

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FOX HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bracknell

LEA area: Bracknell Forest

Unique reference number: 109805

Headteacher: Ms C Mitchell

Lead inspector: Paul Missin 19227

Dates of inspection: July 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> 2004

Inspection number: 256161

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	227
School address:	Pondmoor Road Easthampstead Bracknell Berkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Fox Hill Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Beadsley
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Fox Hill Primary School is about the same size as most other schools of the same type. The school serves a large housing estate in inner Bracknell. There are 17 more boys than girls in the school. Twenty-five children attend the Nursery in the afternoon. Most pupils are from the white British ethnic group, but the most numerous of other ethnic groups are mixed white and black Caribbean and mixed African. Six pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are at an early stage of language acquisition. There are 56 pupils on the school's special educational needs (SEN) register which is above the national average. Five pupils have statements of SEN. This is also above average. The most common areas of need are social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, and moderate learning difficulties. The school has received the following national awards; Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2002, a School Achievement Award in 2003, Healthy Schools Award and an Investors in People Awards in 2003. In 2000, the school suffered a major fire. The school was threatened with closure as a result of a review of school places in the area in 2003 but this decision was reversed following a successful campaign. From September 2005, the school will vacate the current Key Stage 1 building and the Years 1 and 2 classes will move into the Key Stage 2 building. When they enter the school, most pupils are achieving standards that are well below those expected for their age.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19227	Paul Missin	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology, history, geography. English as an additional language.
9588	Tony West	Lay inspector	
16760	Dorothy Latham	Team inspector	English, art and design, music, personal, social, health and citizenship education. Children in the Foundation Stage.
16492	Bob Lever	Team inspector	Mathematics, religious education, design and technology, physical education, special educational needs.

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>7</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES ONE AND TWO</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>29</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Fox Hill Primary School is a good, effective school.** The Headteacher leads and manages the school very well and this enables the school to ensure that pupils progress as they move through it. Most children are attaining standards that are well below average when they enter the school and, by the time they leave, most pupils reach standards in mathematics and science that are above those expected for their age. Standards in literacy are lower. The good teaching and the well-matched curriculum explain the good progress that pupils make. An important strength is the way that the school fully involves pupils in its work. The school provides good value for money

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The good teaching across the school and the interesting enrichments to the curriculum enable pupils to achieve well and make good progress in their learning.
- The Headteacher's leadership and management of the school are very good and she is very well supported by other senior staff.
- Pupils reach above average standards in mathematics and science by Year 6.
- The leadership and management of the work of the children in the Foundation Stage and for those with special educational needs (SEN) are very good, and provision for them is good.
- The very good relationships in the school and pupils' good attitudes and behaviour all encourage and support effective learning.
- The school has a strong, caring ethos where the safety and welfare of all pupils are high priorities.
- The school is working very hard to address weaknesses in literacy with a comprehensive literacy programme.
- The use of literacy skills across the curriculum and the improvement in pupils' general presentational skills have not been a sufficiently successful focus across the school.
- Attendance is well below average and some pupils are consistently late for school.

Overall, the school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Most of the key issues from the last inspection have been addressed well. Clear improvement has been made in the effectiveness of school improvement planning and in the management of the curriculum. Strengths have been maintained in the quality of teaching, and, currently, there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Since 1999, there has been some variation in the standards being achieved. Currently, standards in Year 6 are higher, and those in Year 2 are lower than at the time of the last inspection. Very good improvement has been made in the quality of leadership. Before it was sound, now it is very good.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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*

There has been a considerable variation in standards achieved by the Year 6 group. Standards have been well below the average of all schools in English and mathematics except for average standards in mathematics in 2002 and English in 2003. Science has mostly been stronger. The school did very well in comparison with similar schools in English and science in 2003. The current Year 6 group is attaining standards in mathematics and science that are above average but standards in English that are below average. Standards in ICT and RE are average. The current

Year 2 pupils are attaining standards that are well below average in reading and writing, mathematics and science and below average in ICT and RE. Standards in PE are average across the school. Children in the Foundation Stage attain average standards in their mathematical development but below average standards in all other areas of learning. **Pupils' achievement is good.** From a well below average level when they enter the school, most children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Pupils in the current Year 2 are also making good progress from a very low level when they entered the school. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress in their learning.

**Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.** Pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour in and around the school are good. Relationships are very good. Attendance is well below average and a significant minority of parents find it difficult to get their children to school on time.

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good.** Strengths in teaching across the school are in teachers' clear and detailed lesson planning and in the very positive way in which pupils are encouraged and supported. Teachers and support assistants work very hard to build up pupils' confidence and self-esteem. This helps pupils' motivation and improves the commitment to their learning. Assessment procedures are good, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is well planned and is enlivened well through a wide range of interesting and challenging enhancements. The good links with parents and the very good links with the local community impact positively on the school's work and pupils' learning.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are very good.** The Headteacher has a very clear vision for the development of the school and leads effectively by example. She is very well supported by an effective Deputy Headteacher, senior managers and subject co-ordinators. Very effective management procedures result in a hard working, well-informed, committed staff team. School improvement planning is clearly at the heart of the school's work. Governance of the school is satisfactory. The recent campaign to save the school from closure was managed very well but governors do not check on the progress and work of the school well enough. All statutory requirements are met.

### **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The school tries hard to develop positive links with its parents and it provides good quality information about its work and the pupils' education. Most parents have very positive views about the school's achievements. Most pupils think that teachers are fair, that they listen to their ideas and that there is an adult that they can go to if they are worried.

### **IMPROVEMENT NEEDED**

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

- Continue to raise the standards pupils attain, especially in Years 1 and 2, and in English across the school.
- Ensure more effective use of writing and presentation skills across the curriculum.
- Continue with the school's best endeavours to improve pupils' attendance and to continue to encourage parents to get their children to school on time.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, Pupils in Year 6 attain average standards. Standards in the Foundation Stage are below average and the current Year 2 group are attaining standards that are well below those expected for their age. This range is explained by variations in the potential of different year groups throughout the school. Across the school, pupils of all abilities, including those with SEN, achieve well and make good progress in their learning. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) make sound progress in their learning.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve standards in mathematics and science in Year 6 that are above those expected for their age.
- Most pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school.
- Standards generally are lower where pupils' difficulties with literacy impact more widely on their learning.
- Pupils with SEN achieve well and make good progress towards their own learning targets.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well.

