

INSPECTION REPORT

MEON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Southsea

LEA area: Portsmouth

Unique reference number: 116222

Headteacher: Mrs L Linscott

Lead inspector: Eileen Chadwick

Dates of inspection: 23–25 February 2004

Inspection number: 256895

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7–11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	309
School address:	Shelford Road Southsea Portsmouth Hampshire
Postcode:	PO4 8NT
Telephone number:	023 9273 2844
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Meon Junior School
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mr David Purnell
Date of previous inspection:	15 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Since 2002 the school has gained a Schools Achievement Award, an Investors in People Award and a NACCE mark accreditation for information and communication technology (ICT). NAACE is a national organisation for advancing education through ICT.

The school is an average sized three-form entry junior for pupils aged 7 to 11. There are 309 pupils, with slightly more girls than boys. This is smaller than when last inspected in 1998, when there were 340 pupils. The school is undersubscribed in Years 4 and 6 with less than 70 pupils in each year group compared with the 90 available places. The school serves an area which is on the edge of the city. Nearly all pupils come from the immediate area, which is a close knit community, consisting mainly of privately owned terraced homes. The school has a history of instability in teaching staff dating back to the previous inspection in 1998. The headteacher was appointed in 2000. The current teaching staff have all been in post for at least one year, although, prior to this, turnover was high. In the last two years nine teachers left and nine were appointed.

Most pupils are White British, although a small proportion are from ethnic minority heritages. A very small proportion have English as an additional language. The main language spoken, other than English, is Bengali. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average at 12 per cent. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register, at 21 per cent, is average, whilst the proportion with Statements of Educational Needs is below average. Most of these pupils are boys with literacy and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Very nearly all pupils enter from the two nearby Beacon infant schools. Pupils' overall attainment on entry is well above average. It is well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing, although a small minority are below average in literacy on entry. The school's task is, therefore, to provide for levels of attainment which range from very high to below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19115	Eileen Chadwick	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs
9769	Margaret Morrissey	Lay inspector	
22028	John Paull	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Music Physical education
8560	Margaret Lynch	Team inspector	English Art and design History Religious education English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is underachieving and as such is not fully effective. While standards are in line with or above national averages, test results and inspection findings indicate that pupils are capable of achieving even more. Since her appointment three years ago, the headteacher has provided at least satisfactory leadership and has helped the school to move forward. This has resulted in improvements in standards. However, there are inconsistencies in relation to teaching and learning in English and mathematics. Overall, the school provides barely satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in science, art and design, information and communication technology (ICT) and music as a result of good teaching throughout the school.
- The headteacher has provided good leadership in the pastoral care of pupils and, despite a period of staffing instability, has created good teamwork and a quest for improvement amongst her colleagues.
- The quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 is often good and this raises standards.
- The pupils behave well due to the school's good provision for their personal development.
- Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is not high enough compared with their high attainment on entry to the school. There are still weaknesses in teaching in Years 3 and 4.
- There is not enough challenge for more capable pupils, including the gifted and talented.
- Some subject leaders are not yet fulfilling their roles effectively enough to assist the headteacher in the raising of standards.

The school was last inspected in June 1998 when standards needed much improvement. The headteacher has successfully tackled most of the issues identified at that time, including improving the school environment. She has ensured that staff mobility has reduced. Standards in mathematics, science, ICT and art and design have improved and are now much higher than in 1998. This has resulted in the school receiving an achievement award in 2002 for improving standards. Assessment systems are now satisfactory, although further work is needed in English. The overall quality of teaching is similar to that seen during the last inspection. Overall, given the huge amount to do, including addressing the backlog of underachievement, the rate of progress since the last inspection has been reasonable. However, there are still some important weaknesses related to improving standards that need to be tackled, including those of higher-attaining pupils, and improving the consistency of teaching. The school has a good capacity to improve in the future.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	C	B	E
Mathematics	D	B	C	E
Science	B	A	A	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Overall, achievement is unsatisfactory. In Years 3 and 4 pupils do not achieve well enough in English and mathematics but achieve well in other subjects. In Years 5 and 6 pupils generally achieve well in relation to their attainment in Years 3 and 4 but could do much better given their well above average attainment on entry to the school. The table shows that standards in English, mathematics and science have been improving over the past three years. They are average or above in English and mathematics and above or well above in science. However, when compared

with standards attained in similar schools, results are well below average in English and mathematics although average in science. This indicates that pupils have not been working up to their potential in English and mathematics and could do much better. Furthermore, standards are well above in art and design and above average in ICT, music and religious education, supporting the view that pupils can do better in literacy and numeracy. Some good work was seen in physical education. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress overall.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' attitudes to school are good and they behave well. Pupils' attendance is good and they are punctual. The school promotes very good relationships between pupils and has very good procedures for ensuring the pupils behave well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In English and mathematics they are good overall in Years 5 and 6 but unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4 because the teaching of reading and writing lacks rigour and, in mathematics, higher-attaining pupils do not always learn at a fast enough pace. Teaching throughout the school for other subjects is good or very good and excellent by a music specialist.

The curriculum provided is satisfactory overall. It is broad with rich provision in science, art and design, music and ICT but has weaknesses in English. Extra-curricular activities enhance pupils' learning. The school takes good care of its pupils with good attention to their welfare and guidance. Links with the community are good, whilst links with parents are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are both satisfactory. The headteacher has, in the face of staffing difficulties, established effective teamwork and commitment to improving standards. However, subject leaders are not monitoring standards sufficiently to identify strengths and weaknesses and help the school to take appropriate action. As a result, their roles are underdeveloped, which was the position at the time of the last inspection. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are committed and supportive and have a good range of skills. They are aware that, as a new governing body, they need to develop a stronger role in driving the school forward. The school fulfils statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Whilst most parents are pleased with their children's education, a minority are not pleased with their progress, especially in reading. Some parents are not happy with information about their child's progress. The inspection team agrees that the teaching of reading needs improving and reading records in Years 3 and 4 do not give parents enough information about their children's progress. Pupils are pleased with school and say they often enjoy their lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- Rapidly raise standards in English and mathematics in order to improve pupils' achievement.
- Improve the quality of teaching in English and mathematics so that it is consistently good enough to raise standards, especially in Years 3 and 4.
- Ensure more capable pupils, including the gifted and talented, are consistently challenged so that the proportion reaching higher levels in English and mathematics national tests increases.
- Ensure subject managers fulfil their roles effectively and contribute fully to raising standards of attainment, achievement, teaching and learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Overall, standards are above average but nevertheless achievement is unsatisfactory. In Year 6 standards are well above average in science, above average in mathematics and average in English. In relation to their high attainment on entry in Year 3, pupils achieve well in science but their achievement is unsatisfactory in mathematics and writing and poor in reading. Pupils have now begun to make satisfactory progress in mathematics but it is still not sufficient to combat their earlier underachievement. In English, Years 5 and 6 pupils are achieving satisfactorily but in Years 3 and 4 pupils still do not achieve well enough because systems for teaching reading and writing lack rigour.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do well in science because of good teaching and learning throughout.
- In English and mathematics pupils do better in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. However, the gains made in Years 5 and 6 do not make up for the shortcomings in Years 3 and 4. As a result pupils are not doing as well as those in similar schools.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average which is a big improvement since the last inspection
- Pupils achieve well in art and design and music and high quality provision ensures pupils develop their creative skills.
- Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall, but their progress is unsatisfactory in reading and writing.
- By Year 6, in both English and mathematics, too few pupils reach higher levels compared with the proportions doing so on entry to Year 3.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (26.9)	26.8(27)
Mathematics	27(28.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.3(30.6)	28.6(28.3)

