring how well the school is doing. Its strong support for the headteacher, staff and pupils, coupled with a determination that the school can do better, is an asset. Governors are effective in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. They fully support the school in promoting policies to ensure that all pupils benefit equally from the good provision and so achieve to the best of their capabilities. Many governors visit the school regularly to help in its work. In their formal visits, they observe lessons and meet the headteacher and key staff to discuss developments in subjects.

41. The school runs smoothly, and management has a good understanding of what the school does well and what can be improved. All staff were involved in formulating the school improvement plan, which is a good document. It contains appropriate priorities that focus on raising standards. However, some of the criteria by which the school says it will measure its success are not clear enough and do not relate strongly enough to the impact on standards. The headteacher and other senior staff monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. Whilst this identifies targets for improvement and support, these are not, in some classes, followed up rigorously enough.

42. There is a strong emphasis on developing staff experience and skills so that the performance of the school is improved. Measures to ensure that staff continue to develop their skills are very good. Staff are well informed and up to date with educational developments. The school has introduced a good system of performance management for all staff, based on the nationally recommended framework. This includes setting targets that focus on pupils' progress, subject management and personal professional development.

43. Procedures for the induction of new staff are very good. New members of staff are supported through a very effective, structured programme of induction processes. In 2003, Hampshire County Council congratulated the school on the very good systems and practices in place to induct newly qualified teachers in their first year of teaching. The arrangements for the financial management of the school are good. The school has effective financial routines that are understood and followed by the staff involved.

44. Whilst strengths in the leadership and management of the school were recognised at the last inspection, the impact of strong leadership is more evident now. During the last few years, standards have risen and the drive to raise standards still further has become more focused. As a result, there has been a clear improvement in the quality of leadership, management and governance since the last inspection.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	610,333.00	Balance from previous year	54,069.00
Total expenditure	634,167.00	Balance carried forward to the next	30,235.00
Expenditure per pupil	3338.00		

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the reception classes is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in all areas of learning results in children achieving very well
- Very effective links between home, playgroups and the school provide children with a smooth start to their schooling
- Very effective monitoring of children's progress guides planning, grouping and individual targets for learning
- Too little thought is given to planning outdoor learning activities

Commentary

45. Children are helped to achieve very well in the Foundation Stage through planning of rich experiences that are taught very effectively. From a low starting point, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills, many pupils are well on course to reach the standards expected at the end of the reception year, although only a very small proportion will exceed them. Very effective and enthusiastic leadership clearly identifies how to improve provision further. Management is good. Good collaboration between the current and previous members of the Foundation Stage team maintains a strong focus on continuous improvement. Very effective displays value children's work and aid their independence, with prompts to remind them about what they are expected to do. Curriculum planning, the usefulness of assessment and the quality of teaching and learning have all improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' very good achievements have been maintained during a period of change nationally in expectations for these young children's learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths

- Children achieve very well in this area of learning so that a large proportion are on course to reach the standards expected at the end of the reception year
- There are highly effective procedures for settling children into school
- Teachers have very high expectations that encourage children to behave well and work independently of adults for sustained periods

Commentary

46. Children make very good progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills, many from a low starting point, through very good teaching and learning that permeates much of the curriculum. Although it was early in the school year, children arrived confidently each morning, showed a high degree of independence during most of the day, and were building positive relationships with adults and other children. The 'jobs list' is a very good way of encouraging children to choose which tasks they will do and when, and to take responsibility for ensuring they are completed. Quite a number of children still have difficulty with aspects of self-care, such as dressing and undressing, but teachers persevere to encourage independence. Children are well behaved. This is because right and wrong are strongly reinforced so that children are aware of the consequences of their actions. This was seen when some large coins went missing and children offered their own sensible views on the consequences of such action and why it was unfair for others. Children's views are valued and they are helped to feel safe and secure in their new environment.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths

- Children achieve very well in this area of learning, but standards are still below those expected of similar aged children by the end of the reception year
- Key skills are taught very well in whole-class lessons and in groups