#### Commentary

1. Several important features of the changing context of the school affect the pupils' capacity to reach average standards and adversely influence the analysis of standards achieved in the national tests. Mobility in the school is very high. In the last school year, 29 pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission and 27 left other than at the usual time of transfer. An example of how the mobility affects different year groups is clearly illustrated in relation to the current Year 2. Of the 34 children who started in the Nursery, only 21 remained to the end of Year 2 (62 per cent). Including those who have left and arrived since the Nursery year there has been a 65 per cent change in the year group by the end of Year 2. Eight of the new additions were already on the SEN register. Mobility makes statistical analysis of the data showing trends at this school between Year 2 and Year 6 unreliable.
2. Another important factor which affects overall judgements about standards and achievement is the variation in attainment on entry. This has dropped since the last inspection when it was judged to have been below average. Now it is mostly well below average. When the current Year 2 group started school, their attainment was very low. The current proportion of free school meals in the school and analysis of available socio-economic data mean that the school's current similar school banding is inaccurate and comparisons are now being made with a different group of schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.8 (24.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.2 (26.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.8 (27.9)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. Analysis of the trends shown in recent national tests in Year 6 shows that standards have been broadly below and well below average in English and mathematics, and average in science. The preliminary results of the 2004 national tests show that standards are likely to be below average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. Comparisons with similar schools are

likely to show that standards in English are average while those in mathematics and science are well above average. The inspection findings are similar to these results. There has been significant improvement in mathematics since 2003 and the high standards in science have been maintained. However, the school's targets in literacy were not met. This is a reflection of the difficulty that some pupils continue to have with the language involved in the testing process. Since the last inspection, standards have improved significantly in mathematics, science and ICT. Analysis of the trend of the combined results of the national tests shows that overall standards have risen each year. The other inspection findings are that standards in ICT, RE and PE are average. Throughout the school, pupils' writing skills are not consistently developed across other curriculum areas.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.8 (15.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.3 (13.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.2 (15.9)	16.3 (16.5)

*There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Analysis of the trends shown in test data in Year 2 shows that standards have been broadly average and below with a significant drop in 2003. The preliminary results of the 2004 national tests and teacher assessments show that standards have remained very low. This is explained by the fact that these year groups were attaining very low standards when they entered the school and have a higher proportion of pupils with significant SEN. The current inspection judgement is that standards in reading and writing, mathematics and science are all well below average. The other inspection findings are that standards in ICT and RE are below average and average in PE.
5. Across the school, pupils' achievement is good. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and achieve well in their learning. The progress that they make in understanding word sounds to improve their spelling and their confidence in using basic numbers are very good. Although the standards pupils attain in Year 2 are well below average, these pupils make good progress from the very low standards that they were achieving when they entered the school. Evidence from their work across all subjects shows that most are making good progress, especially in their acquisition of basic skills. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress. This results in above average standards in mathematics and science and below average standards in English. Across the school, pupils make good progress because of the good teaching, effective learning and the very good leadership provided by senior staff. The smaller teaching groups, particularly in Year 6 have had a positive impact on the progress that pupils make.
6. On entry to the Nursery, most children attain standards that are well below those expected nationally, especially in all aspects of their communication and language skills and also in manual dexterity. By the end of the Reception year, most children have made good progress in their learning and are likely to achieve standards in most areas of learning which are still below those expected nationally. However, progress in their mathematical development is very good and most are reaching average standards. This is the result of the quality of the teaching and the strong emphasis put on the development of early counting and numbering skills. Also, in some aspects of their language work, such as spelling and phonics, many children are approaching average standards.
7. Pupils with SEN make good progress against specific targets and goals. They do well when receiving extra support and teaching is appropriately matched to their needs. Provision for the few pupils who have EAL is satisfactory and this enables them to make satisfactory progress towards meeting their own language targets. They are supported soundly by a LEA support teacher, and class teachers and their assistants make satisfactory provision for them. The majority of pupils who are at an early stage of language acquisition are from an extended family from Venezuela. Most of the few pupils from other minority ethnic groups have equality of access to the National Curriculum.



8. Analysis of recent national test data indicated that boys were achieving better than girls. The school is aware of this but there was no indication of any significant gender differences in achievement during the inspection. Most parents were pleased with the progress that their children were making at school and most pupils thought that they worked hard.

**Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and relationships in the school are very good. Pupils' personal development is promoted well, especially in social and moral aspects. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory and too many pupils are late for school. The school is working hard to redress these weaknesses.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' attendance is well below the national median and has fallen since the last inspection. Unauthorised absence is lower and is better than the national median.
- Too many parents fail to get their children to school on time.
- Pupils show good interest in learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good and there is a good degree of racial harmony.
- Pupils have a very good awareness of right and wrong and show respect for others' feelings and beliefs.

**Commentary**

9. Attendance is unsatisfactory as it is well below the national median, although unauthorised absence is better than the national median. Staff monitor attendance well and receive good support from the education welfare service who visit families when requested. Children whose attendance is causing concern are identified and the school works hard to ensure that they attend school more regularly. There are a small number of families who do not ensure that their children attend school. Reasons for absences are mainly due to illness and medical treatment and increasingly due to parents taking their children out of school during term time for family holidays. During this year, the attendance of all year groups fell below 95 per cent and the lowest average attendance was attributed to pupils in Year 4. The majority of children arrive at school punctually but there are families whose children are regularly late for school. There have been 11 exclusions during the past school year and this is an improvement on the previous year.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.9	School data	0.1
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.*

**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	11	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

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

10. Pupils show interest and curiosity in lessons and the great majority of them concentrate well on their work and have a good attitude to school. Behaviour is good in lessons, around the school and on the playground. At the pre-inspection parents' meeting, parents confirmed that they thought behaviour was good and that there was little bullying at the school. There was no evidence of racial harassment or examples of extreme behaviour during the inspection. Pupils are aware of the school and class rules and fully understand the difference between right and wrong. Their moral development is very good. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds mix together well.
11. Pupils have many opportunities throughout the school to take on additional responsibility and contribute their views and opinions in a variety of ways. For example, they all help to set class rules, they are involved in 'circle time' and their opinions are sought in class. Some are elected members of the school council. They respond very positively to these challenges and have influenced school policies, for example, on the Healthy Schools initiative and school uniform. Pupils are very happy at the school and feel secure and well cared for. They are given a clear picture of what they need to do to improve their work throughout ability and age ranges.
12. Pupils have a good level of respect for the feelings and values of others and are given opportunities to reflect on these feelings. They are encouraged to think of others by raising money for charities and they celebrate major festivals. Pupils chose charities to be supported. This year the focus was on a charity for the treatment of diabetes. Pupils' social development is very good and they are involved in a variety of extracurricular activities, festivals, sporting events and end of term performances. Relationships between pupils and with all the staff are very good. Pupils get on well together and are able to work and play collaboratively very well. They show understanding of and respect for other pupils who have complex needs and benefit significantly from being taught alongside them. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of their own culture and of life within a multicultural society. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is now satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have sound opportunities through the curriculum to appreciate pattern and beauty and opportunities are provided for prayer and reflection in the daily act of collective worship.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The good teaching across the school enables pupils to achieve well and to make good progress in their learning. The curriculum is broad

and is enlivened well. The very good care and welfare procedures mean that pupils feel safe and secure and are keen to learn.

## Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The collection and use of assessment data are also good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is good.
- The effective teaching of children in the Foundation Stage ensures that they have a good start to their time at school.
- Teachers manage pupils well and ensure that the brisk pace to lessons helps to keep pupils committed and well motivated.
- The teaching of pupils with SEN is good.
- The quality and application of writing and presentation skills are not consistently emphasised.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6 (18%)	15 (44%)	13 (38%)	0	0	0

*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. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This confirms the positive view of both parents and pupils. During the inspection, the strongest teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage, where all the teaching was good or better, and in Year 6, where over a quarter of the teaching was very good. Teaching was also judged to have been good at the time of the last inspection. Improvements have been made since then as the small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching evident at that time has been eliminated and the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 has been improved. Several of the strengths in teaching have also been maintained since the last inspection. Teachers' secure subject knowledge in English and mathematics is still a strength and continues to impact well on the achievement of pupils currently in the school. The accurate use of well directed questions and the effective use of words of praise and encouragement are also still notable strengths.
14. Currently, teaching and learning are good in English, mathematics and science across the school. They are satisfactory across the school in RE and PE. In ICT, teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Since the last inspection, standards of teaching have been maintained in English and they have been improved in mathematics and in science and ICT in Year 6.
15. An important strength in teaching is the positive way in which pupils are managed. Teachers devise interesting activities for pupils to do, introduce them clearly and make sure that pupils know clearly what is expected of them. Lessons are taught at a brisk pace and in the best lessons, activities are carefully timed and introduced in small steps. These features of teaching help to secure and maintain pupils' interest and involvement and improve the quality of their learning.
16. Teachers' planning is detailed and clear and they make good reference to the work that pupils have previously done to set the context of each lesson. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards which are available in some classes, to enliven their lessons. Some shortcomings in otherwise satisfactory lessons are where teachers do not emphasise sufficiently the importance of producing clearly recorded written work and opportunities to remind the pupils about the effective

application of wider literacy skills to their work are not always taken. In some lessons, the move from whole class introduction to individual or group work is not managed well and time and pace are lost as some pupils are not focused on their new work quickly enough.

17. Further features of good, effective teaching were seen in a science lesson in Year 5 where pupils were setting up an experiment to investigate the rate at which water evaporated under different conditions. The lesson was clearly planned and effectively introduced. The teacher maintained a brisk pace and showed good, confident subject knowledge. She used the interactive whiteboard well to show and remind pupils the focus of the lesson and also the new vocabulary, which included specialist terms such as evaporation, particle, liquid and gas. The teacher asked the pupils interesting and challenging questions about their work, including good reference to their understanding of fair testing. As a result of this effective introduction, pupils were prepared well for the task of devising their own investigations.
18. The teaching of pupils with SEN is good. Teachers generally use appropriate methods, which enable pupils to learn effectively. Teachers are aware of the targets set out in the pupils' individual learning plans and plan against these for lessons across the curriculum. Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) provide effective support, which helps pupils to achieve well in learning basic skills. Learning plans are sufficiently specific for accurate assessments of progress to be made. Assessment arrangements are effective and records are thorough and well maintained. The school uses assessment data from teachers and from a range of tests to inform target-setting procedures in individual education plans. Assessments made on entry to school enable early identification of pupils needing extra support.
19. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good overall. In the lessons observed during the inspection, they ranged from good to very good. Planning is clear and detailed, and assessment and its use are also good. In play, there is a good balance between free and directed activities, both of which are often imaginative and exciting for children. Skilled questioning and conversational techniques promote speaking and listening, as well as mathematical development. Teaching staff and helpers work together well as a team. The children learn well from the good teaching and make good progress
20. Assessment procedures across the school are good. Both the collection and the use of assessment data have improved since the last inspection. In 1999, assessment procedures were judged to have been satisfactory but their use in overall school planning was unsatisfactory. Currently, assessment procedures in literacy, numeracy and science are good. Data are collected through standardised testing, the use of optional national tests and from in-class testing. In reading, writing and mathematics, data are used well to set individual, class and year group targets for pupils and provide clear information to track the progress the pupils are making as they move through the school. Recently established systems for monitoring samples of pupils' work in all subjects across the school are good. The initiative to interview pupils to add their perspective to the work in each subject is also good. Data are also used well to set individual Performance Management objectives for teachers and support staff.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum overall is good. It provides very good opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum very well.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is well planned to cover all subjects.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good.
- Extracurricular provision is very good.
- The accommodation is very good and the curriculum is well resourced.
- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good.

## Commentary

21. The curriculum is planned well against national guidelines to provide breadth and continuity in learning. Time allocations are broadly in line with recommendations with an understandable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects to guide planning. The numeracy and literacy strategies are in place and staff have received significant training. This confirms the positive views of parents in their pre-inspection questionnaire where most thought that the school provided a good range of activities for the pupils. Good improvement has been made in the management of the curriculum since the last inspection.
22. A good range of clubs, visits and visitors enhances the curriculum. Lunchtime clubs, which are devised and arranged by the pupils themselves, include cheerleading, badminton, tag rugby and kwik cricket. After school clubs, which are run by teachers and members of the community, include board games, art, philosophy, French, choir, dance, volleyball, science, gardening and cross-stitch. Pupils take part in athletics, football, volleyball, badminton and cross-country tournaments and festivals locally. They make visits locally and further afield. They have visited the church, and have visits from clergy, but links with other faiths are limited.
23. Overall the provision for SEN is good. The curriculum is appropriately organised for those identified with SEN and no pupils are disapplied. Arrangements for using individual education plans are generally effective in ensuring that learning needs are met whilst still enabling pupils to have access to the whole curriculum. The LSAs are experienced and receive training within and outside school.
24. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It is appropriately based on the nationally set goals for five year-olds and is socially inclusive. Planning is imaginative and stimulating and motivates the children well. The balance between free play and directed activities is appropriate for the ages of children in both the Nursery and the Reception class. The outdoor play area is spacious and well equipped, and the school uses this area well. However, outdoor play is used at set times rather than as a free choice activity for children. This is because of a lack of enough helpers. This limits the scope of free choice activities.
25. The school enjoys very good accommodation and resources, which support the curriculum well. The overcrowding in the classrooms that was a key issue at the last inspection has been addressed very well. Classrooms now are of a good size and there are other valuable teaching and storage areas. The kitchen area for food technology is good and is well used. There are very good outside facilities for games and the youngest children have a secure area for play. Accommodation is good for pupils with SEN. There are shared areas and rooms where pupils can be withdrawn to be taught individually or in groups. Most support takes place in classrooms. The building easily enables disabled access and disabled toilet facilities are provided. Resources for SEN in terms of books and materials are good.

## Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety and the involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views are strengths of the school and are very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring of pupils' achievement is good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is very good and their opinions and views are greatly valued.
- The induction arrangements for pupils in the Foundation Stage are good.
- All adults know pupils well and provide very good levels of care for their well being.
- The school has good systems to monitor pupils' academic standards and progress.