There were 90 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The overall rate of improvement in standards achieved by Year 6 pupils has been similar to that found nationally over the past few years. However, comparisons with similar schools in 2003 showed standards in Year 6 were well below average in English and mathematics and average in science. This is because the rate of improvement now needs to be faster than the national trend if pupils are to catch up from their earlier underachievement. The rate of improvement in science has been better than in English and mathematics because the school is maintaining consistently well above average standards from year to year. In mathematics, standards improved significantly in 2002 but dropped again in 2003. Inspection shows standards in mathematics have improved again for Year 6 pupils and are now above average. In contrast, in English, standards are now only average yet they were above average in 2003. Pupils have too much catching up to do in Years 5 and 6 in English because of their underachievement earlier in the school. The standards reached by Year 5 pupils indicate a

- continuing rising trend in mathematics, although this is not the case in English despite the sound progress now being made in Year 5.
2. The targets set for English and mathematics for the current Year 6 are realistic in relation to the standards these pupils attained in Years 3, 4 and 5. The school is on course to reach these in English and may exceed them in mathematics because of much very good teaching in Year 6.
 3. By Year 6, standards are not good enough in English and mathematics compared with pupils' well above average attainment on entry. The high standards in science also show pupils should do better. In the current Year 6 standards are well above average in speaking and listening, average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. In English, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory because of some weak teaching and provision in reading and writing in Years 3 and 4. In mathematics, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory despite the generally satisfactory progress now being made. This is because the overall rate of progress has not been fast enough to combat pupils' earlier underachievement. Inspection findings suggest that this situation is getting better because pupils are now making good progress in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 and satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4. The weaknesses in Years 3 and 4 are related to difficulties faced by teachers in matching pupils' numeracy work to their very wide range of attainment in mixed ability classes. Standards are well above average in science and art and design, and above average in ICT, music and religious education. Pupils' achievement is good overall in these subjects.
 4. The school has to work very hard to raise attainment because of its history of underachievement. The need to improve standards was noted at the time of the previous inspection when there was considerable underachievement for higher-attaining pupils in English, mathematics and science and for all pupils in ICT. The school has been successful in improving science and very successful in improving ICT and art and design. Standards are also higher in mathematics, although there is still underachievement for higher-attaining pupils. The school has made unsatisfactory progress in improving standards in reading and writing. This is due to the lack of rigour in the teaching of reading and writing in Years 3 and 4. Higher-attaining pupils are achieving well in science, ICT, art and design and music. Gifted and talented pupils (the potentially very high attaining pupils) make sound progress in ICT, art and design and music. However, their progress is unsatisfactory in other subjects because the challenge they receive is inconsistent through the school.
 5. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. No significant differences were observed between the achievement of different racial groups. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Their progress is satisfactory in mathematics, very good in science and ICT but unsatisfactory in English.
 6. In science and ICT expectations are high for all and pupils are given very well matched work to help them do well. Pupils with special educational needs are not heard read frequently enough, and when the whole class is taught together, shared texts are often hard because they are aimed at pupils who are much further ahead with their reading. Pupils' past underachievement in English has resulted, by Year 6, in almost one quarter of all pupils being on the special educational needs register. This is a far higher proportion than indicated by their attainment on entry to Year 3.
 7. In all year groups there are far more boys than girls on the special educational needs register. In the main, these pupils have learning difficulties in literacy or have emotional and behavioural problems. The school provides very good pastoral support for the pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties but is not successfully addressing the low attainment in English. In literacy lessons, pupils are often supported well during group work because their teaching assistants are clear about what it is pupils need to learn. Pupils' needs are identified and the targets on their Individual Education Plans are specific and related to their needs.

8. Pupils' use of literacy in other subjects is often good. Their use of numeracy is good, with some very good work in science seen in Year 6. The use of ICT within subjects is good overall. ICT is applied very well to the wider curriculum during discrete ICT lessons in the computer suite but there are lost opportunities for this in some literacy classes. This limits the use of ICT as a tool for raising standards. Overall, because of pupils' underachievement in English and mathematics, the school has made unsatisfactory progress in improving standards since the previous inspection. However, the school has made very good progress in improving science, ICT and art and design and has done well to maintain high standards in music in the face of staffing turbulence and loss of some specialist music teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance and their attitudes, values and personal development are good, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are nearly always attentive in lessons.
- Pupils respect each other and their teachers and usually work together well.
- Pupils enjoy school and trust their teachers and other adults.
- Attendance is above that in most primary schools.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	School data	0.4
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.

9. Attendance overall is good. Parents receive very clear information on attendance procedures; they are left in no doubt about the school's expectations and respond effectively. Three white British boys were excluded in the last academic year for 13 fixed period exclusions. The number of exclusions is lower this year.

Exclusions

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	286	13	0

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

10. Both at the pre-inspection meeting and in questionnaires, parents expressed the view that behaviour is generally good. Inspectors agree with this. Both around the school and in lessons, pupils behave well. In lessons, teachers have very high expectations of good behaviour and pupils reward them well. Pupils' good behaviour contributes strongly to learning, as little time is lost on managing poor behaviour or inattention. This is the case even when lessons have a slower pace and insufficient challenge is provided for higher-attaining pupils. At the pre-inspection meeting, a few parents expressed the view that pupils are not praised enough for behaving well, whereas those few who are disruptive take up a lot of time and receive rewards

for small improvements. Inspectors found no evidence to support this

suggestion. During the inspection, teachers used both praise and sanctions effectively and disruption was minimal. Furthermore, the much larger group of parents who returned questionnaires felt that their children are treated fairly and inspectors saw much to support this opinion.

