

INSPECTION REPORT

CURDRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Curdridge, near Botley

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115879

Headteacher: Mrs L Squire

Lead inspector: Mr M Milton

Dates of inspection: 25th – 27th May 2004

Inspection number: 255942

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	112
School address:	Church Lane Curdridge Near Botley Southampton Hampshire
Postcode:	SO32 2DR
Telephone number:	01489 782613
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R Short
Date of previous inspection:	1 st June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Curdridge Primary School has 112 pupils in four classes and is smaller than most primary schools. Each class has pupils from two school years, but the school teaches the pupils in Years 1 and 2 as separate classes for one English and one mathematics lesson each week. The Reception children are taught in a class with the youngest Year 1 pupils. There are equal numbers of boys and girls in the school as a whole, but imbalances in particular years. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well below the national average and no pupils have statements of special educational needs. The most common special needs of these pupils are difficulties with learning, speech and communication. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the start and end of the school year is above the national average. The proportion of the pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The area from which the school draws most of its pupils is advantaged socially and economically, but includes some pockets of disadvantage. The school received the Healthy Schools award in 2001 and a School Achievement Award from the DfES in 2002. For 2000 to 2003, the school received another DfES award for being in the top 100 most improved schools for Year 6 results. Pupils' overall standards on entry vary from year to year but are broadly average, with strengths in pupils'

communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1723	M Milton	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Mathematics Information and communication technology History Religious education Personal, social and health education
9053	V Phillips	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
2083 2	M Galowalia	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science Design and technology Geography
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	3
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	13
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Curdrige Primary is a good, effective school and is highly successful in a number of areas. Overall, the very good quality of teaching, the good curriculum and pupils' very positive attitudes result in very good achievement in English, mathematics, science and physical education. Standards in these subjects are well above national averages. The good leadership and management of the school ensure that all pupils achieve very well and help create a stable team of very committed staff. Parents support the school's provision in many practical ways. Expenditure per pupil is below average, so the school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good teaching makes very effective use of the local community and a stimulating range of visits, with the result that pupils' achievement is very good.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well and respond to the teaching with impressive levels of concentration and persistence.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in English, mathematics, science and physical education.
- The school has great success in ensuring that all pupils benefit from the education it provides, and pupils with special educational needs have very good learning opportunities.
- For physical education and sports, the very strong links with a network of local organisations provide pupils with some excellent learning opportunities.
- Although the outdoor play space for Reception children is unsatisfactory, the staff work valiantly to make the best use of it.
- A significant minority of parents have concerns about at least one aspect of the school's communication with them.

The school has made a good improvement since the last inspection in 1998. The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved since then. Standards have risen in five subjects, including English, mathematics and science. The key issues from the previous inspection have been addressed successfully.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	A	A	A
mathematics	C	A*	A	B
science	B	A*	A	A

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

In 2002, the results of the Year 6 pupils in mathematics and science were very high, and in the top five per cent of all primary schools nationally. **Overall, pupils' achievement is very good.** In the Reception class, children achieve well, and by the start of Year 1 most have exceeded the goals children are expected to reach. Their standards are well above average in

personal, social and emotional development and in physical development. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is very good and their standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above national averages. Pupils' very good levels of achievement continue in Years 3 to 6, and their standards in Year 6 are well above national averages in English, mathematics, science and physical education. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above national averages but achievement is not as good as it could be because pupils do not have enough experience of multimedia presentations and data logging. Standards in religious education in Year 6 match the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory; their knowledge of two of the religions they study needs further development. **Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.** Their self-discipline is exceptional, and they are very co-operative and cheerful. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and their attitudes are very good. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good, with a significant number of very good features. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teaching and learning were very good or better in more than half of the lessons seen. Work is well matched to pupils' differing learning needs. Class management is very effective and secures a very positive response from pupils. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Some teaching is very imaginative and challenging. In the case of younger pupils, there are occasions when learning objectives are not shared clearly with the pupils and used to help them review their learning. There are good assessment procedures for English, mathematics, science, design and technology and ICT, and the school plans to put into practice whole-school procedures for recording assessments in other subjects. The curriculum provides good learning opportunities and is enriched by excellent extra-curricular activities for physical education. There is also a very good range of visitors and visits, including residential courses in Years 4 to 6. Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to use their writing skills in other subjects. The school takes good care of pupils and guides them well with their work. The quality of partnership with parents and other schools is good. The school's communication with parents is reasonable but rather formal in style and content rather than featuring user-friendly, vivid material. Links with the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is good, with a significant number of very good features. Governors carry out their responsibilities effectively; some aspects of their work are very effective. All statutory requirements are met. All of the school's staff work very effectively as a team. Because of the small size of the school, teachers each take several responsibilities and carry these out to good effect. There are systems for monitoring and evaluation, but there are not written records of any outcomes, and points for improvement are not always identified clearly.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school and are very pleased with the good job it does in terms of pupils' behaviour, attitudes and standards. Pupils are very satisfied with the school. They love working and playing with their classmates. The school provides them with very good opportunities to express their views and to influence what happens in school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are to:

- make monitoring and evaluation more rigorous so that the success of innovations can be judged accurately and aspects for improvement identified clearly;
- ensure that the content and style of communications with parents reflect the school's aims;
- implement, as planned, whole-school recording procedures for assessments in history, religious education, and design and technology.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement in Reception is good, and children exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the start of Year 1. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' overall achievement is very good and their standards are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Reception, standards are well above expectations for personal, social and emotional development and in physical development.
- In Years 1 to 6, pupils' standards are well above average in English, mathematics, science and physical education.
- Pupils' achievement ranges from very good to satisfactory in different subjects.
- The results of the national tests for Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science rose from below national averages in 2000 to well above national averages in 2003.

Commentary

1. Standards are the levels of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils reach compared with those of pupils of the same age nationally. Achievement is an assessment of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to their capability, and it is a judgement upon whether pupils are doing as well as they should. Because in this school the number of pupils in each year group is relatively small, caution is needed in interpreting the school's results because the performance of one or two pupils can have a significant impact on the overall results.