## **Commentary**

26. The school has adopted good, clear procedures to support the high number of pupils who join the school other than at the beginning of the year. Parents and their children are introduced personally to the class teacher and the support assistant and pupils are allocated a special 'buddy' who will help them to settle. Families are provided with an information booklet about the school and detail of the topics planned for the year. These strengths help parents and children to be aware of the school's expectations and to settle as quickly as possible into school routines. There are also good induction arrangements for children when they first start at the school, enhanced by the good relationship with the Nursery based on the school site. Opportunities are available for new parents and children to visit the school in the term before they start. Information booklets are provided and the teachers make home visits, before children come to school. As a result, children start well at school, settle in quickly and happily and make good progress. There are good procedures for monitoring their achievement on a day-to-day basis. Pupils with SEN form good relationships with teachers, support staff and each other. Their confidence and self-esteem are increased by the quality of the support they receive.
27. The school has very good health and safety procedures in place. Governors and staff make regular health and safety checks and make a range of full risk assessments. Regular checks are made to grounds, buildings and equipment. The Headteacher is the nominated officer for child protection procedures and all other staff have been trained and would inform the Headteacher if they had any concerns. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for the care of children who are unwell are effective and help them to feel safe and secure at school.
28. The school has very good arrangements to ensure that all the adults working in the school, especially the LSAs, have consistent information on the needs of all the pupils. They know them well and are able to support them well and provide good role models. Discussions with pupils and the analysis of their questionnaires show that they feel safe and secure and can turn to an adult if they need help or comfort. The pupils have access to good advice and are provided with individual targets and assessments that enable them to improve their work and make progress in their personal development.
29. There are very good arrangements for involving pupils in the work and management of the school, including the formation of a school council and assisting staff in the running of the school. Throughout school, their opinions and views are sought and valued and have impacted on the design of school rules, the implementation of the Healthy Schools initiative, provision of resources and several other issues. This is a considerable strength of this school.

## **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's links with parents are good. The school's links with the community are very good. There are good links with other schools and colleges.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- The school provides parents with good information about the curriculum and how to help their children at home.
- Good links with the pre-school and other local schools benefit pupils.
- Very good links exist with the local community.
- Communication with parents of children in the Foundation Stage and with parents of children with SEN is good.
- Some families do not always ensure their children attend school.
- Parents do not always consistently support their children's work at home.

## Commentary

30. Relationships with parents have been positively influenced by the uncertainty over the future of the school and its possible closure. This was averted by the strenuous efforts of the governing body and parents. Parents and carers have very positive views of the school and pupils' achievements. The school works hard to encourage parents to support the school and to help their children at home. However, some parents do not always support their children with their work at home. The school puts a great effort into helping parents to improve their understanding of educational provision but, for some, this has had a limited impact. The school provides a wide range of information for parents about the curriculum and how they can help their children. Parents have also been encouraged to get further qualifications, including City and Guilds. The parents also appreciate the opportunities provided by the 'open learning centre'.
31. Parents are able to meet staff formally and informally through the school year in order to discuss their children's progress. Written annual reports for parents are good: they inform parents what their children, know, understand and can do, and give areas for development. The reports inform parents where their children are in relation to what is expected. Parents and pupils are able to record comments on reports. A few parents do not always ensure that their children attend school or arrive on time. However, the school is working hard to encourage improvements in attendance and punctuality.
32. There are good procedures for parents at the time of children's first induction to school, including home visits, and time for parents to enjoy some activities with their children in the Nursery on visits, before starting. Later on, parents are offered meetings about curricular matters. Parents have the opportunity to speak to teachers about day-to-day matters, as well as to discuss the children's progress over time at the regular formal consultation meetings. Parents of pupils with SEN are encouraged to be involved in identifying their needs and in providing support. They are well informed and are generally supportive. They speak highly of the support that their children receive. There are good links with outside support agencies and close liaison with secondary schools.
33. Good links exist with a local group of schools, including those from the secondary phase. The Headteacher and staff meet staff of other schools regularly in their management and co-ordination roles. The school also has good links with secondary schools and many older students take part in work experience at Fox Hill. The school has benefited from strong links with their receiving secondary school. They provide sports resources, venues for meetings and other curriculum support for such areas as science and tennis. There are strong links with local universities and teacher training colleges.
34. The school has very good links with the local community and these enhance and strengthen its work. There are strong links with the local education authority, the local authority, Member of Parliament and local businesses. A professional football club and local sports associations have supported extracurricular and sports coaching activities. The school has been involved in music festivals as well as performances by musicians and the choir. Several visitors have come into school and have contributed well to pupils' personal development and curriculum enhancement. These have included the caring and emergency services, authors, artists, theatre groups, members of the clergy, religious groups, members of the business community, parents and friends of the school. The community also uses the school and groups hire the school buildings and grounds including a very active, after school club.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The Headteacher's leadership and management are very effective and she is very well supported by other senior staff. Governance of the school is satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Headteacher's very good leadership ensures that the school is continually seeking for improvements.
- The very good management procedures encourage all involved in the school to be fully committed to its work.
- Performance Management procedures are well established and are an integral part of the school's development.
- The management of SEN provision and the co-ordination of the work of children in the Foundation Stage are very good.
- The school improvement plan is clearly at the heart of its work, but the priority to raise standards in literacy and numeracy is not sufficiently explicit.

## Commentary

35. The leadership and management of the Headteacher are very good. This has been a significant improvement since the last inspection when they were judged to have been sound. The Headteacher leads the school very effectively. She has a very clear vision for the school which she articulates very well to all involved with its work. She effectively combines a determination that pupils should achieve as high standards as possible with a concern for their families, the community and the general context of their learning. The school values its position in the local community. Good use is made of opportunities provided by the Open Learning Forum and the school intends to make an application for extended school status. The Headteacher's enthusiasm and commitment to the school are infectious and she leads very well by the example that she provides. She is a good class practitioner and is involved well in supporting teaching and learning in the classroom. She has successfully established an effective senior management team which has an important role in the school's work.
36. The management of the school is also very good. An important strength is the quality and effectiveness of the leadership teams which help to ensure that all staff are informed about, and involved in, the work of the school. The senior management team meets regularly, has clear responsibilities and has an important role in the school's development. The management of the key stage teams and curriculum subjects is effective. Performance Management procedures are well established. Teachers' objectives are related both to planned priorities to improve overall attainment and also to their own professional development needs. Procedures have also been introduced for support staff. These strengths have a very positive effect on the high staff morale and their commitment to the school. Monitoring of curriculum development and teaching and learning are good. Strengths are in the well managed and systematic way that pupils' work is analysed in all subjects and in the way in which interviews with pupils has begun to give more prominence to this important perspective on the school's work. These strengths represent good improvement in this area which was a key issue at the last inspection.
37. School improvement planning is clearly at the heart of the school's work. The way that improvement priorities are discussed at regular staff meetings and inform the objectives of the Headteacher, teaching and support staff ensures that they are the focus of the school's work. Procedures for devising and monitoring the progress through the plan are secure. This has represented good improvement since the last inspection when there were shortcomings in planning for school improvement. Minor shortcomings are that the school's main aim to improve standards in literacy and numeracy is not sufficiently explicit in the way that the plan is presented. Also the current plan does not include the overall aims of the school and, as a result is not set in the long-term context of its work. In addition, the areas for development sufficiently prioritised in the final document.
38. Further strengths of the Headteacher are the way in which she gives the school a high profile in the local area. Support agencies are used effectively to support and complement the school's work and good opportunities have been taken to participate in national award schemes such as Investors in People and Healthy Schools.