11. Pupils respond well to facts and stories about a range of different cultures. The few pupils who attend from minority ethnic groups are fully involved and accepted. All pupils who were asked were sure that racist attitudes, bullying or other types of oppressive behaviour would not be tolerated. No incidents were witnessed during the inspection and pupils are also sure that they know a member of staff whom they would be able to turn to and trust if they were experiencing problems either at home or at school.
12. In assemblies and a range of other situations, pupils are taught about right and wrong and they understand the need to co-operate with others. Whenever they are asked, they collaborate well with others, both in pairs and groups. Girls and boys are willing to work together, without silliness or self-conscious attitudes. A weaker element in provision for pupils from ethnic minorities is that opportunities for them to share their different cultural perspectives and experiences are not always taken. Nevertheless, visiting groups, such as Indian dancers, musicians representing ethnic minorities and a Jewish speaker and others contribute well to pupils' knowledge of other cultures and to their overall personal development. Opportunities to contribute to the local community are also evident. Musical concerts are regularly staged, for example, and groups of pupils perform to elderly residents at Christmas.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and the curriculum provided are satisfactory overall, although there are important weaknesses in the teaching of reading and writing and the curriculum for reading. The support and guidance of pupils and links with the community are good whilst links with parents are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is good in Years 5 and 6, but in Years 3 and 4 there are significant weaknesses in the teaching of literacy. Despite these weaknesses, there are considerable strengths to the teaching in this school in science, ICT and the broader curriculum. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning in Year 6 is good in English and very good in mathematics. This is because teachers often have strong subject knowledge and skilfully match pupils' work to their prior attainment.
- The quality of teaching in Year 5 is good overall, especially in mathematics, science and ICT.
- The specialist teaching of ICT, art and design and music is very good because these teachers have strong subject knowledge and provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, including the more able.
- Work in science in Year 6 is linked effectively to mathematics so that more able and gifted pupils are provided with appropriately challenging and stimulating tasks. This is contributing well to the school's work in raising standards.
- The quality of teaching of reading and writing is unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and there are some weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	8(19%)	18(43%)	10(24%)	5 (12%)	0 (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. Taking into account all inspection evidence, the quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. There is evidence of consistently good teaching in Years 5 and 6. In Years 3 and 4, teaching is unsatisfactory in literacy lessons and some numeracy lessons but it is sound with good features for all other subjects. The weaknesses are related to teachers' lack of subject knowledge and understanding of how to implement the literacy and numeracy strategy within mixed ability classes.
14. The example set by the art and design and ICT subject leaders has had strong influence on the standards pupils reach in these subjects and the good and very good teaching seen in these subjects. These subject leaders have inspired other teachers by leading by example and teaching alongside them. This has demonstrated the standards that pupils can achieve through high quality provision. This has built teachers' subject skills and their vision for the high standards which pupils can achieve. The school has started to introduce interactive white board technology in some classes and teachers are now using these with confidence. Standards have been rapidly raised in these subjects since the current headteacher was appointed.
15. Throughout, teachers manage pupils well and have good relationships with their pupils. In good and very good lessons strengths include the teachers' good subject knowledge. This raises their expectations of what pupils can achieve and they teach the subject's skills and knowledge thoroughly. They teach the subject in considerable depth to ensure there is enough challenge for the potentially large proportion of more capable pupils. In strong lessons teachers also provide the right steps in learning for pupils with special educational needs so that pupils can reach standards that are at, or close to, those expected for their age. This was seen in a very good mathematics lesson in Year 6 for lower-attaining pupils. Teachers often use a balance of teaching styles so that pupils can learn through exploration and problem solving as well as learning through watching, listening and practising skills. A successful feature of the very good specialist teaching of ICT is that plans for the year ahead are used, where necessary, to meet the needs of the many higher-attaining pupils.
16. Teaching and learning in mathematics are satisfactory overall but vary widely. In Year 6 pupils are taught in ability sets. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, expectations of pupils are high and there is a very good match to pupils' prior attainment. This ensures that pupils work hard, systematically build up knowledge and understanding and have plenty of opportunity to practise skills. In Years 3 and 4, although mathematics teaching was good in most classes, two unsatisfactory lessons were observed, one in a Year 3 lesson and one in a Year 4 lesson. These unsatisfactory lessons had a slow pace generally but, on both occasions, the slow pace of learning was particularly noticeable for higher-attaining pupils during the introduction when the whole class was taught together.
17. Teaching and learning in English are unsatisfactory overall despite the good teaching seen in Year 6 and the satisfactory teaching in Year 5. In good literacy lessons, as seen in writing lessons in Year 6 and in a Year 5 lesson, there is good modelling of writing by the teacher to the whole class, which enables pupils to learn by example. Three unsatisfactory lessons were seen two in Year 3 and one in Year 4. The unsatisfactory features included:
 - Reading skills were not taught well enough during the Literacy Hour. Class texts were often too small for pupils to see and engage in class reading.

- Class shared texts were, too often, hard for lower-attaining pupils. This limited the time these pupils spent on reading during the Literacy Hour.
 - Whole-class phonics work was often too easy for higher attainers and did not provide enough small steps for lower-attaining pupils.
18. The programme for teaching pupils to read on entry to Year 3 does not build adequately on their Year 2 attainment. The school's use of its reading books does not provide the necessary structure for learning spelling conventions and word patterns. Pupils are not heard to read regularly enough by adults and their reading books are not always well matched to their needs, being sometimes too hard or too easy. Pupils' reading records are unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. They do not provide enough information about how the school is teaching reading, the progress pupils are making and targets for success. At the parents' meeting some parents expressed concern about the teaching of reading and the slowing of their progress when they entered Year 3. The inspection team agrees with these views.
 19. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in numeracy but there is not a systematic enough approach to teaching these pupils the small steps in reading and writing. Pupils make very good progress in science, and ICT is used well for enhancing these pupils' learning in both literacy and numeracy. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs during group work but are underused during literacy introductions when they are used to translate hard texts. This limits the time pupils spend learning to read at their own level. Pupils' needs have been accurately assessed by the recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator and the targets on their individual plans are specific but this information is not yet used adequately for improving provision.
 20. The few pupils with English as an additional language are mainly in Year 5 and 6 classes and are taught satisfactorily, with some support from a bilingual teacher. This teacher supports pupils two afternoons each week and there are good opportunities for speaking and listening through practical group work, for example in science, art and design, music and ICT. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified although support for them is not yet consistent through the school. The co-ordinator has been in post for one year and has had much to do since she was appointed.
 21. Assessment systems are satisfactory in English and mathematics and very good in science and ICT. They are satisfactory in all other subjects. However, the use of assessment outcomes for providing well-matched work to pupils' abilities is unsatisfactory in reading and writing.
 22. The use of homework was criticised in the last inspection. It is now much better and the school has made satisfactory progress in improving this since the previous inspection. However, there remains an area for improvement. The homework given to Year 5 pupils is harder than that given to Year 4; however, the frequency with which it is set is the same. Parents are dissatisfied with this arrangement. Inspection findings agree that a more challenging system would be beneficial to Year 5 pupils.
 23. The overall quality of teaching is similar to that seen during the previous inspection. However, the composition of the workforce has changed and although it seems as if the school has not yet been successful in eliminating the wide variation in the quality of teaching and the unsatisfactory teaching, the issues are different. Nevertheless, the inconsistencies in teaching and learning have prevented standards from being raised in English and mathematics. The school is now well placed to improve the quality of teaching because teachers are staying longer at the school and there are well informed subject managers for all subjects.