Commentary

47. Children's communication and language skills are generally low when they start school. Effective teaching and learning helps children to make very good progress over the course of the year and to achieve very well in lessons. Children are encouraged to listen attentively and to respond with an increased vocabulary. Teachers place a very strong emphasis on eliciting responses from even the most reluctant child. However, many children still have difficulty constructing coherent replies beyond one or two words. A very small number of more able children use simple phrases, for example to explain their views on shared books. Adults encourage children to enjoy books by having time to handle and browse through them. Children also develop strategies to understand stories by using pictures, and a small number of more able children use letter sounds. A very good focus is placed on teaching early reading skills in groups, matched to children's needs. In writing, children can often barely make marks when they join school. By the end of the reception year, some are using very simple words in their own writing, although letters are not always correctly formed. They are given very good opportunities to practise writing skills in self-chosen activities, such as tracing patterns and letters.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths

- Children achieve particularly well in counting and their knowledge of numbers
- Teachers use effective strategies to help children achieve greater accuracy in their number work

Commentary

48. Many pupils are on course to reach national expectations in counting. This shows good achievement since their low attainment on entry to the school. Good teaching helps children to use effective strategies to aid counting, such as making sure they touch each object separately as they count. Most of the current children count aloud to 10 and beyond along with the teacher, and recognise some numbers. A few count objects accurately to five. A small number, with encouragement and strong support from adults, add two different groups of objects but still have little understanding of calculation overall. Adults are effective at checking children's understanding of newly introduced ideas through effective questioning and working in small groups.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths

- Children have a very good range of experiences over the year
- Teaching is very effective in raising children's curiosity about the world around them
- Teachers use a very good range of resources to bring learning alive

Commentary

49. By the end of the reception year, children's knowledge and understanding of the world has increased significantly since they started school. Some particularly good learning took place in the lessons observed because teachers planned activities carefully to raise children's curiosity and enabled them to investigate first hand. Teachers' very good questioning helps to deepen children's understanding, for example to talk about and compare likes and dislikes when tasting different foods. As a result, children understand that people are not all the same. They are helped to understand more about their own lives and the world around them by thinking about themselves in the past and how they have changed. Teachers use resources effectively to stimulate discussion, for example

when comparing what children wore as babies and toddlers. They use significant events, such as baptism to help children to understand about beliefs. Teachers provide opportunities for children to work independently to develop their skills in using computers, for example children use a mouse confidently and accurately to control movements on a screen.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Gymnastic skills are taught very well
- Not all children have frequent, immediate access to an outside area for physical activity on a larger scale

Commentary

50. Children achieve well in developing their physical skills overall, which match the standards expected of similar aged children. Some particularly good achievement was observed in a gym session where children's imaginative movements were improved significantly. They skipped, slid and turned with increasing control on and between large apparatus, finding spaces to move into as opposed to huddling together. Children were inspired not only by the example set by the teacher, but also by other children, who were encouraged to demonstrate good practice and evaluate their efforts. This provided an effective incentive for them to improve. Children do not have enough opportunity to develop their physical skills on a larger scale outdoors. These sessions are brief and the location of one of the reception classes means that there is no immediate access to the outdoor facilities. Children show sound control of small equipment and tools to make marks, paint and construct models.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Musical skills are taught well
- Teachers provide good opportunities for art work
- Role-play areas are not particularly inspiring to encourage more imaginative play

Commentary

51. Children achieve well in this area of learning. Standards match those expected for children of this age and most are on course to reach the expectations expressed in the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Some very high standards were observed in a singing lesson because effective strategies to improve singing were used by the teacher. The first attempt at singing was taped and children questioned carefully to help them to evaluate where their efforts could be improved. This helped the children to perform even better. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities for art work and children explore different media in self-choice activities. Well-organised resources are provided and individual style encouraged, which results in variety and imagination in children's work, such as painted faces and pastel representations of fruit. While the learning environment is generally of a high quality, not enough thought is given to enclosing role-play areas and equipping them to create more distinct, interesting places where children can be encouraged to create more imaginative scenarios.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are good
- Standards in writing have improved
- Good opportunities for speaking and listening in many lessons develop pupils' skills effectively
- Teaching is good, but weaknesses in the management of pupils' behaviour slow down learning in some lessons
- Leadership of the subject is good