39. Governance of the school is sound overall. The very recent situation following the threatened closure of the school has had a mixed impact. The campaign to keep the school open was managed very effectively by the governing body and very successfully galvanised support from the parents and the wider community. However, in recent months this campaign has been very much the focus of governors' energies and, because of this, some routine functions have not been given equal prominence. A further factor which has limited the effectiveness of the governing body is that it has not had the use of a clerk for some time. A scrutiny of the minutes of recent full and committee meetings shows that a wide range of relevant issues is discussed. A strength is in the depth and quality of the Headteacher's reports to the governing body. Through these governors have a clear view of the working of the school. Relative shortcomings are that there are insufficiently clear procedures for regularly monitoring the progress that the school is making through the school improvement plan and the visits that the governors make to the school are not clearly co-ordinated with development priorities. As a result, the evaluative role of the governing body is underdeveloped. Governors now fulfil all their statutory duties, including providing a daily act of worship. This has been an improvement since the last inspection.
40. The co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is very good, and staff work well together as an integrated team. Teachers and support assistants work together with co-operation and care. All understand the Foundation Stage curriculum well, are familiar with the planning, and contribute to the ongoing assessment of the children. The co-ordinator has very good knowledge and understanding of young children and their needs, and of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The premises are excellent and form an ideal purpose-built context for Foundation Stage education. It allows children to conduct their activities in small units while receiving careful monitoring from staff due to the inbuilt viewpoints for adults. This, together with the very good outdoor area, enhances children's learning and their sense of independence.
41. Management of SEN provision is very good. There are accurate records of pupils' progress and the required documentation is kept in good order. The co-ordinator is experienced and supports colleagues well.
42. The finances of the school are managed well. The finance officer is well qualified and, although she is relatively new to the post, she has already established some effective and efficient financial practices. Procedures for devising the school budget and for tracking spending patterns are secure. This was also the judgement of the most recent office audit which took place in June 2004.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	576,171
Total expenditure	606,136
Expenditure per pupil	2,613

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	52,787
Balance carried forward to the next	22,822

## **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 Foundation Stage is **good**.

43. At the time of the inspection, there were 49 children in the Foundation Stage. Twenty-five attend the Nursery for afternoons only and the other children are taught together in a single Reception class. Many children start in the Nursery in the January before their fourth birthday. Transfer from Nursery to the Reception class and then to Year 1 is smooth and is accompanied by comprehensive records of their progress. When children enter the Nursery, most are attaining standards that are well below those expected for their age. Children's language skills are particularly poorly developed. However, there is some variation between different year groups. When the current Year 1 and 2 pupils entered the school, their attainment was very low.
44. By the end of the Reception year, most children are on line to achieve standards that are below those expected for their age in all areas of learning, except in their mathematical development where standards are average. From a low level of attainment when they enter the school, most children make good progress and achieve well in the Foundation Stage. This is achieved as a result of the good teaching and the good curriculum planning for these children. Strengths in this area have been maintained well since the last inspection. In 1999, children were also making good progress, but from a below average level on entry to a broadly average level when they entered Year 1. Overall provision remains good as it was at the last inspection
45. Teaching which is good overall and ranges from good to very good, brings about good learning and good achievement for most children. Teaching is good in all areas of learning. Strengths of the teaching are the wide programmes of stimulating activities which promote first-hand experience and active learning. These are also matched well to children's needs through careful ongoing assessment. Good improvement has taken place since the last inspection in the quality of teaching, particularly in phonics teaching and number work, and in the procedures for, and use of, assessment.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good, imaginative teaching leads to good learning and good achievement.
- The standards attained by Reception children in phonics and counting are good.
- Induction and assessment procedures are good.
- Standards of attainment in general are below average for age in both the Nursery and the Reception year.

#### **Commentary**

46. Children feel safe, confident and happy in both year groups. Relationships between adults and children are very good. Children achieve well in their **personal, social and emotional development** through interaction and play, despite immature levels on entry. However, their standards of attainment are still below average for their age on entry to Year 1. In the Nursery, most children prefer to play alone, while towards the end of the year, some are beginning to enjoy interacting with others engaged in activities alongside them. In the Reception Class, many like to play alongside one another, and a few begin to develop short periods of collaborative play. Children in both groups behave well for their age, and are encouraged to develop independence. Children show respect for each other's needs and this is promoted well through sharing and turn taking. The good teaching is carefully planned and allows plenty of scope for free play with a good balance of short periods of adult-led activities.
47. In both year groups, children make good progress in developing their **communication, language and literacy** skills, but they start from a low base. Thus, despite the good teaching and learning which brings good achievement, standards of attainment are still below average in both

groups. However, a recent initiative to boost phonic skills has impacted very well on children's learning and, by the time they are at the end of their Reception year, most of them show above average standards in spelling and phonic recognition. Their range of vocabulary and use of grammatical structures in speech remain immature. Due to immature manual dexterity handwriting is also below average. Reading is improving though still below average. Teaching is extremely thorough and there is a strong focus on conversation with children, to promote speaking and listening.

48. By the time they enter Year 1 most children attain standards in their **mathematical development** that are in line with those expected for their age. This is the result of the good teaching which impacts well on children's learning and they achieve very well. A great deal of emphasis has recently been placed on counting and the ordering aspects of number to form a basis for numerical understanding, and in this aspect, children achieve very well. By the end of the Reception year, most children are attaining the expected standards in this area and some are exceeding them. In other aspects of mathematical development, such as the group values of numbers, understanding of number processes, and knowledge of space and shape, most children by the end of the Reception year are reaching the expected standards. Teaching is thorough and considerable care is taken to apply mathematical teaching and learning in a practical way, using real items and everyday objects.
49. Despite a very good range of first-hand experiences and exciting activities provided in this area of learning, the standards of children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** in both year groups are below average for age. Teaching and learning are good, and much attention is paid to the development of children's knowledge and ideas. However, children's low language levels and short attention spans inhibit understanding and retention of knowledge. Against this, children achieve well, showing interest and making good progress from their low start. Aeroplanes and air travel are a current focus for work which engages children's interest. They enjoy playing with toy aeroplanes, learning their names, making their own streamers and looking at the action of windmills created by the flow of air, as well as having the fun of role play at the check-in desk with their home-made passports. Children use magnifying glasses to observe dry and wet shells and pebbles, and watch water creatures in the pond as early work in science. The Reception Class is able to have access to suitably sited computers with appropriate programs and children gradually become familiar with the keyboard and the mouse. However, the only computer in the Nursery is sited in a place which is too high for the children and currently prevents easy access.
50. Standards of attainment in **physical development** are below average for age in both year groups. Although approaching the expected level by the end of the Reception year, in larger movements such as running, climbing, and jumping, the finer control for starting, stopping and steering direction remains immature. In terms of manual dexterity, children enter the Nursery with poor levels of control and, by the end of the Reception year, these are still below average for their age, despite the provision of plenty of opportunities for drawing, writing, painting, modelling, threading and construction play. Teaching is good and provides encouragement and specific skills tuition and results in good learning. Achievement against the entry levels in both year groups is good. The outside area is spacious and well equipped. Although both year groups have good access to outdoor play, this is timetabled, since levels of support staffing preclude periods of free in and out play which limits the opportunities for children to make more choices.
51. Standards of attainment in **creative development** are below average for children's age in both year groups. Most of them are not yet fully meeting the standards expected by the end of the Reception year. Poor manual dexterity and the limited understanding hinder the development of the children's imagination and expression. Progress is made in both year groups, however, and achievement is good, due to the good teaching and consequent good learning that takes place. There is plentiful provision of imaginative opportunities for skills to be taught and developed in drawing, painting, modelling and making, as well as for learning rhymes and songs. Reception children loved using the streamers they had made in a dance routine, pretending to fly and float through the air.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject is very well led and managed.
- English is well taught throughout the school.
- Pupils achieve well in the subject.
- Recent initiatives in the teaching of phonics are beginning to show benefit.
- Assessment is good in the subject.
- The library skills of older pupils are weak.
- Opportunities for writing are not fully exploited across the curriculum.