The curriculum

Overall curriculum provision is satisfactory. Accommodation is good and this has been greatly improved in recent years. There are good opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum and for learning outside the school day.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers a broad curriculum, which has benefited from rapid improvement in ICT in recent years.
- There is a rich curriculum in science, art and design, music and ICT, which meets pupils' learning needs well.
- The curriculum offers good opportunities for participation in sport and the arts.
- Not enough time is devoted to teaching reading, and the school lacks appropriate systems for this.
- Resources for reading are not good enough for pupils in Years 3 and 4.

Commentary

24. Overall, the curriculum provided is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and provides well for the development of pupils' investigative skills in science and their creative and physical skills in art and design, music and physical education. The schemes of work for literacy and numeracy are in line with recommendations expressed in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The units and topics are taught well in Years 5 and 6 but lack of experience by teachers in Years 3 and 4 limits the school in its ability to ensure that these National Strategies are implemented successfully and pupils gain maximum benefit from them.
25. The school has made good progress in addressing the curriculum planning weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. Appropriate time is allocated to each subject. Overall, the curriculum meets statutory requirements, including provision for religious education and collective worship. Although the curriculum now generally ensures pupils are given equal opportunities for learning, this has clearly been unsatisfactory in the past, dating back to the previous inspection, when higher-attaining pupils underachieved. The school still has work to do in raising the proportions reaching higher levels in English and mathematics by Year 6 and improving provision in English in Years 3 and 4. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified but there is inconsistent provision for these pupils in English, mathematics and science.
26. Teachers and pupils often have access to a good range of resources. The library, the computer suite and classroom computers are now easily accessed and provision and access to these have been greatly improved since the previous inspection. The ICT suite is very well equipped and regularly used by pupils throughout the week. However, there are not enough structured reading books and larger shared texts for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' personal development is successfully promoted through the day-to-day life of the school, their subjects and a good programme for personal, social and health education. The school provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Their difficulties are identified as soon as they enter Year 3 and their progress is now being carefully monitored through the school by the special educational needs co-ordinator and the headteacher in order to redress any underachievement in literacy.
27. Good use is made of external resources to enrich the curriculum, for example, through visiting teachers for musical instrument tuition. These, together with the many out of school activities offered, contribute well to pupils' learning and ensure that the curriculum provides well for pupils' learning outside the school day. The wide range of extra-curricular activities includes rich provision in music, sport, science and art and design. There are sufficient teaching and support staff with qualifications and expertise to meet the demands of the curriculum.

28. Since the headteacher was appointed three years ago the school has concentrated on broadening and enlivening the curriculum, beginning with providing a quality curriculum in ICT and art and design. In both subjects, very good planning and teachers' subject confidence ensures there is a very good balance between ensuring pupils develop appropriate knowledge and skills and develop their creativity. The school has maintained high quality provision in music despite the loss of the specialist teacher, who previously taught every class in the school. Teachers now often have well developed expertise in music, which was gained through teaching alongside the specialist. The curriculum is very well planned and this also enables the teachers to provide worthwhile musical experiences for the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very well provided for. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are satisfactory and their views are sought and acted on well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff work closely together to ensure a very good level of care for pupils.
- There are very good child protection arrangements.
- Pupils are very well supported through provision from outside agencies.
- The quality of liaison with other agencies is good.
- The overall effectiveness of support for pupils' personal development is good.

Commentary

29. The day-to-day awareness of health and safety is very good and well known to all staff and pupils. This is strongly supported by the designated governor for health and safety and the premises manager, working closely with the headteacher. Risk assessment procedures are very well established, and the school monitors and constantly reviews safe working procedures. Pupils say they feel safe and protected in the school, and fully understand what constitutes a health and safety risk. The very effective child protection procedures are agreed by the governing body and are well known by all staff. First aid provision is very good; pupils are confident to seek help and are well cared for.
30. The school has good procedures for the personal support of pupils. Pupils are confident they have a voice in the school and can make their views fully known through the School Council. Pupils' wishes and opinions are carefully considered by the school and mostly acted on.
31. The school now keeps detailed records of the standards reached by pupils in their Year 2 tests, which was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. This information, with the regular use of Qualification, Curriculum and Assessment Authority's standardised tests, is carefully recorded and has been used to measure pupils' progress and identify underachieving pupils in English and mathematics. Targets have been set for pupils and all teachers have a list of underachieving pupils so that they can rigorously monitor their progress towards their targets. Gifted and talented pupils have now been identified but the use of this information for supporting these pupils' progress is inconsistent. It is used well in music, art and design and ICT, where there is rigorous subject teaching but not well enough in the rest of the curriculum. As a result, these pupils continue to underachieve.
32. There are good induction procedures in relation to pastoral care so that pupils settle well in Year 3. However, there is work to be done to ensure pupils' learning builds consistently on the standards they reached in Year 2 in English and always meets the needs of higher-attaining pupils in mathematics. The school has good relationships with the main secondary schools to which pupils transfer and there are transition mathematics and English projects for Years 6 and 7 for bridging the gap between the junior and secondary schools.

Partnership with parents, other schools, and the community

The school has satisfactory links with parents and good links with other schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes full use of its premises for adult learning outside the school day for the benefit of the community.

Commentary

33. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. The school provides a warm welcome and has good relationships with parents. This enables them to feel welcome in the school and approach the school with any concerns. Many parents are very keen for their children to do well and most parents who responded to the parents' questionnaire were pleased with their children's overall progress. Many parents said they were delighted with some of the improvements seen since the current headteacher took over the school, including those in the accommodation and ICT facilities. However, a minority of parents were not pleased with their children's progress in Years 3 and 4. The inspection team agrees that pupils are not making enough progress in English in these years. There are good procedures for dealing with any complaints parents may have but a small number do not feel confident they receive enough support. This is mainly related to the concerns they have that their children do not make sufficient progress in reading, and poor reading records in Years 3 and 4. The headteacher has recognised this as an issue and has already taken action. For example, she has appointed a new Year 3 leader this year and, for example, she has identified ways of improving the school's approach to teaching reading. Although the impact of these actions does not yet show in pupils' achievements the likelihood is that these measures will be successful.
34. The school provides good information about pupils' progress through a parents' meeting each term and through a range of other meetings, annual reports, and pupils' "Special Workbooks"; also, it has enlisted the help of those parents whose children have underachieved. The school prospectus and annual governors' report provide clear, in-depth information and the half-termly newsletters ensure regular updates. Parents are confident they can speak with the headteacher or class teacher on a daily basis. Information provided for parents in the pupils' home/school reading records is unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. The school does not give enough information on the strategies for teaching reading, the progress pupils are making, or the targets pupils need to achieve.
35. The Parent-Teacher Association provides very good help to the school. The members raise money to support the school, are very much appreciated by the staff and are valued by the headteacher as a further communication line to parents' views.
36. Parents are given opportunities to spend time in school: a number work as classroom helpers and support reading and school visits. The two feeder infant schools provide good quality information about their pupils, although this school still has work to do in building on the standards pupils reach in Year 2. Systems are now in place to measure this progress and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.
37. The community has a good impact on pupils' learning. The school regularly brings the community into the school, both to broaden pupils' learning and to raise their local and wider environmental awareness. Community links are further strengthened by good liaison with the local parish, by the school choir's visits to the local old people's home, and by the school's involvement in and support for the local Neighbourhood Watch.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. This applies to the leadership provided by the headteacher, senior staff and subject co-ordinators and the systems for managing the school. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, appointed three years ago, has made a substantial impact on improving the climate for learning and has engendered the will to improve the school in all staff. Her pastoral leadership is good.
- There is a systematic approach to year co-ordination, which is having a good impact on improving achievement in Years 5 and 6.
- Strong subject leadership is having a good impact on raising standards for science, ICT, music and art and design. There are weaknesses in the leadership of English.
- Governors are supportive and work hard for the school. However, this is a relatively new governing body and their monitoring roles are not yet fully developed.
- Systems for monitoring teaching are insufficiently robust to help the school identify strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate remedial actions, especially in English and mathematics.