2. In the national tests for Year 2 pupils in 2003, results were well above national averages for all schools in reading and mathematics, and average for all schools in writing. Compared to those of similar schools, the reading and mathematics results were well above average and the writing result was below average. The trend of the school's results from 1999 to 2003 was broadly in line with the national trend of improvement. The local education authority's data indicates that the school added more value than expected to pupils' results in reading and mathematics, while the value added to pupils' writing results was at the expected level.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.1 (16.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.9 (13.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.4 (16.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The school's results in English, mathematics and science in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2003 were well above national averages for all schools. Compared to those of similar schools, results were well above average for English and science and above average for mathematics. The value the school added to pupils' results between Year 2 and Year 6 was well above average. The trend of the school's results from 1999 to 2003 was above the national trend of improvement. In 2003, the school exceeded the targets it had set itself for English and mathematics. There are challenging targets for the number of pupils to reach the expected level 4 and the higher level 5 in English and mathematics in 2004.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.6 (29.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.1 (31.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.3 (31.3)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. In Reception, standards are at least above average in all areas of learning, because teaching is consistently good and the curriculum is varied and interesting, with a range of exciting events and visits to inspire the children. The children achieve well overall. Standards are well above average for pupils' personal, social and emotional development because the adults make this a priority and give children very good opportunities to use their initiative and work with independence. Consequently, children's achievement is very good. For children's physical development, standards are well above average and achievement is very good because teaching provides high quality opportunities for pupils to extend their skills and presents them with challenging tasks.

5. In Year 2, pupils' standards are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in writing have risen since last year because the school has made the subject a priority for improvement and has taken a good range of steps to raise standards. Pupils' achievement is very good because of the very good teaching combined with pupils' response to the teaching, which includes impressive levels of concentration and persistence.

6. The standards of Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science are well above national averages. Pupils achieve very well because of the stimulating and challenging teaching, coupled with their very good attitudes to work and their very high levels of co-operation with their teachers. Pupils' standards in physical education are well above national expectations in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' achievement is very good because they enter enthusiastically into all activities; the teachers' enthusiasm inspires them to want to succeed; all the teachers have good subject knowledge; and there is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs.

7. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory and the standards attained by Year 6 pupils match the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity but their knowledge of the other religions studied is relatively weak. In ICT, pupils' standards are above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and of Year 6, and their achievement is good. A high proportion of pupils are working at the expected National Curriculum level, but they do not have enough experience of working with multimedia software and data logging equipment.

8. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good because provision is of a consistently high quality and is very well managed. Children in the Reception class achieve well because planning takes account of their differing abilities and lessons are well taught. Pupils in the older classes make very good progress because teaching is very good and support is very well focused on their particular needs. Most of the pupils are attaining standards that are in line with national averages as a result of this very effective support.

9. Higher-attaining pupils usually achieve very well, especially in English, mathematics, science and physical education, because the work is well matched to pupils' differing learning needs within the mixed-age classes. Boys and girls achieve similar standards and are fully involved in the learning during lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are very good and their behaviour is excellent. As a result, pupils' personal qualities mature very well, helped by the school's good overall attention to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages are extremely willing to do what is asked of them in lessons, which ensures first-rate learning where teaching is at its best.
- Pupils of all ages and backgrounds behave exceptionally well in and out of lessons, which is a significant factor in their achievement and maturity.
- Relationships are very good, and this helps pupils to feel very positive about school and the friendships they make.
- As pupils benefit from a very good range of activities outside school, their personal qualities develop very well.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

10. Even the youngest children work exceptionally hard to follow instructions, and they respond to teaching with impressive levels of concentration and persistence. For instance, in physical education lessons, they try eagerly to practise and improve skills such as skipping, throwing and catching, in response to clear routines and high expectations. Pupils' very high levels of co-operation and cheerfulness ensure that everyone has the chance to learn and make significant progress. The pupils have an enthusiastic, good-natured approach to lessons which carries them through even when teaching lacks sparkle or a sharp focus on what they need to learn next. Pupils ask interesting rather than searching questions. They are particularly keen on practical work, and most likely to be imaginative and use initiative in what they do when spurred to think for themselves. Otherwise, they accept information readily without probing further. In general, they do exactly as they are asked, rather than brimming with the active curiosity of avid learners. They are able to rise to the stimulating challenges set in the best lessons, as in an exciting discussion of the best way to separate compost from water in a Year 3/4 science investigation. A high proportion of pupils enjoy being at school.

11. The climate in which pupils learn is very settled because of their impressive understanding of the need to listen, take turns, and follow instructions. They work and play together extremely happily, with no sign of bullying, racism or misbehaviour beyond the occasional insignificant squabble characteristic of their age group. Pupils love working with classmates, especially on interesting projects. As a result of their friendships and the wide range of things to do, pupils are very positive about school. They look forward to trips and visits, and treasure the time they have to play together, especially out in the summer sunshine. Their self-discipline is outstanding. There are no exclusions. The behaviour of children with special educational needs is outstanding. They are always well included in lessons and in class discussion. Support is appropriate and teachers make lessons interesting. Where pupils are withdrawn for additional support, this is done sensitively and best use is made of the

time available. In non-academic subjects such as physical education, the quality of the provision enables pupils to excel and to improve their self-confidence. Parents judge that behaviour is good and that the staff encourage their children to become mature and independent.

12. Pupils' experience of a very good range of after-school sports clubs, residential visits and special workshops, especially for music and dance, helps them to develop very good teamwork and better awareness of other ways of life. Every other year, a group of Indian dancers spend the day working in school at a time when India is being studied as part of the geography curriculum. Older pupils learn about other cultures as they pursue research for their mini-topics. Also, older pupils can learn French (there is a charge for these lunchtime lessons) and they relish the chance to show off their skills and deepen their understanding of the culture, as shown by a Year 5/6 group who were intrigued by the importance of 'la politesse' (courtesy) for shopping in France. There are many displays of books and commercial posters about the richness and variety of cultural traditions, but little original and inspirational work of the pupils is on display. The board of 'post-it' notes used to acknowledge personal achievement does not give a real sense of how special pupils are, or of celebration. The best displays in classrooms celebrate the individual qualities and achievements of pupils in a dynamic way. There are some wonderful moments, such as the gasp of joy when children discovered they were going to watch 'Canon Jenny' christen 'their baby'. However, the school does not monitor and evaluate its provision for pupils' personal development systematically.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education that the school provides is good, with a significant number of very good features. The overall quality of teaching is very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good in Reception. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are very good and pupils respond to the teaching with impressive levels of concentration and persistence. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are very good. The overall quality of assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage their classes very effectively, and this secures an excellent response from pupils.
- Work is well matched to the different year groups of pupils in each of the mixed-age classes.
- Teachers have high expectations of how pupils will behave and what they will achieve, particularly in English, mathematics, science and physical education.
- Teachers use a variety of teaching methods so that pupils experience a good range of activities
- Visitors provide some very good quality teaching.
- Learning support assistants are used effectively to help pupils learn.
- There is a well-structured system for tracking the progress of each pupil in English, mathematics and science, but whole-school systems for recording assessments have not yet been established in the case of six subjects.