Commentary

52. During the past few years, standards in reading have been relatively constant. Standards in writing have risen because the school focused on improving this weaker aspect of pupils' work through careful assessment, better teaching and more opportunities to write. Results of the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2 were average in reading, and about the same as those gained by similar schools. In writing, the results improved from below average in 2002 to average in 2003. Work in Year 2 pupils' books from last year confirms the picture of average standards in writing and shows that most pupils made good progress, particularly in their confidence to write at length, and in the skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Overall, pupils' start school with below average attainment in English, and a significant minority has poor language skills. Pupils achieve well to reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Those who have special educational needs and those who are more able achieve well, in line with their capabilities. The school's own records of pupils' progress confirm that about a third of pupils did better than expected in both reading and writing, compared with their attainment at the beginning of Year 1. This success is owing to good leadership, good teaching and a well-planned curriculum that teaches the basic skills of reading and writing in a methodical way.

53. In Year 2, standards of speaking and listening are about average. Teachers provide lots of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in whole-class sessions and by using a good range of strategies that enable pupils to speak for a purpose and to listen actively. For example, when an adult brought some Christian symbols into a religious education lesson, Year 2 pupils listened to her explanation carefully and then asked thoughtful questions to find out more information. In a number of lessons, teachers used 'talking partners' so that pupils could discuss their ideas. In a Year 1 science lesson, pairs of pupils looked carefully at each other's facial features and talked about the differences, which enabled them to make sensible points in a whole-class discussion. Activities in *Circle Time* also promote good listening and encourage the expression of feelings. By Year 2, most pupils listen carefully and explain their ideas clearly. In some lessons seen, however, pupils did not listen well enough during whole-class sessions. They need to be really interested to display the listening skills of which they are capable.

54. Pupils in the current Year 2 vary considerably in their reading skills. The more able read simple novels fluently and take unfamiliar words in their stride, using a wide range of skills to work them out. They understand the plot and predict what might happen next. Those of average ability read books with pictures and text fairly accurately. They have good skills for tackling unfamiliar words, particularly using their knowledge of letter sounds, but they need adult support to understand the text fully. There is a significant proportion of pupils who are still developing confidence in reading books with simple, repetitive text, so standards are likely to be below average overall by the end of Year 2. Good support from parents at home, reading to adults in school, and a good variety of reading material are helping all pupils to achieve well. Emphasis on reading within literacy lessons reinforces skills, as seen when Year 1 pupils read '*Suddenly!*' by Colin McNaughton. Not only did they thoroughly enjoy the book, but they learnt a lot about letter sounds, using clues to read words, and following the plot.

55. Year 2 pupils' writing from last year shows that they achieved well, but the content of many pupils' work still lacked variety, interest and an imaginative use of language. Teachers' marking shows that they worked to inject more variety into the structure of pupils' sentences. Re-telling the story of Misha and Masha, one child wrote, "Then, later on, she saw a little house so she opened the

door and went inside”, which responded well to the teacher’s request to use ‘time words’. The least able pupils’ writing is fairly brief, but tells a story clearly, even though spelling and punctuation are inconsistent. Pupils write for a good range of purposes, with examples of narrative writing, very good reports on visits out of school, letter writing, instructions and poetry. The school’s strong focus on improving standards in writing is evident in the amount of work in pupils’ books and the way in which teachers’ marking is very positive, but identifies what pupils need to do next to improve. Whole-school initiatives, such as the ‘Ashley News’, provide good opportunities for pupils to write for a wider audience.

56. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan lessons meticulously and include a good range of tasks so that pupils are interested and work well. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, the main focus was learning how to use an index to find information. In the whole-class session, the teacher reviewed features of non-fiction texts, drawing on the pupils’ ideas through well-targeted questions, before explaining clearly how to use an index. Well-chosen books and resources enabled the pupils to work in groups finding information and, by the end of the lesson, they all knew what to do. Basic skills, such as letter sounds, handwriting and spelling are taught well. Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils’ learning effectively, particularly when they work with small groups and individuals, so less able pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Although teachers have high expectations of pupils’ contribution to lessons, they do not always manage this as well as they should. As a result, in some of the lessons observed, there were times when pupils’ unsettled behaviour reduced the learning for the class. Group work was productive in most lessons, but lacked challenge in others and did not engage the pupils fully.