Commentary

38. The headteacher has provided satisfactory leadership and management. When she was appointed the school was in need of much improvement. Staffing was not stable at the time of the previous inspection in 1998 and this continued until 2002. This was a barrier to the rapid improvement that is needed in this school in order to address pupils' underachievement. The headteacher has now created a teaching team which has been stable for one year. As a result, teamwork is improving, there is a strong commitment to the school and the headteacher has successfully engendered a quest for improvement in staff. She has a clear vision for improving the school, which is shared with staff. This is providing clear goals and a common understanding of the school's priorities for action.
39. Senior staff and subject co-ordinators now have clear roles and responsibilities. They understand the part they should play in raising standards and, as a result, they provide sound support to the headteacher and deputy headteacher. This is a significant development as this aspect of leadership and management was in need of much improvement when the headteacher was appointed. Management systems are satisfactory and school routines function smoothly. The headteacher has developed good systems for ensuring pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning despite considerable staffing turbulence. This is making a significant contribution to school improvement.
40. The science, ICT and art and design and design co-ordinators have had a very good impact on raising standards. They have a very good vision for improving their subjects and are very effective in the way they communicate and work with other teachers in order to develop their subject confidence and competence. These subject co-ordinators have kept abreast of subject development and inspire other teachers by the standard of their own work. They keep a close eye on what needs to be done to improve their subjects and are effective in making sure improvements happen. They are not complacent, constantly seeking to raise standards. In contrast, subject improvement has not been successful in English and there has not been the same close and informed watch on how pupils' learning progresses throughout the school. There has been weak analysis of what needs to be done to build upon the range of pupils' prior attainment on entry to Year 3, especially in reading.
41. The deputy is now working closely with the headteacher on the management of assessment. The school has put electronic systems in place to measure pupils' progress and has used these to identify the impact of its own provision on improving achievement. These are important tools for the strategic management of the school.

42. The senior management team and subject managers monitor planning and pupils' work. The monitoring of teaching also occurs. However, the monitoring of teaching is not rigorous enough in English and mathematics to ensure teaching quality is always good enough to raise standards. There are new co-ordinators since September 2003 for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language, and their management is satisfactory. However, there is a lot to do to improve the achievement of pupils with special educational needs in English. The co-ordinator has accurately identified the need to improve provision in the teaching of reading.
43. The school received 'Investors in People' status in 2002 for the training of staff. The school had difficulty in recruiting. Five newly qualified teachers were appointed within two years. These teachers have been well supported and often now set good and very good examples by their own good quality of teaching. The headteacher has shown good strategic management in the way she has appointed teachers with strong subject expertise and selected teachers for leadership posts based on their impact on improving achievement. A new mathematics manager was appointed in September; she has just begun to monitor mathematics lessons in partnership with her year leader, who is very skilled in the teaching of mathematics. The headteacher has also changed the year leaders of Years 3 to 5 in this academic year. This wise decision is already having a measure of success with a noticeably good impact in Year 5.
44. Nearly all the governors, including the Chair, were appointed under eighteen months ago. In a relatively short time the governing body has made a sound contribution to the development of the school through exercising its statutory responsibilities. The governors are keen and have a suitably wide range of expertise. The headteacher keeps the governors informed and governors have analysed the school's results and compared them with similar schools. The governors also see the local education authority's monitoring reports. Some governors regularly help in school and keep a close watch on what is happening. Overall, given the newness of the governing body, their roles are appropriate as they are now putting systems in place to develop their critical friend and monitoring roles. This now needs to be rapid so that they can take a full part in rapidly driving the school forward.
45. The performance management requirements are being implemented effectively. This is supported by an appropriate programme of staff training and indications are that this is having a positive impact on teaching and learning. Suitable mentoring arrangements exist for new staff. There has been strong support and monitoring of ICT by the local education authority and this has been well managed in school. All subject managers have identified priorities for school improvement planning. These priorities feed into the school improvement plan and planning is for a three-year period. These plans show relevant priorities and the large and fundamental improvements that have been needed for improving this school. This includes the provision for pupils with special educational needs and for gifted and talented pupils.
46. Financial planning is satisfactory, with a planned programme of spending linked to the school improvement plan. The school's budget is monitored carefully by governors and the school uses the services of the local education authority to assist in its processes of financial management. The financial audit in 2002 showed there was much to do and there was no finance officer for about one year. The new finance administrator has been in post for fifteen months and the school has since made good headway in addressing the issues in the financial audit.
47. The school carried forward a very large amount of its annual budget for 2001/2—17 per cent. The present governors inherited this contingency fund. This was used to supplement the budget for 2002/3 in order to avoid cuts in teaching staff. The balance carried forward at the end of April 2003 was much reduced but, at seven per cent, is still high. However, the predicted budget carry forward for April 2004 is only two per cent because of cuts in budget. Funding for each pupil is below the national average for junior schools and, as a result, the school is using its contingency funds for staffing costs. The school researches and makes

decisions about goods and services that represent best value. However, it has just begun to compare its results with similar schools according to prior attainment in order to measure the impact of its provision on pupils' achievement.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	762,977
Total expenditure	825,969
Expenditure per pupil	2,497

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	119,077
Balance carried forward to the next	56,086

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is not good enough in Years 3 and 4. As a result pupils do not do as well as pupils in similar schools by Year 6.
- Systems for teaching reading and writing in Year 3 do not help pupils to successfully build on their achievement in reading and writing in the infant school.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 is good overall. This improves pupils' attainment but, nevertheless, the standards they reach are too low because of earlier underachievement.
- A significant number of teachers have unsatisfactory subject knowledge and, as a result, the teaching of reading and writing is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