#### **Commentary**

52. Standards in reading and writing in Year 2 are well below average. This represents a decline from the standards reported in the last inspection, but is similar to results in the national end of Year 2 tests for both the current and the previous year. However, since these pupils entered the school with well below or very well below average standards of attainment their progress is at least satisfactory and often good.
53. Standards in English attained by pupils in Year 6 are below average. This is the same as the standards reported in the last inspection, although attainment has varied in the intervening years. It is similar to the results for the end of Year 6 national tests for the current year. Variations in the abilities of different year groups and high mobility of pupils account for the changes in standards attained.
54. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress over time and achieve well against their capabilities, including those with SEN and the more able. There are no significant differences between the performances of boys and girls.
55. Standards in speaking and listening are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. Pupils have good attitudes to speaking and listening, however, and make good progress in this aspect of English. They are confident speakers, able to express themselves clearly and are generally keen to enter discussions and ask and answer questions. They readily talk about the books they read and the characters and plots of the stories. However, the range of their vocabularies and their grasp of grammatical structures often limit their expression and their understanding.
56. Reading standards in Year 2 are well below average and in Year 6 they are below average. Pupils make good progress in their reading, however, and their achievement is good for their capabilities and previous learning. Younger pupils read accurately and with confidence about the texts they are given. They also use the skills they have been taught to tackle unknown or difficult words. Older pupils enjoy selecting books themselves as well as being introduced to new authors for their class and group reading activities. Pupils borrow frequently from the library, and some older pupils enjoy visiting public libraries as well, although their library skills are weak. They enjoy a good balance between fiction and non-fiction. The most significant weakness across the school is that pupils are slow to develop fluency and expression in reading. Additionally, by the top of the school, despite increased progress, comprehension levels are still weak.
57. Standards in writing in Year 2 are well below average and, in Year 6, they are below average. Despite considerable imagination and originality, poor secretarial skills of handwriting and spelling hamper pupils in setting down their ideas and make written work slow. This hurdle is only gradually overcome, although the current initiative to boost phonic skills, not only throughout the

school but also with an early emphasis, is beginning to show benefit. A good range of purposes for writing is provided for pupils, with plenty of attention generally to organisation, structure, grammar and punctuation. In Year 6, pupils' work shows evidence of beginning to adapt both structure and vocabulary to the purpose of the writing. Presentation and display of written work show some very imaginative challenges given to pupils, and a good standard of finished work for their capabilities.

58. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons seen were all good or very good. Teachers try hard to develop pupils' literacy skills by modelling appropriate language and by giving clear explanations of new words and expressions. They make good use of questioning, the use of paired and small group talk, and the reporting opportunities in the literacy hours. Tasks are generally well matched to pupils' needs. Marking is regular and generally gives guidance for further improvement, while assessment procedures and their use are good. There has been substantial in-service training for teachers in the subject.

59. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and manages the subject very well. She surveys planning, monitors lessons, samples work, and analyses data. The latter is used to set individual and group targets, and to set the year group targets for the school. In 2003, the targets set were exceeded, but, for the current year, they were more realistic, although not quite achieved. The school has established a scheme for speaking and listening to support pupils' development through the school. Resources in the subject are good and the school has a wide range of books for reading and for use in the literacy hours. However, the main library area is small, making facilities for much independent research by older pupils difficult and limiting the range of the stock. Generally, the stock is adequate, with a good balance of areas of study. The books are appropriately classified, but even older pupils prefer to use a colour coding rather than the conventional system. Enrichment opportunities in the subject are good, and include book fairs, visits by authors, theatre groups and drama events. Improvement since the last inspection is good, despite lower standards in Year 2, because of improved progress and a higher quality of teaching.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

60. Opportunities to use and develop reading skills in or through other subjects are good. However, the development of writing skills in other subjects is consistent. Opportunities are lost to write at length and to apply handwriting and presentational skills to complete work. Where both reading and writing are used, standards of literacy are similar to those in English. ICT is frequently used for word processing, editing and for accessing information from the Internet.

## **MATHEMATICS**

The provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning are good and lead to pupils achieving well.
- The subject is very well managed.
- Pupils show good attitudes and are generally enthusiastic.
- Pupils in Year 6 have done particularly well.

### **Commentary**

61. In last year's tests, results were well below the national average at both the ages of seven and eleven. There has been a trend of falling standards at the end of Year 2 from 2002. The present Year 2 has experienced a very high number of pupils coming and going from the time they started school and a growing number of pupils with SEN. Within this context, pupils are achieving well and making good progress from a low base. This results in a broadly average percentage of pupils achieving the lower end of the national expectation but fewer than normally found exceeding it. In Years 3 to 6, the trend has been more erratic and indications are that, this year, standards in Year

6 are above the national average. For these pupils achievement has been very good as a result of consistently good teaching, good support for those pupils with SEN and carefully matched work for all. The additional daily mental mathematics sessions and carefully targeted 'booster groups' have had a positive effect on raising standards. The weaknesses found at the previous inspection in pupils' using and applying mathematics and solving problems have been successfully addressed through the consistent application of the National Numeracy Strategy.

62. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers insist on good standards of behaviour and set up a calm environment where learning can take place. They have good subject knowledge and challenge pupils of all abilities well. Planning of work is well matched to pupils' needs as teachers know their pupils well. Pupils show good attitudes, behave well and are enthusiastic in their work. They listen attentively and know what they are expected to do. They enjoy mathematics and are keen to do well. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher set a range of problems for pupils to solve. They used a good range of tables and charts to organise their thinking and to show how a solution was reached. Pupils reacted well to the teacher's confident and enthusiastic manner. They were attentive and concentrated very well. The interactive whiteboard was well used to build up and explain solutions. In a very good Year 1 lesson, the teacher used a good range of strategies to make learning fun and keep pupils' interest. The teaching assistant supported a group of pupils with SEN well with their work, which was well matched to their needs.

63. Management of the subject is very good. The Headteacher has taken over as the co-ordinator and has a good grasp of what needs to be done. The subject is well monitored and results are analysed. Analysis identified a group of Year 6 pupils this year in need of additional support. The Headteacher worked with this group and they achieved particularly well.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. There are good opportunities to use mathematics in other subjects, which was not the case at the previous inspection. There are time lines in history and data collection and graphical representation in science. Pupils measure accurately in science and design and technology. In geography, they work on maps using different scales. In athletics, they measure time and distance and plot their improvements.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good teaching across the school enables pupils to make good progress in their learning.
- Good progress has been made in the subject since the last inspection.
- Pupils undertake some interesting and challenging investigations.
- Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory, but the co-ordinator is not sufficiently involved with work in the subject across the school or in the analysis of assessment data.

#### **Commentary**

65. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards that are well below average and, in Year 6, pupils attain above average standards. This is different from the judgements made at the last inspection when standards were judged to have been average in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. The difference is explained by changes that have taken place in the ability of each year group. The current findings are similar to the results of the 2003 national tests for eleven-year-olds but different from the teacher assessments in Year 2 which were average. Pupils with SEN attain well for their capabilities and make good progress towards their own learning targets.