Commentary

13. A high proportion of parents consider that the teaching is good and that staff treat their children fairly and expect them to work hard and do their best. A similarly high proportion of

pupils consider that they have to work hard and that teachers show them how to make their work better.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	14	9	0	0	0	0

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

14. In Reception, the teacher and learning support assistant work very well together to help children learn, for example by monitoring and supporting the progress of different groups of children. Work is very well matched to children' differing learning needs, and the needs of the Reception and Year 1 pupils are catered for well. Learning tasks are usually interesting and good use is made of visits to places such as a local airfield where Tiger Moths are renovated. Questions

are usually used effectively to help the children learn. Occasionally, questions are too vague, opportunities are missed to ask children to explain their answers or methods, or discussion does not move the children's learning on as quickly as possible. There are high expectations of children, who are set demanding tasks that challenge everyone in the class.

15. The class for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is very well managed and this helps to secure a very good response from the pupils, who work exceptionally hard to follow instructions. They respond to the teaching with impressive levels of concentration and persistence. Work is almost always very well matched to the learning needs of the two different year groups in the class, although in one lesson the activities were pitched at the average. Questions are used very well, for example to help pupils devise a notation for recording a sequence of directional instructions. Good opportunities are provided for well-organised practical work, for example when pupils first devised their own science experiments before selecting the resources they needed and putting their plans into practice. Work on the class computers supports pupils' learning of other subjects well. The learning support assistant is used effectively to help pupils learn by, for example, carrying out specific assessments or working with a particular group. A relatively common weakness is that learning objectives are not shared explicitly with pupils at the start of lessons and are not used to help them review their learning at the end of the lesson. Occasionally, learning objectives are not clear enough.

16. Classes are also very well managed in Years 3 to 6, and the excellent relationships between pupils and adults help create a very positive climate for learning for all pupils. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, for example when effective use was made of the correct technical vocabulary during a design and technology lesson. Pupils are taught how to interpret historical sources, and practical tasks are used to help pupils understand the idea of longshore drift in geography. Some lessons have very imaginative introductions. For example, a class was taken outside to a campfire to be told an African myth by an 'explorer', and this fired the pupils' imaginations as they started their writing task. In another English lesson, the teacher read out the letter the school had received giving the go-ahead to the building of the two new classrooms but adding the rider that it would be necessary to build houses on the school's field to pay for them. This horrified the pupils, who were quickly engrossed in their task of presenting a point of view in their own writing. Lessons often involve the use of a variety of activities and learning resources. Good links are made between pupils' learning in different subjects, as in a religious education lesson that compared Christian beliefs with the Roman gods studied in history. Teachers and learning support assistants monitor the progress of pupils effectively and make sure that any pupils experiencing difficulties with their learning are helped to overcome them. Lessons usually have a brisk pace, and sometimes include time-limited tasks. A consistent feature of lessons is that teachers have high expectations of all pupils and so set tasks that provide a good level of challenge, especially for the different year groups within each class. Occasionally, pupils do not have enough opportunities to evaluate their own work and marking does not make it clear to pupils how they can improve their work. In one lesson, the concluding plenary did not add enough to pupils' very good learning during the rest of the lesson.

17. Local clergy make a very good contribution to pupils' learning as they lead role plays in the nearby church, with teaching that is closely linked to the pupils' own experiences. Also, some special coaches support pupils' work in physical education.

18. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good teaching. Teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve. Progress is very well monitored. In the Reception class, children's needs are identified early, because very effective systems are in place. This practice is sustained as pupils move through the school. They all have targets in their trays, and know what they are. Support staff work very closely with teachers to ensure that work is matched to targets. Very good resources, including computer software, are used to supplement class work.

19. In Reception, assessment of children's work is efficient, with good record keeping so that assessment information is used to plan children's next steps of learning. The school has made good improvements to the assessment of Reception children following the last inspection, when this was identified as a key issue for improvement. Teachers use the assessment notes they make on their weekly planning for all subjects to identify how the planned work needs to be modified to meet pupils' learning needs. Under the headteacher's guidance, the tracking system is used to identify pupils who are underachieving. Each teacher sets curricular targets and group targets for their class for English and mathematics, and pupils are aware of these, although teachers' marking rarely refers to them. There are good systems for recording assessments for English, mathematics, science, physical education and ICT. In the case of history, religious education and design and technology there are not yet whole-school approaches to recording assessments, although the school plans to implement these soon.

The curriculum

Curricular opportunities are good, with some very good features. There is excellent provision for extra-curricular sport and very good enrichment by visits and visitors. Good use is made of the accommodation and resources to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have the opportunity to attend residential courses in Years 4, 5 and 6.
- Teachers' planning for subjects includes the pupils' use of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, but plans are not yet implemented consistently.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school has started to plan the development of pupils' creativity throughout the curriculum.
- Links with the local community enhance pupils' learning.

Commentary

20. The curriculum is well planned for the mixed-age classes, with the result that work is well matched to the needs of the different year groups within each class. All of the necessary National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught, though older pupils do not have enough opportunities to cover some work required for achievement at higher National Curriculum levels in ICT. The personal, social and health education programme includes the required relationships and sex education, and education about the misuse of drugs. The length of time allocated to English and mathematics lessons is longer than that recommended by the national strategies, and the governing body should review these time allocations, because occasionally the pace of learning slows in these lessons. Because of the curriculum planning there are some very good examples of pupils using their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. For example, in a history lesson about Ancient Greece, pupils debated whether or not the Parthenon should be redeveloped, and in work on Roman Britain pupils had many opportunities for extended writing. However, there are occasions when pupils have limited opportunities to use their writing skills. A high proportion of parents consider that the school provides a good range of activities which their children find interesting and enjoyable.