57. Management of the subject is good. Strengths and weaknesses in pupils’ achievements are identified clearly through careful monitoring, and areas for development have been followed through rigorously. As a result, standards in writing, the main focus for improvement, have been raised, following considerable staff training. Focused initiatives, such as concentrating on improving the organisation of the more able Year 2 pupils’ writing, have been successful. The curriculum is broad and well planned, so sequences of lessons fit together well and pupils’ skills develop steadily. There was little evidence in pupils’ work, however, that ICT is used systematically to support writing. The assessment of pupils’ attainment and the tracking of their progress across the school are very good, so teachers know exactly what pupils can already do and what they need to learn next. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, particularly in writing standards. Strong leadership of the subject, and a continuing whole-school focus on raising standards in key skills, provide a very good springboard for future improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. The use and development of pupils’ language and literacy skills in other subjects is good. Speaking and listening skills are developed through work in most other subjects, and teachers plan for these opportunities carefully. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes, such as reports about their visits out of school, or instructions about how to make orange squash in design and technology. In subjects such as science and art, pupils learn special vocabulary. The school improvement plan is focusing particularly on how key skills can be developed in subjects across the curriculum, so teachers are very aware when planning lessons that they must take account of ways in which pupils’ literacy skills can be improved.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils use a wide range of strategies to solve calculations and so achieve well in number work

- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly with the less able pupils
- Pupils' attainment is assessed regularly and their progress is monitored carefully
- In a few lessons, work was not challenging enough, particularly for the more able pupils

Commentary

59. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 improved significantly following the previous inspection, reaching a high point in 2001 when they were well above the national average. This improvement was one of the key reasons why the school gained a series of Schools Achievement Awards up to 2002 for better test performance. Results were above average in 2002, but they fell to just below average in 2003, both compared with all schools and with similar schools. The main reason for the decline was the lower proportion of more able pupils in that particular year group. Whilst almost all pupils reached the expected Level 2 of attainment, more than the previous year, only about a quarter gained the higher Level 3, compared with 40 per cent the previous year. The school's own monitoring of these pupils' progress shows that about a third did better than expected, considering their attainment at the beginning of Year 1. Bearing in mind that pupils start school with below average mathematics skills overall, and the balance of ability in the year group, the 2003 results represent good achievement for most of those pupils.

60. Year 2 pupils' work from last year shows that standards were about average. Pupils' knowledge of basic number facts is good. They learn to work methodically when calculating possible answers and to recognise that addition can be done in any order. They use different strategies to solve calculations and explain their methods orally. For example, in a Year 2 lesson seen at this early stage in the school year, more able pupils added three two-digit numbers and learned how to look for combinations of numbers to make the task easier, whilst less able pupils added three single-digit numbers accurately. Work from last year shows that pupils have a sound knowledge of shapes and measures.

61. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, but evidence from pupils' work last year and the progress pupils make over time shows that it is normally better than this. The school makes very effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to plan and provide a consistent framework for teaching and learning. Teachers plan lessons in detail to ensure that pupils learn specific skills, and they use a good range of teaching methods. Planning allows for regular consolidation of skills.

62. Pupils' achieve well in number because they practise and sharpen mental skills at the beginning of each lesson and are taught a variety of strategies to solve calculations. Resources are good and used well to extend the pupils' mathematical understanding. For example, during whole-class sessions pupils wrote answers on white boards in response to questions from the teacher. These were used to share strategies and assess learning. Teachers encourage pupils to use proper mathematical vocabulary, and employ good questioning techniques that enable pupils to reason for themselves, to recall previous learning and to check understanding. For example, in a good Year 1 lesson, the teacher's effective questioning, targeted at pupils of differing abilities, helped many pupils to take the next step in their learning.