66. Across the school, pupils achieve well. Pupils in Year 2 make good progress from a very low level when they entered the school. Pupils in Year 6 make very good progress to achieve above average standards by the time they leave the school.

67. In Year 2, pupils work on a sound range of topics. For example, they know the names of the main parts of a flowering plant and how different animals move. They can differentiate between pushing and pulling forces and they sort different materials into groups according to their characteristics. They have undertaken an investigation into how chocolate changes as it is heated. In Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of electrical circuits and they are familiar with symbol diagrams. They know the effect of resistors in the circuit and how to make a bulb brighter or dimmer. Their work on seeds, including the process of pollination and the different methods of seed dispersal extend their knowledge into areas above those expected for their age. They undertake a good range of interesting investigations. For example, they investigate how to separate mixtures of flour, sand and gravel and how to measure and record the different rates that water can evaporate. This area was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Across the school, there are weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills, particularly in Year 2, which limit their ability to explain and record their work in written form. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations about how to improve the quality of pupils' written work.
68. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is good. Teachers set the context of pupils' learning well by reminding them of what they have done previously. The specific focus is clearly explained at the beginning of the lesson. This helps pupils' learning because they know what is expected of them. Teachers explain concepts clearly and introduce and reinforce new vocabulary well. A strength is the way in which interactive whiteboards are used effectively to introduce important information. Pupils are managed well and this improves their motivation and commitment to their own learning. Some further features of very effective teaching were observed in a lesson in Year 6 where pupils were analysing data from a previous experiment into the rate at which cola released its bubbles at different temperatures. The teacher asked some very challenging questions and encouraged pupils to analyse the data in carefully timed, small steps which successfully secured their concentration. Good links were made with ICT as pupils used a spreadsheet to record and display their results.
69. Planning in the subject is secure and topics, which follow the nationally recommended scheme of work, are taught on a two-year cycle. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator manages the resources well. Monitoring is sound. Strengths are the way in which sampling of pupils' work and interviews with pupils are beginning to build up a picture of work in the subject across the school. Shortcomings in the leadership of the subject are that the co-ordinator teaches in the Foundation Stage and does not have a sufficiently clear view of the work in the subject across the school. She is not sufficiently involved in analysing assessment data or in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The subject action plan does not make sufficient reference to the need to continue to raise standards in the subject to improve achievement even further. Assessment procedures are good. Pupils' understanding is assessed at the beginning and the end of most of the units of work which are taught. Interest in the subject is promoted well by several interesting visitors and projects such as a theatre company and a whole school science week. Weaknesses at the last inspection in teachers' subject knowledge, in promoting investigational work and in raising standards in Years 3 to 6 have been addressed well and good progress has been made in the subject since 1999.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils in Year 6 achieve very well and attain standards in their word-processing that are above average.
- The subject is well managed by an effective co-ordinator.
- ICT skills are used well in other curriculum areas.
- Pupils show good attitudes to their work.
- Good improvement has been made since the last inspection.

## Commentary

70. Pupils in Year 6 attain average standards while those in Year 2 attain below average standards. This is different from the findings of the previous inspection where standards were average in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are achieving above average standards in their word processing skills. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection when important aspects of the subject were not being taught to older pupils and the subject was not fully meeting statutory requirements. This has been rectified and the overall provision for pupils, especially those in Year 6, is now good.
71. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6, and satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. The achievement of pupils in Year 6 is very good. This group has had better access to specialised subject teaching and a very good range of equipment and the progress that pupils make is accelerated as a result of these opportunities. The progress that pupils make in Years 1 and 2 is from a very low level of skill and awareness when they enter the school. These pupils have access to a sound range of equipment.
72. In Years 1 and 2, some pupils write their own names and print them using different coloured fonts and use an art program to draw coloured patterns. Others use number programs to count the number of fish being shown, and move a turtle around the screen. Here standards are below average because pupils have significant difficulty in applying their literacy skills to the subject. Pupils in Year 6 are introduced to a wide range of topics. Their word processing skills are developed very well. They use facilities well, for example, to write letters of thanks for a recent visit and invitations to attend a special meal and to complete poems and class stories. Most devise an attractive PowerPoint presentation with interesting hyperlinks to show features of their history project on the Tudors. More recent work on spreadsheets and control features indicates that pupils are achieving average levels in these areas.
73. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6 overall but very good in Year 6. There was no teaching in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection, but evidence from the work analysis and interviews with pupils indicated that pupils were given satisfactory access to a sound range of opportunities. Pupils demonstrated positive attitudes and enjoyed their work. The best teaching was observed in Year 6. Here, specialist teaching adds significantly to the quality of pupils' experiences. Teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and use the facilities of the interactive whiteboards and the laptops very well. They ensure that ICT skills are used in a good variety of contexts. For example, very effective use of data handling was observed in a science lesson, and good use of the Internet was observed during a history activity as pupils accessed local websites to find out information about a historical house they had visited recently. They were enthralled to discover several ghost stories attributed to the house.
74. The subject is managed well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who gives the subject a high profile in the school and in the local area. The school's decision to be part of a project for the introduction and use of laptop computers was a wise one. The access to a good number of laptops encourages pupils' good attitudes and impacts positively on the standards achieved. Overall, resources are good. They are very good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Assessment is good. Pupils assess their own achievements as they complete 'I can do ....' statements and teachers record the attainment of their class using criteria based on National Curriculum levels. There is a useful collection of work done by pupils in several aspects of the subject. Teachers are now confident about the use of the interactive whiteboards and these develop pupils' interest in the subject and encourage cross-curricular links well. Older pupils undertake interesting projects, such as to design a poster to make local people aware of environmental issues, which are then assessed.

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. ICT skills are used well across other curriculum areas. The flexibility provided by the use of the laptops means that computers can be used well to support work in each classroom in individual



lessons. Good use was observed during the inspection of computers to support pupils' literacy and numeracy work, and good use was being made of the Internet to research a history topic. The newly introduced interactive whiteboards are being used effectively to enliven the presentation of work in several curriculum areas.

## **HUMANITIES**

There was insufficient evidence for overall judgements to be made about provision or standards attained in geography or history.

76. In **geography**, evidence from teachers' planning and the sample of pupils' work indicates that a sound range of topics has been covered. In Years 1 and 2, pupils consider why it might be better to live on the island of Struay rather than in Bracknell. They look at several holiday destinations and see where Barnaby Bear went for his holiday. Pupils' appreciation of maps is developed as they draw a sketch of their route from home to school and draw a plan of their classroom. In Years 3 to 6, pupils know facts about the geography of Nigeria and Kenya and make comparisons between a village in India and their locality. Others know the main parts of a river system and how this relates to rivers such as the Thames and the Severn. In the lessons observed during the inspection in Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning were consistently good. Teachers had good subject knowledge, managed the pupils well and successfully channelled their interests and enthusiasm. The subject is well managed and provision is enhanced well by visits such as trips to the seaside at Southsea and visits to the Forest of Dean
77. In **history**, evidence from teachers' planning and the sample of pupils' work indicates that a sound range of topics has been covered. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the life and times of people from the past such as Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes and some details of the Great Fire of London. Older pupils in Years 3 to 6 order events which took place in Ancient Greece and they know some features of life in Victorian Britain, such as the differences in lifestyle between rich and poor people. Younger pupils contrast Roman and Celtic times and know facts about the life and importance of Boudicca. Work in the subject is enhanced and extended well through a good range of interesting offsite visits. For example, older pupils visit the Roman Palace at Fishbourne and others visit South Hill Park mansion.