21. Links with the local community provide the school with very good access to sports areas at the reading rooms' field (buildings and grounds maintained by a village charity). There is a wide range of competitive matches with neighbouring small schools in a very good variety of sports, specialist coaching from local rugby and hockey clubs, and the provision by sponsors of school kits for three sports. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a very good range of competitive sports. The school's locality and its residents are also used to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects, including science, history and religious education. The only regular extra-curricular activities

provided by the school are in sports. In addition, about half of the parents pay for their children to attend a lunchtime French class that provides enjoyable, very good quality teaching which fosters a love of learning among the pupils

22. The school improvement plan includes a target to improve pupils' opportunities for creativity within the curriculum. To achieve this, a range of stimulating visits has been arranged for each class, including two residential visits which provide learning opportunities for ICT, outdoor pursuits, history, and geography. For example, when Years 5 and 6 pupils visit Beaulieu as part of their work on the Victorians, they have to apply for the jobs of footman or chambermaid as they role-play life in a Victorian country house. In addition, teachers plan for the development of pupils' investigative skills in mathematics and science. However, the follow-up activities to the visits do not always demand enough of pupils' creativity, and on occasions there is too much use of worksheets. Some opportunities for creativity are missed when pupils use worksheets of idealised landscapes and journeys to study the countryside and routes to school. Teachers have introduced accelerated learning and thinking skills, although these are at an early stage of development.

23. Pupils with special educational needs are given very good opportunities to access the curriculum. Much of the time they take part fully in class lessons, with work well matched to their abilities. They benefit from the very good teaching of the special needs teacher and from the support of very well trained and experienced learning support assistants. They are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities. In particular, there has been success in sport, and this has boosted pupils' self-confidence.

24. The school makes the best use of its accommodation, which has some limitations. The cramped library is used for teaching pupils with special educational needs, and the temporary classrooms can be reached only by steps. The Reception staff work hard to make the best use of the restricted outdoor space for the children. These problems will be removed in 2005-6, when a building programme will replace the two temporary classrooms. The teachers and support staff are well qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum, and the learning resources are good.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of pupils and guides them well with their work. Pupils have very good opportunities to express their views and to influence what happens in school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school and year councils are thriving and give pupils a real 'voice' in school life.
- Pupils are very clear that they feel able to talk to someone if they have a problem.
- Pupils are very well known to staff, which helps to ensure good levels of care.

Commentary

25. Older pupils have the chance to be members of class councils that meet weekly to discuss matters of concern to them, which can then be brought to the attention of the school council. They are very clear that the system works very well and enables everyone who wants to take part to have a turn as a representative sooner or later. The fact that their opinions are heard, not just by staff but also by governors, has made a difference to the influence they have had, for instance in the refurbishment of toilets in line with children's wishes. Pupils have had rewarding opportunities to work with college students on new designs and markings for the playground. They helped to work out a fairer system to ensure that everyone had the lunch they wanted. So pupils were quick to agree that their views are "really valued".

26. Pupils new to the school said that they are helped to settle in well because “everyone is friendly and knows everyone else and wants you to join in”. Pupils of all ages are happy to chat to adults, because the very good relationships in the school help to make them feel safe and well cared for. They are able to identify someone they would be happy to talk to if they had a problem and are confident about asking for help, whether with work or for a bumped knee. Adults are quick to spot any changes in a pupil’s approach to work or play because they know the children so well. The informal sharing of information about pupils ensures that they receive the support they need to cope with their work, although formal reference to specific steps to take towards targets is not as good as the general help and encouragement.

27. A high proportion of parents consider that their children are well cared for, that great care is taken on trips and visits, and that the arrangements for settling their children into school are good. The school has clear policies and procedures for matters of welfare and child protection. Governors check on health, safety and risk assessment with care. From time to time, parents have noticed a minor lapse in quality of supervision and children's safety, which has then been dealt with effectively but without triggering a rigorous reappraisal of all related procedures. There are occasional lapses such as the inappropriate placement of bins, or inattention to who is on duty where. There is therefore scope to improve the monitoring of procedures to ensure they are put into practice consistently.

28. Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides strong leadership and ensures that pupils are identified early and their needs met. Individual education plans are detailed, well written and reviewed regularly. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress, and encouraged to help them at home. Often the school lends resources to parents for this to take place. Pupils know what their targets are, and how well they are doing. All staff know the pupils very well and monitor their progress closely.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and with other schools and colleges are good. Links with the community are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the school provides satisfactory information for parents, it does not make the most of its opportunities to communicate and consult with them about its work and children's achievements.
- Parents make a very valuable contribution to their children's learning.
- Pupils benefit from very good links with the community and from encouragement by a range of adults to enjoy experiences that enrich their knowledge and understanding of life beyond home and school.
- Good links with other schools and colleges help with a smooth transfer into and out of the school.

Commentary

29. Parents are generally positive about the school and the good job it does in terms of standards of behaviour and high expectations. However, just under half of those who responded to inspectors' questions had reservations about at least one feature of the school's communication with them. A significant minority of parents are unconvinced that the school welcomes or takes their views seriously, guides them clearly about homework, and informs them well about children's progress. Communication is reasonable but with scope for improvement. For instance, information about the curriculum was improved immediately after the last inspection but summaries have not been provided for the last two years. The school's written information is formal in style and content, rather than featuring user-friendly, vivid material. The prospectus and governors' report lack illustrations or contributions from children which are likely to capture parents' interest. The newsletter produced by the PTA (parents' and teachers' association) and the pupils' newspaper are much closer to the lively style of presentation that works well in similar schools. The school is missing opportunities to communicate with parents about essential information and its successes in a style that reflects its stated aims.

30. The school has improved the annual reports since the last inspection, when they were identified as a key issue for improvement. These reports are now satisfactory. There is still little specific comment on whether enough progress has been made, given the child's starting

point and capabilities, particularly in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Reports say little about how any specific gifts or talents have developed, for instance in art, music or physical education. Pupils reflect on how well the year has gone and identify targets for improvement in discussion with their teachers, but the opportunity is missed for pupils to practise another style of writing and to communicate the outcomes of these discussions with parents.

31. Parents are very keen to help their children make the most of school, for example by encouraging reading at home. Many parents provide their children with extra opportunities, including tuition and educational visits, that complement work done in lessons. As a result, pupils are quick to share very good general knowledge when opportunities arise in school. Parents' attendance at consultation meetings, events and educational evenings is excellent, including a much higher turnout for the governors' annual meeting than is usually seen. The governing body includes a session on an aspect of the curriculum, such as teaching mathematics, at its annual meeting for parents. Parents and parent governors are very active in trying to ensure that views, including those of pupils, are heard and can influence school improvement.