63. In the lessons seen, good progress was made when pupils remained on task because they were challenged and interested. Where teaching was satisfactory, but had weaknesses, a lack of challenge led to some pupils, particularly the more able, becoming restless and disturbing the learning of others. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. They plan with teachers and know what pupils should learn in a lesson. When working with less able pupils and those who have special educational needs, classroom assistants are very skilled in explaining tasks carefully and ensuring that the pupils remain focused on their work. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs made good progress in the lessons seen.

64. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Teachers are well supported through training days and staff meetings. The subject leader monitors the quality of teaching and learning in lessons, by looking at teachers' planning and by evaluating samples of pupils' work. This has led to

improvements that have raised standards. For example, the school is developing the aspect of using and applying mathematics, which was identified as a weakness through monitoring. Assessment is thorough and pupils' progress is carefully tracked. Provision in mathematics has improved since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Mathematics is used and developed well in other areas of the curriculum. In science, pupils handle the data from experiments, producing bar charts and pie charts to record results. In an art lesson observed, pupils completed and discussed repeating patterns. In ICT, data handling and numeracy programs are utilised. The school improvement plan has a main target to develop the application of number as a key skill across the curriculum, which is focusing teachers' minds when they plan work in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths

- Pupils' achievements are good
- The curriculum covers all aspects of science effectively
- Lessons involve pupils in lots of practical activities, which capture their interest
- Links between work in science and work in ICT are good
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning

Commentary

66. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average and about the same as at the previous inspection. In 2002, teachers assessed the overall attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 as average. This combined two extremes because a below average proportion reached the expected Level 2, but an above average proportion gained the higher Level 3. These assessments reflected the inclusion of a number of less able Year 2 pupils from the Resourced Provision classes. Teachers' assessments for 2003 were almost identical to 2002, and pupils' work from last year confirms teachers' views. Given that many pupils start school with below average attainment, the sustained average standards at the end of Year 2 represent good achievement, as noted at the previous inspection. Those who have special educational needs and those who are more able achieve well, in line with their capabilities.

67. In Year 2, pupils' knowledge of basic science facts is good. They observe and compare living things and materials, and use books to find out information. They sort living things and describe similarities and differences between their properties. The more able pupils explain and reason about investigations. With guidance, pupils are beginning to carry out simple experiments, and many predict what might happen, observe carefully what does happen, and reach simple conclusions. Pupils' understanding of the need for experiments to be fair is developing.

68. In the three lessons observed, teaching was good in two and satisfactory in one. This, alongside the quality of pupils' work from last year, shows that teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is well planned to cover all aspects of science. Teachers' lesson planning makes explicit the key ideas, learning intentions, vocabulary and expectations of the pupils. A wide variety of teaching approaches and activities is planned, which encourages pupils to question and explore. For example, a visitor to the school brought in live birds for the pupils' to explore first hand. All lessons observed had practical activities that motivated the pupils effectively.

69. Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and start with good opening activities to get the pupils thinking. For example, in Year 2, brainstorming at the beginning of the lesson was used to engage the pupils' interest, and assess their prior learning. Good emphasis on scientific vocabulary is developed throughout. Teaching assistants reinforce pupils' learning and give very careful explanations to the less able pupils to ensure they make progress. Teachers use perceptive questions and pose problems for pupils, which really make them think. Pupils respond

positively because they are interested. Repeated quick activities and lively expressive discussions keep the pupils' attention so they focus on the learning, develop ideas and achieve well. Resources are good and used well.

70. Good links with other subjects ensure that pupils' key skills are developed appropriately in science lessons. For example, the Internet and CD-Roms are used to research science information, using and developing ICT skills. A computer microscope is used for investigating minibeasts, leaves and fingerprints. Speaking and listening skills are developed through discussion and brainstorming activities. Recording results in tables and graphs develops mathematical skills.