48. Inspection findings show that too much unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4 is leading to pupils underachieving. Despite good teaching in Year 6, standards are only average in reading and writing because the school does not build sufficiently well on pupils' very good prior attainment on entry to the school. By Year 6, pupils' overall achievement is unsatisfactory compared with their high attainment on entry. This is particularly noticeable in relation to higher-attaining and gifted pupils. Too few reach the higher level (Level 5) by Year 6 compared with the proportion who reach the higher level (Level 3) on entry in Year 3. Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress. Those with English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress. These pupils are mainly in Years 5 and 6.
49. By Year 6, pupils' listening and speaking skills are very good. Pupils listen very well and show very good respect for the suggestions, opinions, feelings, values and beliefs of others. Pupils are articulate and often have very good subject vocabulary, for example in science, ICT and music. Although no use of drama was noted during the inspection, there was very good planning for the use of drama in history.
50. By Year 6, standards of reading are average and pupils achieve as well as can be expected of them in this particular year. However, teaching of reading lacks rigour lower down in the school. This makes it difficult for the teachers in Year 6 to compensate fully for lack of achievement and bring standards up to those predicted at time of entry to the school. There are weak systems for teaching reading, including in literacy sessions. There is a lack of resources for teaching reading for pupils who need to be on a reading scheme in Years 3 and 4 and pupils are not heard to read frequently enough by an adult. The teaching of reading skills and knowledge of how different texts work is, too often, unsatisfactory. There is little detailed, in-depth, whole-class teaching from reading texts during Literacy Hours.
51. The school's use of a system of 'Reading Buddies' is appropriate as a tool to enthuse readers. It does not, however, replace the need for teachers and/or trained classroom assistants to listen to pupils reading individually or in a group situation (guided reading). Pupils' underachievement results in a drop in reading standards by Years 3 and 4 from the well above average standards they reached on entry to the school. The lack of rigorous

systems, including the frequency of opportunities for informed adults to hear pupils read, means underachievement is occurring for all ability groups. The books which pupils take home to read are not matched well to their level of skill, being often too hard or too easy.

52. The pattern in reading is repeated in writing. By Year 6, standards in writing are average. Pupils write reasonably well for different purposes and audiences. ICT is appropriately used. In a good lesson in Year 6, pupils suggested content for a letter of complaint connected with a recent visit to the Action Stations and Science Fair. The overall gains made in writing are not good enough because in Years 3 and 4, there is too much unsatisfactory teaching. There is not enough attention to teaching writing skills, including grammar and spelling, in literacy lessons. Phonics teaching, during whole-class time, is not rigorous or well-matched to pupils' very wide range of prior attainment. There is much underachievement for lower and higher-attaining pupils. In contrast, pupils' achievement in handwriting and spelling is generally satisfactory.
53. The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning was good in three of the eleven lessons observed and unsatisfactory in three. In the remaining five lessons, teaching was satisfactory. Where teaching was good in Year 6, there was good inclusion of all pupils. Good use of ICT enabled the teacher to quickly write pupils' suggestions and transfer them from computer to whiteboard for class review. The teacher's very good pace throughout, alongside imaginative teaching, resulted in a high level of interest and pupils' good learning. Teaching was unsatisfactory in Year 3 and Year 4 due to teachers' insecure subject knowledge. Two of the lessons observed were concerned with the writing of instructions. The third lesson was on the planning of an explanation, "Why do Mums tell us off?" In one lesson the quality of literacy instruction was limited because the teacher's own subject knowledge of the style of writing was not secure and the writing task was not matched to suit the abilities of different groups of pupils. In the unsatisfactory lessons, shared text work was very small and, as a result learning objectives for the lessons could not be addressed adequately. Sometimes no dictionaries or writing frames were provided for pupils, which limited them in their ability to develop independence and express their ideas effectively.
54. A scrutiny of pupils' work showed a good range of opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes in other subjects. Teachers' marking of work is sound and indicates ways forward for pupils to further improve their writing. Classroom assistants sensitively support pupils with special educational needs in lessons. However, the match of work during whole-class lessons and lack of rigorous systems to promote the small steps in reading and phonics needed for these pupils mean provision is unsatisfactory.
55. A lunchtime club is taken by a knowledgeable parent on one weekday and provides a good opportunity for enrichment in reading for a small group of boys and girls. A teacher manages the library and library provision has been very much improved in the last three years. Classes have the opportunity to visit the Beddow Library and all classes in the school attend the public library; this is improving reference skills. Provision for homework is satisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement in this since the previous inspection. The use of ICT within English is generally good. It is very good when pupils use the ICT suite and are taught by the specialist teacher. However, in some classes computers are underused during the Literacy Hour. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory as assessment is not used well enough to match pupils' work to their prior attainment.
56. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The subject manager has, rightly, focused on raising standards in Year 6. However, the support and challenge for Years 3 and 4 have not been so effective. The co-ordinator has initiated a Home/Reading focus on silent reading and this is having some success in raising standards but this is not enough on its own. Insufficient attention has been given to putting systems in place for the rigorous monitoring of teaching and reading provision. As a result strengths and weaknesses have

not been adequately identified. The school has made unsatisfactory progress in improving English since the previous inspection. Standards are still only average and the quality of teaching is not as good as it was.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57. Opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, especially writing, in other subjects are now generally good. The school has worked hard to improve this, although it has still to impact on standards by Year 6.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The above average standards observed in the current Year 6 show improvements on the standards Year 6 pupils achieved in their 2003 national tests.
- Planning of work for pupils with different prior levels of understanding is often good in Years 5 and 6. There is much good teaching in these years.
- Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, but unsatisfactory features were observed in Years 3 and 4.
- While satisfactory overall, provision for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs is good in Year 6.
- Provision for gifted pupils is inconsistent.

Commentary

58. Results in National Curriculum tests in Year 6 have been unsatisfactory for many years, considering that pupils' overall attainment on entry to Year 3 is well above average. Nevertheless, pupils in Year 6 are currently making rapid progress, based on very good teaching and standards are now above average. Standards and progress are now also good in Year 5. In Years 5 and 6 there is a higher proportion reaching higher levels than for 2003 Year 6 in their national tests. This is also higher than Year 6 national averages. This improving profile is likely to continue, given stability in the good quality teaching in Years 5 and 6. However, despite this indication of improving standards pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory by Year 6 as standards are still not high enough.
59. Furthermore, the new subject co-ordinator is well aware of the reasons for pupils' underachievement and has already begun to form strategies to address it. She understands that the amount of direct observation of teaching and learning has been insufficient in the past. There are satisfactory plans to address this weakness. Identification of strengths, weaknesses and inconsistencies in teaching has, therefore, been insufficiently detailed to identify good practice, to spread it effectively and to eradicate those features that are unsatisfactory.
60. Since the inspection of 1998, improvements in standards have kept pace with the overall trend nationally. Improvements in resources and accommodation are also apparent. However, taking pupils' high standards on entry into account, attainment by the time pupils leave has rarely been as high as it should be. In order to put this right, the school now needs to increase its improvement in standards to a rate above that of the national trend. At the time of the previous inspection in 1998, the overall quality of teaching was judged to be good, whereas it is only satisfactory now. In order to rapidly improve standards teaching and learning need to be consistently at least good in all classes in each year group.

61. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but ranges from good and, sometimes, very good in Years 5 and 6, to unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. In Years 3 and 4 the quality of teaching is often good but inconsistent across the three classes in each year group. The unsatisfactory teaching is the result of methods which lead to an inefficient use of time and lack of challenge. The pace of learning is too slow. In addition, work is not always well matched to pupils' needs, and this also results in a lack of challenge, especially for pupils of average or above average ability. As a result, pupils make insufficient progress and underachieve. Where teaching is good or better, however, lessons move at a good pace and pupils are constantly challenged. Pupils rise to the challenge and apply themselves well to their work. As a result, they make good progress and begin to make up the ground they lost previously. Work is well matched to the prior attainment of all pupils.
62. In all areas of mathematics, pupils of different backgrounds and those few with English as an additional language make similar progress to all other pupils. Teaching assistants make valuable contributions to the quality of learning, asking good questions and, in the groups that they lead, helping pupils to understand their work and to progress effectively. Nearly all pupils understand basic number well and nearly all use fractions, percentages and decimals accurately. In work on shape and space and the use of data their understanding is often good, and pupils use their knowledge well in practical situations, solving problems with interest and showing considerable involvement with their tasks. Their behaviour in lessons is consistently good, often very good. Higher-attaining pupils use coordinates successfully in all four quadrants, use decimals to three places and work well independently, when asked. Pupils of different prior attainment, including those with special educational needs and those of higher attainment, are served well in Year 6.
63. In Year 6, pupils are allocated to classes based on their ability (known as sets) and work is adapted well to meet their requirements. This enables pupils to learn rapidly. Year 5 pupils were taught by most of the same teachers last year and are benefiting from teaching consistency. Assessment and the use of assessment for planning well-matched work are mainly satisfactory. However, there is inconsistent provision for gifted pupils and, as a result, these pupils make unsatisfactory progress compared with their earlier standards. The quality of subject management is satisfactory. The new manager has a good vision and is being enabled to develop her leadership skills. There are satisfactory plans for developing the monitoring of teaching. Overall progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory as the proportion of higher-attaining pupils is still too low by Year 6.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Overall, numeracy skills are used well in other subjects. This helps pupils to develop rigorous methods of quantification in science. Other good uses were seen in geography, information and communication technology, design and technology, and even art and design, in which different geometrical shapes are employed to produce patterns in the style of Mondrian. This helps pupils to apply their learning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, standards are well above average and the majority achieve well.
- Standards have been consistently high in science for several years.
- The quality of teaching is good with some very good elements.
- Pupils' investigative skills are systematically developed throughout the school.
- The use of mathematics in science is good and very good in Year 6.

- The subject manager has a clear vision for developing the subject and subject management is good.
- There are inconsistent opportunities for gifted pupils to excel.

Commentary

65. Assessments made by teachers for the current Year 3 pupils in their Year 2 national assessments showed standards were above average on entry to the school but not as high as in English and mathematics. The standards reached by Year 6 pupils are a very good improvement on those reached by pupils at the last inspection, when they were average. Throughout the school, pupils systematically learn investigative skills and practical work underpins pupils' learning of scientific knowledge. This helps pupils to learn successfully. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make very good progress through very careful teaching to enable them to succeed. Higher-attaining pupils' progress is good. However, gifted pupils' progress is inconsistent, despite good opportunities in Year 6 for using mathematics in science.
66. By Year 6, pupils adeptly plan and conduct experiments and take a high degree of responsibility for their own learning. Pupils' thinking skills are very good, including an ability to predict on the basis of their very good scientific knowledge. Pupils are able to collect evidence through correct experimental procedures, for example, accurate fair testing, and they use mathematics very well for collecting, recording and interpreting evidence. Many are achieving at Level 5 across all aspects of science. Pupils' good achievement in science is due to good teaching and the systematic programme of work that is followed through the school.
67. Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and their lesson planning is also good. Planning for the range of ability is closely linked to the National Curriculum levels. The co-ordinator has recently introduced a very good system of target setting for all aspects of science. This clearly shows expectations for teachers and pupils for higher level work, as well as that for other levels of attainment, and enables teachers to easily translate the attainment targets into practical work. This innovatory practice is having a very good impact on teaching and learning.
68. A very strong feature is the way teachers keep a close watch on the proportion of higher-attaining pupils to ensure they receive well-matched work and, consequently, there are consistently high numbers reaching higher levels. This was seen in a good lesson in Year 5. Higher-attaining pupils, investigating the way animal skeletons are adapted to their particular ways of life, were encouraged to think deeply and hypothesise on the evidence available and their previous knowledge before putting forward their ideas. As a result, they made progress commensurate with their ability. Nevertheless, provision for the small minority of gifted pupils, who have the potential for very high attainment, is inconsistent. The subject co-ordinator has identified this as a key area for development.
69. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils were taught to use mathematics rigorously for recording, showing and interpreting evidence. This enabled pupils to reach conclusions on the basis of quantified data - a very important aspect of science. In this lesson, the teachers' high expectations in both science and mathematics, and the necessary high-level subject knowledge in both subjects, were very strong. This resulted in rapid learning for all pupils, including the gifted pupils. Homework is not used consistently for supporting pupils' learning and, therefore, is not used as a rigorous tool for raising standards.
70. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop literacy and numeracy in science, with carefully matched work for the range of ability. ICT is often used well in science. In a Year 5 lesson, ICT was used very well for supporting a group of lower-attaining pupils who, as a result, rapidly learned the names and functions of bones in animals. There is, however, as yet, no systematic planning for using ICT to extend gifted pupils in science.

71. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject and is very enthusiastic for all pupils to achieve well. He sets a good example by the quality of his own teaching and has a comprehensive strategy mapped out for further development. This accurately identifies the need for more rigorous monitoring of teaching. Monitoring of teaching of science is planned for this term, although this does not include the monitoring of all teachers' lessons in a year group. The subject manager oversees planning, provides guidance to teachers and evaluates pupils' books. However, no extra time is allowed for the co-ordinator to perform these management roles, which limits the time available for feedback to teachers. Outside visits and a residential week provide a very good basis for biological science and Year 6 pupils also take part in a local science fair. These activities greatly enrich provision in science. The school has links with a local secondary school, although this has not yet resulted in practical teaching projects for bridging the gap between primary and secondary schools and for enthusing pupils about learning in the secondary school. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 6, attainment is above average. This is a rapidly improving subject throughout the school and, in Year 5, pupils are achieving high standards.
- Teaching and learning which takes place in the computer suite are very good.
- Pupils enjoy ICT and work hard.
- The use of new technology, including electronic keyboards in music, is good.
- Management of the subject is very good.
- Opportunities are inconsistent for pupils to use ICT in class lessons in their subjects.