## **Religious education**

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are limited opportunities to extend the curriculum.
- Pupils bring limited knowledge and experience to the subject.

## **Commentary**

78. Standards are below those expected at Year 2 but in line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus by the age of eleven. Many pupils bring little previous knowledge to the subject and there is much confusion amongst the younger pupils about the religions studied. However, they make steady progress and achieve soundly in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 they achieve well to reach the required standards by the time they leave in both learning from religion and about religion. Pupils respond thoughtfully to others' views on religious and moral issues and are able to reflect on their own feelings and views. They name and describe the significance of key figures, places, events and artefacts. They are able to talk about distinctive features of the religions they have studied.
79. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, as they were at the last inspection. Teachers manage lessons well. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and are interested in what is taught. They are keen to learn new things and try hard. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher followed the theme of caring for each other. She recapped on previous work on Buddha but pupils could recall little.

They made good attempts at remembering the Sikh places of worship and the Langar Hall. In a Year 2 lesson, they learned about the life of Mother Teresa and her work in India as part of their topic on caring for each other. The teacher used ICT well in a Year 6 lesson. Using the interactive white board, pupils learned the key features of traditional and modern places of Christian worship. They used their literacy skills to make lists and there were good opportunities for discussion.

80. Management of the subject is satisfactory. There was no co-ordinator at the time of the last inspection. The current co-ordinator has a clear view of what needs to be done but does not have time to monitor lessons in other classes. The subject supports speaking and listening well. There are times for discussion and pupils enjoy role-play. . Pupils learn well through drama and topics are built into assemblies, plays and festivals. There is only limited use of ICT to support the subject. There are few opportunities to gain first hand experience of other religions. Although pupils visit the church and have visits from the vicar, there are few links with the other religions. This is recognised by the school and is identified as an area for development.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

It was not possible in this inspection to gather sufficient evidence for overall judgements to be made about provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning in art and design, design and technology or music.

81. Work in **art and design** is attractively displayed across the school. Information gathered from a survey of planning, the sampling of sketch books which are in use throughout the school, portfolios of work, and the displays around the school indicates that the subject meets National Curriculum requirements. Pupils have the opportunity to use a variety of media such as those employed for sculpture and modelling, for textile work and for printing. ICT is employed in the subject with art and design programs, access to the Internet for information, and the very good opportunities for the subject afforded by the interactive whiteboards.
82. In Year 1, pupils produced very effective sunset scenes from colour wash backgrounds with superimposed cut outs, while in Year 2, recent work has been focused on weaving techniques using paper, textiles and natural materials. Years 3 and 4 have been studying the work of L.S. Lowry, and have produced their own paintings using his urban scenario and colour palette, as well as the tiny lean figures dwarfed by adjacent buildings. Recent work in Years 5 and 6 focused on the work of Salvador Dali, with his focus on abstractions from memory. Year 6 pupils enjoyed this study and made their own watercolour paintings in his style. Enrichment opportunities are good, with an annual art week, visiting artists to run workshops, and a regular after-school art club.
83. A scrutiny of previous work in **design and technology** indicates that work is planned against national guidelines, which build systematically on pupils' knowledge and skills at appropriate levels for their ages. The subject was enhanced by a French meal in Year 6 which pupils planned and prepared. They prepared the ingredients for coq au vin and served a delicious meal for themselves, the Headteacher and lead inspector. Pupils in a Year 3/4 class planned and made a sandwich snack and were well supported by adults in the well-equipped kitchen. They enjoyed the session and showed good regard for hygiene and safety.
84. In a **music** lesson observed in Year 2, pupils were working on a seaside theme following a visit to the seaside which was made a few days before. They listened carefully to some music with a sea theme, and they were able to report the imaginative images this evoked for them as individuals. They then composed an accompaniment to a song about the seaside using percussion instruments, voices and body percussion. Pupils sang and played with enthusiasm. Pupils in Year 6 could recall well the work of Gustav Holst on 'The Planets'. They talked about the characteristics of the music matching the moods related to the names of several of these pieces. They were enthusiastic about describing how they went on to make their own group compositions for imagined planets, and how they selected appropriate themes, with apt choices of instrumentation. They were able to record their compositions using either conventional or informal notation. Resources for the subject are very good, with a good range of instruments and plenty of listening music. These include some ethnic instruments and some examples of musical traditions from

around the world. Enrichment in the subject is good. Visiting musicians to perform to pupils, there are musical workshops, and opportunities for the choir to take part in local events and festivals.

## **Physical Education**

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good management of lessons leads to good behaviour.
- Good facilities support pupils' learning.
- A very good range of additional activities extends pupils' learning opportunities.

85. Two lessons of games were observed in Years 1 and 2 and two athletics lessons in Years 3 to 6. It is not possible to make judgements on standards or achievement beyond these areas. In these lessons, pupils reached similar standards to those found in most schools. This represents satisfactory achievement overall. The school reports that most pupils reach the national expectation for swimming. Improvement has taken place since the last inspection when it was judged that standards in Years 3 to 6 were below average and that standards and progress in games skills were poor.

86. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers manage lessons well and pupils are attentive. They listen carefully to instructions and perform sensibly and safely. Pupils enjoy the lessons and make steady progress in developing their skills.

87. The subject is soundly managed and there is a very good range of extracurricular activities for sport. Pupils can play badminton, kwik cricket, tennis, tag rugby and volleyball. They take part in athletics and cross-country events. Matches are arranged with other schools and the school recently received the Fair Play award in a badminton tournament. The school has good links with Reading Football Club, who provide valuable coaching for boys and girls. The school enjoys very good facilities. Outdoors, there are good hard surface areas and a good-sized field for a range of sports and games. The hall is of sufficient size for whole class lessons and a good range of resources support pupils' learning in the subject well.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

88. There was insufficient evidence for overall judgements to be made about provision, standards and the quality of teaching and learning in personal, social, health and citizenship education. (PSHCE). Work in this area has only recently taken its place as a full curriculum subject, although 'circle time' and many elements of it have been established for some time. It includes sex and relationships education and education about drugs misuse, which together also form part of the science programme. A new draft policy and scheme have been devised for work throughout the school and are currently being trialled. The co-ordinator has arranged in-service training for staff members, and is available to staff for advice. She also arranges for outside experts to help in promoting some topics, such as community nurses and police officers. Both the lessons observed during the inspection focused on the move of Year 5 into Year 6 next year, and the transfer of Year 6 to secondary school. Sensitive issues were discussed, such as the things pupils were looking forward to, as well as disarming worries and fears. This was a very helpful exercise for both groups. Pupils were well used to the conventions of 'circle time' and observed the rules well.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
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	2
Accommodation and resources	2
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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