32. The school makes very good use of the talents of visitors and of visits within and beyond the local community to extend and enrich pupils' experiences. Parents consider that the school's involvement in the annual Curdridge Show is excellent and of great benefit to the pupils. Special trips are used very well to foster a better spirit of enquiry. For example, a fascinating visit to see a restored Tiger Moth aircraft at a local airfield resulted in imaginative activities in class and a swift display of colourful digital photographs showing pupils spellbound. In addition, opportunities through the 'Omega' local schools network ensure that pupils have the chance to work with and learn from a wide range of young people of similar ages. They get to know future classmates before changing school and have much better chances to enjoy competitive sport and musical productions than a small school can offer on its own. These strong links contribute well to pupils' personal development, including confidence about transferring to secondary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good, with a significant number of very good features. The headteacher, ably supported by the committed team of staff, provides firm effective leadership and management. Governance is good, with some very good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors are committed and carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- The school improvement plan actively involves the governing body and makes the priorities for improvement clear.
- The leadership and management are very effective in developing the school's ethos.
- All staff work very effectively as a team so that all pupils benefit from the education the school provides.
- Good progress has been made in managing teachers' workloads.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed.
- Although there is a good range of monitoring, no formal records of the outcomes are kept.

Commentary

33. The expertise and hard work of the governors is an asset to the school, and they have made particularly strong contributions to the development of the buildings, both in the past and as planned for in 2005-6. Governors meet their statutory duties, including the promotion of policies for inclusion. They provide sufficient challenge in their role as critical friends. Governors are well informed and all are involved in visiting the school; they have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They receive detailed reports from the headteacher, although these do not include explicit information about the outcomes of monitoring or about progress in implementing the school improvement plan. The governors are actively involved in the school improvement planning process. Through these and performance management, they help to shape the school's vision.

34. The leadership of the headteacher provides a purposeful backdrop against which the academic and personal development of each child is of paramount importance. Similarly, the deputy headteacher and other staff provide a clear vision and strong sense of purpose as they each effectively carry out several whole-school responsibilities. The school is committed to improvement and has introduced important developments such as the inclusion of planning for the use of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in all subjects, and the introduction of accelerated learning and thinking skills. However, there are not always sufficiently clear step-by-step strategies to put these into practice consistently. The very good level of commitment to inclusion, the promotion of equality of opportunity, and the concern for the needs of individual pupils are reflected in the co-ordination of special educational needs provision and the way in which teachers match learning to the needs of the pupils in their mixed-age classes. The leadership and management have been particularly effective in developing pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work.

35. The headteacher and other teachers carry out a good range of self-evaluation activities. The headteacher has a detailed knowledge of the school's work and teaches each class when she provides cover for staff absence or for teachers working away from their classes. The school uses the outcomes of the self-evaluation to inform the targets selected for the school improvement plan. However, no formal, brief written records are made of these monitoring activities and consequently some inconsistencies and weaknesses are missed.

36. Good progress has been made in managing teachers' workload within the particular pressures of a small school where each teacher carries a wide range of responsibilities. As has been the case for several years, each teacher receives one afternoon per week to work on monitoring, assessment and planning away from their classes. Steps have been taken to make curriculum planning more efficient. Procedures for carrying out the performance management of teachers are linked to whole-school targets for improvement, though the nature of the target for pupil progress in the past year does not focus explicitly enough on the progress of pupils with their learning. Performance management does not yet include support staff, such as learning support assistants. The school does not face any difficulties in recruiting staff. The continuing professional development of staff is managed well, and the teachers attend a very good range of training.

37. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a high level of expertise. All members of staff play an active role in ensuring that pupils are included and that work is appropriate for them. The school spends more money in providing support than it receives for special educational needs in its budget, so that pupils who are not normally funded do not lose out. There is very good liaison with the receiving secondary school and with the co-ordinators in other schools. There are also strong links with other agencies, such as speech therapy. Since the last inspection the quality of provision has improved, and it is now very good.

38. The last audit of financial systems found that they were sound. The school's budget is linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan. Best value principles are applied well. The school challenges itself by the results of self-evaluation to identify weaknesses in standards. It consults pupils systematically. It is aware that the consultation of parents is mostly informal, and a more systematic approach is being considered.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	365,679
Total expenditure	365,613
Expenditure per pupil	3,207

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	22,690
Balance carried forward to the next	66

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Reception class is **good**. This is a considerable improvement from the situation reported at the time of the last inspection.

39. Children enter the school with standards that are broadly average, although there are wide variations between the abilities of individuals. During the year they spend in the Reception class, all children achieve well because of consistently good and sometimes very good teaching. The curriculum is varied and interesting, with a range of exciting events and visits to inspire them. Standards in personal, social and emotional development and in physical development are well above average by the time children enter Year 1.

40. The teachers and learning support assistant work very well together as a team. Particular strengths are the quality of questioning and the opportunities for children to reflect upon their learning. Teachers have high expectations and children work hard. The quantity of work produced is above what is normally expected, with rapid progress evident in the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Assessment of children's work is efficient, with good record-keeping systems in place. Occasionally, questions are not clear enough and class discussion does not move the children's learning on as quickly as it could.

41. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable about the needs of young children. Planning is comprehensive and covers the six areas of learning very well. An emphasis on real-life experiences enriches the children's learning. Children are developing independence, and work with concentration and commitment. Parents are very supportive and help in the classroom and on visits. There has been a very good improvement to provision for Reception children since the last inspection.

42. The outdoor area is a narrow sloping space. This is too restricted and is unsatisfactory as a learning resource. It also contains the external access to the school kitchen. Staff have worked valiantly to make the best use of the space, but they face an uphill struggle. This weakness in provision will be eliminated when there is a new building programme, which is planned for 2005-6.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- Behaviour is excellent and children co-operate very well.

Commentary

43. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is a high priority for staff, and they ensure that all children feel happy and secure in class. Most children have already achieved the early learning goals in this area and many are likely to exceed them considerably by the time they enter Year 1. Children work with concentration and perseverance on the tasks they are set. When they are selecting their own activities, they work very well together. They are also developing

the ability to work independently. At the end of each lesson the children have opportunities to reflect upon their learning. They listen very well to instructions, as was evident in a physical education lesson when no learning time was wasted, and they carry out classroom routines efficiently.