71. Good leadership and management of the subject ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the school. The subject leader is well organised and has a clear understanding of where developments need to take place. Her current priority is to improve planning, teaching and assessment of investigational science. Pupils' work is monitored, and their progress is tracked through the school. Assessment data is analysed and compared with school targets to guide future planning. Overall, provision in science has improved since the last inspection because teaching and learning are more consistent.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements have improved significantly since the previous inspection
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject
- Although ICT is used well in science, pupils' skills are not developed as well in other subjects

Commentary

72. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, so judgements rely on talking with pupils and teachers, observing pupils working on computers and scrutinising work on display. Standards are in line with national expectations and better than at the previous inspection. In Year 2, with support, pupils organise and classify information and enter, save, retrieve and print their work using the computer. Pupils are confident to use the mouse to control programs and are developing their keyboard skills. Overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory.

73. Pupils work well independently and collaboratively when using the computer. For example, Year 2 pupils interacted well and helped each other read information when they were using a CD-Rom to find out about types of birds. Good discussion took place. Pupils were keen to learn and enthusiastic to share their findings. All pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject. For example, Year 1 pupils working in pairs co-operated well with each other, staying on task and working very industriously. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm when using computers. For example, Year 2 pupils entered data from a written tally chart into a database and printed this out in the form of a bar chart and pie chart. Pupils were fully engaged in learning because they enjoyed the subject and this helped them to concentrate.

74. All pupils have equal access to the ICT curriculum because there are an adequate number of computers. A variety of programs ensures all pupils have sufficient opportunities to learn and practise new skills.

75. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Good support and training have been provided to develop the ICT skills of teachers and teaching assistants. There are good links with the junior school; this shares experience and expertise across the primary phase. The subject leader has written a detailed scheme of work for ICT, which supports teaching and learning effectively. Provision of ICT has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. ICT skills are used and developed satisfactorily in other subjects. There are examples of good work, particularly in science. Pupils use the Internet and CD- Roms for research. A computer microscope is used for investigating minibeasts, leaves and fingerprints. Data handling and number programs are used within numeracy and a reading program is used in English to improve basic skills. On the whole, however, ICT skills are not used and developed systematically in all subjects of the curriculum, and this key skill has been correctly identified by the school for current development.

HUMANITIES

In religious education, two lessons were observed, inspectors talked to pupils and teachers, and pupils' work from the previous year was scrutinised, which provided secure evidence for what is said in the report. In geography and history, however, only a small amount of pupils' work from the previous year was available for scrutiny, no lessons were observed and neither of the subjects was a focus for the inspection. As a result, insufficient evidence was gathered to report on pupils' achievements.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils are given some enriched opportunities to develop their understanding about religion
- In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching varied too much

Commentary

77. Evidence from pupils' work during the previous year, and from the lessons observed, shows that, by the end of Year 2, standards broadly meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This is a similar picture to the previous inspection.

78. The pupils achieve satisfactorily, and make steady progress in learning about religion. They are beginning to understand what people believe, what people do and how they express themselves. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils learned about some of the symbols associated with Christianity, such as the cross, the sign of the fish and the significance of the dove. Good use was made of real-life artefacts for pupils to look at and examine, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Productive discussion with the teacher and teaching assistant helped the pupils' understanding. Pupils were given time to consider different symbols and to ask questions to clarify their meaning. They really valued the teaching assistant's personal comments about why some of the artefacts were particularly significant for her.

79. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but more variable than at the previous inspection. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils' learning was unsatisfactory because inattention and unsettled behaviour was not managed well by the teacher during a discussion about Harvest prayers. As a result, the pupils were unable to share their views productively, and many were inattentive and lost interest. In the follow up activity, not enough challenge was given to pupils to express their own feelings of thanks in a prayer because they were simply asked to stick different coloured papers on prepared kites. This failed to inspire them to consider prayers more carefully.