44. Behaviour is outstanding, both in the classroom and when out on visits. For example, on a trip to a local airfield, all children were captivated by the historic aeroplanes and asked interesting questions based on their prior knowledge. Teachers make the work interesting and fun. The role-play wedding ceremony in the local parish church taught much about cultural rituals and gave children real insight into this special occasion. Children's personal and social development is carefully recorded and monitored throughout their Reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing.
- Children make rapid progress in developing writing skills.
- Good use is made of individual targets to ensure that all children achieve well.

Commentary

45. Most children are likely to exceed the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year. Standards in writing are above expectations and achievement is good. This is because work is well planned and opportunities to develop early writing skills are built into other activities, such as role-play. Speaking and listening are strengths. Exciting events are devised to inspire the children, including visits to the airfield and a local motor museum. Children are encouraged to talk about their learning, as they do at the end of "plan, do and review" sessions when they select what they will do beforehand and then afterwards give an account to the rest of the class. A girl working in the water tray declared she had "made potions", while a boy dressing up said he was "an eastern prince."

46. Reading is well taught, with an appropriate emphasis on learning sounds. Children read to an adult four times per week. Careful records are kept of their progress. Targets are set at the beginning of each term and reviewed at the end of the term. The learning support assistant is fully involved in supporting children's learning. A love of reading is developed through shared stories and a good range of books around the classroom.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- Children make rapid progress, especially in number, measure and shape and space.

Commentary

47. Standards are above average because teaching is good and children achieve well. All the children can count to ten accurately. A very large quantity of work has been produced in developing early numeracy skills, not only in number but also in other areas such as measurement, shape and space. Teachers challenge the children through demanding mental arithmetic and good use of mathematical vocabulary.

48. Mathematical understanding is extended to other areas of learning, such as knowledge and understanding of the world. On the visit to the airfield, children considered how the windsock had been made of different coloured squares into its conical shape. The learning support assistant encourages pupils to use mathematical language in groups and develops their learning well.

49. Planning is very thorough, with interesting activities devised to meet learning objectives. Targets are set termly, and children's progress is carefully monitored.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- Teachers have high expectations of what children will achieve.

Commentary

50. All children are attaining the early learning goals for this area of learning, and many are likely to exceed them considerably by the end of the Reception year. In physical education lessons, children have high quality opportunities to extend their skills. In a very good lesson, children were observed throwing and catching a range of small apparatus with considerable aplomb. Some children had confidence and ability well exceeding normal expectations for this age group. All were also able to skip, some with great fluency.

51. Children have above average manipulative skills, whether writing with a pencil or making construction toys. They work to full capacity and achieve very well. Teachers present them with challenging tasks and give clear instructions. Lessons are very well organised and routines are well established. The hall and the general playground are used for wheeled toys and other physical activities that would be impossible in the restricted outdoor area. There is thus no barrier to achievement.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

52. This was not a focus of the inspection. There are no judgements on provision or standards. Visits provide a rich source of real-life experience for the children, such as the trip to the airfield and to the motor museum. They also give an insight into the history of transport, which is this term's topic. Children have walked around the school grounds collecting different types of leaves and have compared their shapes, sizes and colours. Other imaginative events, such as the role-play wedding ceremony in the parish church with an organist and large hats, bring learning to life. Follow-up work is prompt and thorough, making the most of the excitement generated. In the case of the airfield trip, children drew pictures of the planes, wrote about them, and made models, using the construction toys. A good selection of reference books in the classroom supports the topic. Good use is made of the class computer.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

53. This was not a focus of the inspection. There are no judgements on provision or standards. Paintings and drawings are of a high quality and clearly the children's own work. The drawings of the planes following the airfield visit contained much detail. During registration, opportunities are taken to sing rhymes around children's lunch choices. There is a rich selection of costumes for dressing up.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above national averages for all schools.
- Speaking and listening is a strength throughout the school.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good.
- Lessons are interesting and teachers have high expectations of pupils.

Commentary

54. Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are well above average. Pupils achieve very well because teaching is very good and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do. In 2003, all pupils attained the national average or above in the Year 6 national tests. The development of writing has been a priority this year and this has led to standards rising, especially in Years 1 and 2. Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning and are very responsive to all that their teachers offer them. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent.

55. Pupils often enter Year 1 with well developed speaking and listening skills. Teachers build on these by providing stimulating lessons and encouraging discussion. In one very good lesson, the teacher showed pupils a letter from the local council giving the go-ahead for the two new classrooms to be built. It also stipulated that new housing must be erected on the school field and trees cut down! This inspired a lively debate. Pupils are taught to see both sides of an argument.

56. Reading standards are high throughout the school. Pupils have a thirst for reading and talk with enthusiasm about books and authors. They read with expression and clear diction. Classes are well stocked with a range of fiction. The library is rather cramped, but a good selection of relevant reference books is available in classrooms. Pupils know how to find information and also have access to the Internet.

57. Pupils write for a variety of purposes, often inspired by their lessons. Appropriate targets are set, and pupils know these. Their progress is carefully monitored, by building up a portfolio of work as they move through the school. Presentation of work is neat and marking is helpful. On one memorable occasion, Year 5 and 6 pupils had to write instructions for putting the cover on a duvet. They were then given a duvet to test the accuracy of their classmates' efforts! Higher-attaining pupils are given challenging work to do and produce stories of real quality.

58. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers know the subject very well and make learning exciting and fun. They adapt the literacy hour to meet pupils' learning needs and to make lessons

more interesting. For example, one class was taken outside to a campfire to be told an African myth by a 'jungle explorer' as an alternative to shared reading. This provided a strong stimulus to fire the pupils' imaginations. The confident teaching helps to explain the rapid rise in standards and why pupils achieve so well, whatever their starting points. Learning support assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' progress, particularly pupils with special educational needs. At present, lessons are longer than required, at 75 minutes, and occasionally whole-class teaching is too long and a few pupils become uncomfortable and fidgety. Learning objectives are not always written clearly or shared with the pupils in Years 1 and 2.

59. The subject is very well led and managed by the enthusiastic and energetic co-ordinator. Recording systems are excellent, and they monitor progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing most effectively. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked as they move through the school, and targets are set at the start of each year. Many pupils exceed their targets. Where a dip in performance is observed, strategies are in place to help the child improve. Computers are often used to support learning in the classroom. There has been a good improvement to provision since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Links are increasingly being made with other subjects, especially history, design and technology and science. However, this good use of pupils' language and literacy skills is not found consistently throughout the school. The school is looking to build extended writing into other areas of the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is much practical work that helps pupils develop their mathematical understanding in Years 1 and 2.
- The progress of individual pupils and year groups is tracked closely.
- Pupils in Year 6 respond very well to problem-solving tasks.
- Very good teaching promotes high levels of achievement.

Commentary

61. Standards are well above average at the end of Year 2 and of Year 6. Boys and girls achieve similar standards. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and often reach average standards. Pupils' achievement is very good because teaching is usually challenging; pupils are motivated to do their best, and they cover a very good range of mathematical work. In Year 1, pupils use apparatus to create number sentences, and Year 2 pupils carry out a variety of practical tasks, including the use of ICT, as they learn about the measurement of time and distance. In one lesson observed, Year 6 pupils read accurately the relatively complex instructions for a problem-solving task and then accurately used a range of mathematical skills as they designed and costed housing developments. In other work, the pupils investigated the areas and perimeters of various shapes and identified patterns in their findings. The work is challenging for more able pupils in Year 6.

62. The features of the very good teaching and learning are:

- the use of continuous assessment in each lesson to identify the pupils' next steps of learning;
- matching the work to pupils' differing ages and learning needs in the mixed-age classes, with a good level of challenge for pupils of all abilities;
- clear explanations and a brisk pace in whole-class teaching;
- good marking that indicates how pupils can improve their work.

Occasionally, opportunities are missed to ask pupils to explain their methods, and the concluding plenary session does not contribute enough to pupils' learning.

63. Leadership of the subject is good. Pupils' progress is monitored through the well-structured tracking system, detailed assessment records, and samples of assessed work. There is a sound development plan for mathematics. Two teachers are taking an advanced course in mathematics teaching. There is insufficient formal monitoring of mathematics teaching, with the result that some minor weaknesses in provision are not identified. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection, as the quality of teaching is now higher and pupils' standards have risen.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Planning for all subjects includes the use of pupils' mathematical skills. Pupils make good use of their mathematics skills in other subjects, such as design and technology, science and ICT. For example, in science pupils often represent experimental data in different types of graph, which they then interpret. In design and technology, much careful measurement is required.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- Teaching and learning are very good, so pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils are very good partners as learners.
- Leadership of science is effective.
- The way in which investigations are structured does not always develop enquiry skills efficiently.

Commentary

65. In 2003, the results of teacher assessments of Year 2 and of national tests for Year 6 were well above national averages. They were also well above average in comparison with those of similar schools and these pupils' prior attainment at age 7. During recent years, the Year 6 results have risen much more rapidly than the national trend of improvement. The standards of current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are well above national averages, and boys and girls achieve similar standards.

66. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school as a result of the combined effect of pupils' high aspirations for learning, the very good quality of teaching, and the ethos of the school. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to lead exciting discussions and apply sequences of questions to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. In one highly successful lesson, pupils developed very good independent investigative skills. They planned an investigation to separate a mixture of compost and water and used their ideas of fair testing to devise their own experiments. The pupils had a good range of equipment to select from. They responded well to the challenge and learnt a

great deal. The scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work shows that some investigations are not carried out with the same clarity of purpose and clear structure, and do not include the collection of a variety of types of data. Overall, the teachers are very successful in promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding of science. This leads to pupils' well above average attainment. The pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and these are a significant factor in their success.

67. Assessment is well developed. Termly assessments are given National Curriculum levels and are moderated for consistency. These assessments, together with optional tests at the end of the year, are used effectively for setting targets and tracking pupils' progress. The leadership of the subject is good. Clear vision is combined with a drive to find interesting ways of teaching, for

example using a theatre group's presentation for promoting understanding of electricity. Monitoring of teaching and learning is informal but has not tackled inconsistency in the development of scientific enquiry skills. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to use ICT as part of their work in all subjects.
- Pupils have started to make creative use of English software in Years 5 and 6.

Commentary

68. Standards are above national expectations at the end of Year 2 and of Year 6. For example, Year 6 pupils use spreadsheets for modelling in mathematics and to examine relationships between data in science. They devise flow charts to create logical instructions. Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have started to use software that provides a very good stimulus to pupils' imaginations and helps them to structure their ideas as part of the process of creative writing. A high proportion of pupils are working at the expected National Curriculum level, but pupils do not have enough experience of multimedia presentations and data logging. Pupils' achievement in ICT is good because they are set challenging ICT tasks that help them to learn, both in ICT skills and in other subjects, and they tackle these tasks with sustained concentration. For example, in combination with mathematics, Year 2 pupils used ICT to draw graphs showing their favourite foods, and Year 4 pupils programmed the cursor on the computer screen so that it created relatively complex geometric patterns.

69. There were no separate ICT lessons during the inspection, but small groups of pupils used the computers in classes as part of their work in other subjects. They were well briefed for this work and tackled the tasks productively. Teachers monitored their progress well and ensured that their learning was good. There is a good assessment system linked to clear expectations about the ICT skills that pupils will learn in each year as they move through the school.

70. Good subject leadership includes monitoring of record keeping, assessment and resources, and action has been taken when deficiencies are identified. However, there has been no formal monitoring of standards, which is a weakness. There has been good improvement in ICT since the last inspection as standards have risen and assessment has improved.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. Good use is made of ICT in pupils' learning of other subjects. Teachers include the use of ICT in their medium-term planning for all subjects. For example in science, ICT is used for data handling, spreadsheets, digital photographs and research, using CD ROMs and the Internet.

HUMANITIES

72. In humanities, work was sampled in history and geography. Only one lesson was observed in each subject. Pupils' previously recorded work, teachers' planning and discussions with the co-ordinators provided other inspection evidence. The evidence

indicates that pupils' standards in **geography** at least match national expectations. The lesson seen was part of the preparation for the visit by pupils in Years 5 and 6 to the Isle of Wight. It included imaginative and very effective practical work to help pupils understand longshore drift before they carry out fieldwork at the coast. The pupils have a good understanding of erosion by rivers and the sea. The Year 6 pupils have used the Internet for research, including the study of a variety of maps.