80. It was too early in the year to have much work in pupils' books, but written work from the previous year was limited in quantity and mainly consisted of simple worksheets, where the pupils' contributions were comparatively sparse. Much of the work is planned to be oral. This has been recognised as an area for more careful monitoring by the co-ordinator to identify where inconsistencies in practice exist and how to overcome them. Good opportunities are provided, however, for first hand study, for example using visits to a local church to gain a better understanding of religious practices. Management of the subject is satisfactory because the subject leader has an appropriate grasp of where there are weaknesses in provision and has plans to tackle them.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

In art, three lessons were observed and a good deal pupils' work was seen, both on display and in the school's portfolio. This provided secure evidence for what is said in the report. Pupils were observed singing enthusiastically in assembly, but no music lessons were seen and the subject was not a focus for the inspection. As a result, no report is made. In design and technology, only a small amount of pupils' work from the previous year was available for scrutiny, no lessons were observed and the subject was not a focus for the inspection. As a result, insufficient evidence was gathered to report on pupils' achievements. Physical education was not inspected.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are good because they complete a range of work in a variety of media
- In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was too variable
- Curriculum plans and supporting guidance are very good
- Good management of the subject ensures that standards are maintained
- Art is used well to support work in other subjects

Commentary

81. Standards at the end of Year 2 are better than those expected for pupils' ages and their achievements are good. As well as work currently on display, the school keeps examples of pupils' past work, which is an effective way to show the range and quality of art produced.

82. At this early stage in the school year, current work in classes was just developing. In Year 1, figure drawing related to a wider topic about 'Families' is typical for pupils' ages, but it was noticeable that pupils had used a wide range of pencils, crayons and other drawing media to experiment with differing effects. Pupils' past work shows how this bears fruit later in the year, with stunning oil pastel drawings of pineapples, oranges and avocados, many of which show careful observation and depth far beyond that normally seen for this age group. Delicately-painted carnations, in which pupils have used colour carefully to match the various shades in the flower, bold charcoal drawings of toys, and collage using shades of browns and greens, all show the range and quality of work Year 1 pupils complete. The best attempts at printing with wood blocks show that some pupils are beginning to understand how patterns can be formed.

83. In Year 2, the theme was 'Pattern' and pupils began by drawing flowers in oil pastel many of which are of good quality and show that pupils build on their previous experiences of using the medium. In a good lesson seen, pupils looked at pattern designs on plates, took time to experiment inventing their own motif and then drew repeated patterns on their own paper plate. The pupils were so enthused by this activity that many of them insisted on finishing the designs in their own time. Pupils' past work shows development of a good range of skills. Self-portraits in the form of three-dimensional figures made of paper and paste are a good introduction to sculpture. Charcoal drawing of a sunflower seed head, or a piece of bark, show how the pupils can use a challenging medium carefully to portray light and dark. Pupils also use the work of famous artists as starting points for their work, as seen in drawings inspired by Esher's visually confusing patterns.

84. In the three lessons observed, the quality of teaching varied too much, from very good to unsatisfactory. Pupils' past work suggests that the quality of teaching is usually more consistent than this. In the two lessons where teaching was good or better, teachers captured the pupils' interest well. For example, in Year 1 the teacher played 'watery' music and asked the pupils to close their eyes and imagine what they could see. She used illustrations from *The Rainbow Fish* to draw their attention to its shape and the colours of its scales. She demonstrated carefully how the pupils could obtain varying depth of colour with drawing materials. As a result, the pupils' drawings showed variety and imagination. Teachers make sure that pupils have a range of good-quality materials and explain how they must make choices about their art work. They share pupils' ongoing work so that they develop skills in evaluating its quality. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, weaknesses in the management of behaviour resulted in the pupils being very unsettled in the first part of the lesson,

which hampered the teachers' explanation. Once involved in their drawing, the pupils were more productive.

85. A curriculum plan of very good quality has been in place for some time, so the subject leader is able to refine and improve it steadily. An excellent art handbook supports teachers' implementation of the scheme. Art is used well to complement work in other subjects, for example the Year 2 fire collages linked to work about a Finnish creation story 'The Sky Maiden'. Work in sketchbooks is adequate, but they are not used sufficiently to experiment and develop ideas. There are also few examples of teachers taking one visual idea and developing it through a series of techniques (drawing, painting, printing, fabric work) so that pupils can compare the effect of each one. Management of the subject is good and the subject leader has a clear overview of work across the school. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons were seen in this subject and there was no past work completed by the pupils that could be used to evaluate the standards achieved. As a result, it was not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum section of this report evaluates provision for pupils' personal, social and health education as **very good**.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).