73. In **history**, the inspection evidence indicates that pupils' standards match national expectations in Year 2 and are above national expectations in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have few opportunities for longer pieces of writing in history, but use oral history sources as they investigate toys in the past. In Year 4, many pupils link the use of Roman artefacts to different groups of people within Roman society, building on what they learnt on a visit to Fishbourne Roman Palace. Year 6 pupils compare shopping in Victorian times with shopping today. A strength of provision is the visits to places such as Beaulieu and Osborne House. Some good steps have been made to develop pupils' creativity through history by, for example, pupils' use of oral history as part of their investigation into the Second World War. There is not a whole-school system for recording teachers' assessments for this subject.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some very good teaching.
- Role-play is used effectively with younger pupils.
- The Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity is much better than for other major religions.

Commentary

74. By the end of Year 2 and of Year 6, pupils' standards match those expected by the local Agreed Syllabus. Year 6 pupils know some of the key features of the religions studied, and describe the ways in which religious beliefs affect the way that people live their lives. They explain the significance of some Christian symbols and know that different religions have different views about death. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions other than Christianity is relatively weak. Year 2 pupils describe features of Jesus's life and teaching but have few opportunities to write at any length, and to complete recorded work on two other faiths. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, with some good achievement in Years 3 and 4, where pupils have a very good knowledge of the life of Jesus and study creation stories and festivals from different religions.

75. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were very good and resulted in very good achievement by the pupils. Younger pupils were involved in a role-play of a baptism in the parish church. Canon Jenny's expert knowledge resulted in clear teaching related to the children's own experience. The clarity of the teaching, linked to the role-play and the religious artefacts, together with the pupils' rapt attention, resulted in very good achievement. In another lesson, very good links were made with work in history. The pupils compared Roman gods with Christianity as an introduction to a task about the pupils' own views and feelings about God. This stimulating and interesting teaching used a variety of methods and resources that gripped the pupils' interest.

76. The curriculum is well organised to accommodate the needs of the mixed-age classes. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There is not a whole-school approach to assessment of pupils' progress in religious education, so differences in standards and achievement between

classes are not identified. Very good use is made of the local church and clergy as learning resources for the younger pupils. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

77. Only two lessons were observed in design and technology, and one in music. No lessons were seen in art and design. It is not therefore possible to make firm judgements about overall provision in these subjects. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to co-ordinators and pupils, and examined pupils' previously completed work.

78. In **art and design**, pupils have opportunities in their sketchbooks to draw from life (for example, the school building) and from their imaginations (fantasy beasts). The very experienced co-ordinator has built up a range of resources to teach a variety of skills. Opportunities for the use of computers in art are highlighted in the planning. Links are being established with other subjects such as geography and religious education; for example, pupils have studied Indian textiles. A useful bank of work by pupils is being built up to record their progress. Visiting artists, including a supply teacher who runs watercolour workshops, enrich the subject. A willow artist also worked with pupils as part of the school's Woodland Week.

79. The evidence indicates that pupils' standards in **design and technology** have improved since the last inspection and are now above national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, work with similar interest and concentration and make similar progress. Year 2 pupils design and make wheeled vehicles of good quality, using a variety of materials. Year 4 pupils design, make and evaluate bread. They also design and make other products, such as belt bags and pop-up books. Their wooden-wheeled chariots are well designed and made. Year 6 pupils design and make musical instruments and bridges, and evaluate a good range of commercial packaging for foods such as stuffing, sweets, chocolate, chicken stock, eggs and butter. Pupils work with a good range of materials. Teaching and learning in the lessons seen were good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and demonstrate skills effectively, and they ensure that pupils' understanding develops well so that, for example, pupils know the principles of good design. They give clear instructions which help to ensure that work is productive. Assessment is not yet developed fully and is not used for driving up the standards. The leadership of design and technology is good, and the co-ordinator has a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the provision. This information is used to plan further improvements to the subject.

80. In **music**, pupils have regular opportunities to join larger choirs to take part in productions at professional theatres in neighbouring towns. In recent years these have included a performance of 'The Selfish Giant' and 'Dreams of Africa'. Pupils also took part in a master class run for teachers by the local education authority. A specialist teacher is responsible for half the curriculum, and the remainder is taught by class teachers who benefit from watching the specialist teach. The one lesson observed was taught by a non-specialist and was very good. Pupils were composing, performing and evaluating percussion pieces on a jungle theme. Teaching was focused, with high expectations. A particular strength was the climate of respect created by the teacher, allowing constructive criticism to take place so that pupils could improve. The co-ordinator is very experienced and has recently purchased a range of new musical instruments with help from the parents' association. Regular visitors to the school include Indian dancers and a folksinger.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress because skills are very well taught.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning.
- The co-ordinator provides outstanding leadership and management.

Commentary

81. Standards are well above average throughout the school, with some pupils in Years 5 and 6 excelling well beyond normal expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when provision was good. The influence of the present co-ordinator has been considerable in driving up standards. Achievement is very good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and enter enthusiastically into the activities. A full range of skills is taught. During the inspection, sessions in dance and games were observed, and the school hosted a rounders tournament.

82. Teaching is very good. All staff have access to high quality training, and their subject knowledge is strong. Most are involved in sport outside school. Some specialist staff also provide coaching. Skills and tactics are taught to an advanced level. Teachers' enthusiasm inspires pupils to want to succeed, and all pupils are very well included in lessons. Attitudes to learning are excellent, with high levels of motivation and participation.

83. The co-ordinator provides exemplary leadership. Pupils excel through her own high level of expertise and willingness to run a wide range of clubs. There are very strong links with a network of organisations, including local businesses. This has led to sponsorship of kits and access to first-class facilities and coaching, all at minimal cost to the school. The school enjoys considerable success in competitive sport against other schools and participates at county and (in swimming) national level. Adventurous sports are taught through residential visits.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

84. Although PSHE was not a focus for the inspection, information gathered from talking to pupils and to the co-ordinator indicates that provision is probably good. There is an overall plan for teaching based on a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed-age classes. In addition, there is detailed guidance for teachers, based on a commercial scheme. Provision includes times in each class when pupils sit in a circle and discuss issues that are important to them. Class councils meet weekly to discuss matters of concern, which can then be brought to the attention of the school council. Pupils are very clear that the system works well and that it enables everyone who wants to take part to have a turn as a representative sooner or later. The PHSE programme includes a citizenship day for pupils in Years 5 and 6, run by the local education authority every other year.

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	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
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	3
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).