Commentary

72. The rapid improvements in ICT are due to the systematic specialist teaching of ICT in the computer suite. This is also used as a powerful vehicle for training other teachers when they work alongside the specialist teacher. All aspects of the National Curriculum are very well taught and learned when pupils have specialist teaching. As a result, pupils' achievement is now satisfactory by Year 6. A strong aspect of the specialist provision is that higher and very high attaining pupils are given well-matched work. Where necessary the specialist teacher uses planning for the year ahead compared with pupils' chronological ages in order not to hold pupils back. More able pupils learn well because they are provided with good challenge. In their classrooms, many teachers check pupils' understanding and set tasks that help to effectively hone skills further.
73. There are good systems for ensuring teachers provide similar levels of work in their classrooms. The subject manager has very successfully introduced a system of workbooks for pupils. They provide valuable information on pupils' achievements over time and are used to provide well-matched work. This level of provision is a very good improvement since the last inspection. However, in a few classrooms, computers are not used enough. In these cases, basic skills on the keyboard and mouse are not practised often enough, which slows the development of pupils' typing skills. The co-ordinator has already identified this as a weakness and has good strategies in place to train teachers to use computers more consistently within the context of their own lessons.
74. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It is very good during the very regular specialist teaching time when pupils are taught in the suite and satisfactory during other lessons. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, attainment is above average – a very good improvement since the last inspection. Younger pupils log on to the school's network, open and close software and know the applications that are associated with a good number of

programs. As pupils move through the school, they develop these skills further, using computers and other hardware to control devices, interrogate and present data with programs such as *Excel*, and learn to choose the best solution from different options that are modelled. Pupils also use the Internet and CD-ROMs well to seek information, which they are able to combine to make presentations. Pupils with special educational needs use computers to help them acquire skills and knowledge effectively. Those few pupils with English as an additional language are represented among the highest attainers in the subject.

75. The subject is very well managed. Systems for improving the subject and teaching have been very effective. There are now good computer resources for all classes, in addition to the very good computer suite. These provide access for a significant number of pupils at one time so that pupils can regularly use ICT to develop their learning in other subjects.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. Overall, information and communication technology is used well in other subjects. However there are a few variations in the use of computers during literacy and numeracy lessons, depending on differing degrees of teachers' confidence. Nevertheless, good examples of the use of computers and other types of electronic technology were seen all subjects, including English, mathematics, science, geography and art and design. During the inspection, several pupils used electronic keyboards to enhance their performance in a musical concert.

HUMANITIES

77. In humanities, work was sampled in history and geography. Two lessons were seen in geography but none in history; therefore it was not possible to form a firm judgement about provision in these subjects. However, discussions with the co-ordinators and examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning took place, which indicate that National Curriculum requirements are being met.
78. In **geography**, pupils' books demonstrate that skills are successfully developed based on pupils' previous work. In the two lessons that were observed, one in Year 4 and another in Year 5, teaching was good. Both these lessons employed ICT well and work was of a good quality. For example, in the lesson in Year 5, pupils understood that tourism in St Lucia has both advantages and disadvantages. They knew that clearing the rainforest to build hotels has had a negative impact on the natural environment but, at the same time, it has provided jobs and economic security for many people. Computers were used to process explanatory text about such ideas. In Year 4, pupils analysed the findings that they had made on a field trip. They used ICT successfully to present their information. Co-ordination and management of the subject are good. The subject manager is knowledgeable, and has good ideas to develop provision and teaching.
79. Evidence suggests that standards in **history** are above average by Year 6 as a result of good co-ordination. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject manager. Discussion with the co-ordinator, together with scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, indicates that the curriculum is inclusive and soundly planned. Sound use is made of external and school resources, together with well-planned activities. Evidence was seen in the scrutiny of pupils' work of benefits to the school from the co-ordinator's attendance on in-service courses concerned with 'high level writing through high level history' and 'Non-chronological report writing in Year 4'. The school's aim is that such report writing will be equally weighted with elements of history and literacy. In planning for this, the managers for history and English work together on medium-term planning. Some good quality work was seen in Year 5's newspaper reports on Henry VIII's divorce, in Year 4, in their non-chronological writing, 'Egypt is the gift of the Nile' and in the autobiographical writing by Year 6 pupils, which stemmed from experiences of grand parents relating their experience of war. The school has had training on the use of drama across the curriculum and pupils' work

suggests it benefits them in learning about the past. Visits out of school enrich the curriculum. The subject manager scrutinises books once a term at the end of a topic as well as examining different year groups' medium-term plans.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths

- The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator.
- There are good opportunities for outside visits.
- Planning is consistently rigorous across all classes in each year group.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and this is improving pupils' achievement.

Commentary

80. The school is providing a good curriculum based on the local authority's revised guidelines for religious education. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach above average standards. Their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils understand there are different beliefs about the nature of God and ways in which people describe God. Pupils apply their understanding and beliefs in preparation for a debate on, "Belief in God helps people to live happier lives". Pupils have a good knowledge of Bible stories from the Old and New Testaments including God's protection of Daniel in the lion's den, the birth of Christ and the story of Mary Magdalene. Pupils understand the role of rituals in religion and some ways used by Christians to describe God. A useful timeline showed that pupils are developing a good awareness of the development of Christianity through time.
81. The overall quality of teaching is good. Three good lessons were observed, two in Year 3 and one in Year 5. In all three lessons, the introductory part of the lesson was well presented and relevant to aspects of the Christian festival of Easter. In all lessons teachers used practical examples for teaching more abstract ideas. Two of the lessons drew on the focus of the paschal candle lit in Christian churches to symbolise Christ, the Light of the World, in the resurrection of Jesus, and contrasted with the concept of darkness of crucifixion and death. In the Year 5 class, each desk or table had a cross standing on it. This encouraged pupils to quietly reflect in their small groups. Year 5 pupils understood the concept of symbolism and appreciated that they were learning about the symbolic features of the cross with no figure on it. In all three lessons a variety of good teaching strategies enabled pupils to be enthusiastic learners and use thinking skills effectively.
82. The subject manager, appointed this September, is establishing rigorous systems for finding out about the quality of work in all classes, for example resources, opportunities for appropriate use of ICT and suitable visits out of school for classes. She has provided an in-service training session for staff, monitored pupils' books and ensured that staff work to the literacy marking policy and she is trying to acquire appropriate good ICT resources. She has organised appropriate visits and visitors, including Indian Dance, the vicar from the local church and Christian Fellowship for enriching pupils' learning. As a result of the co-ordinator's good ideas and good management skills, this is an improving subject. The school has made satisfactory progress in improving religious education.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

83. Art and design, design and technology and physical education were sampled. In addition to observing a small number of lessons, inspectors spoke to subject co-ordinators and pupils. They looked at pupils' work from the last and the current year in art and design, and design technology.

84. Examination of pupils' previous work in **art and design** shows standards are well above average by Year 6. Throughout, pupils successfully develop their practical, creative and thinking skills using a wide range of media and through appreciation of other artists' work. There are very good examples of three-dimensional work. By Year 6, pupils design and make typefaces for lino printing and this is of a high quality. Some excellent three-dimensional work was seen when Year 6 pupils designed and made life size figures using paper and paste techniques and designed and made animal figures using wire and tissue paper. Pupils' paintings of water scenes are of a high quality, having experimented with techniques, brush strokes, shapes and tints before creating their own work using techniques similar to famous artists such as Monet. Children's very recent work in the style of paintings in the style of Matisse in Year 3 is of a very high quality.
85. A very good lesson was seen in Year 4. The pupils' task was to paint pictures in the style of Lowry. The teacher built pupils' understanding and skills over a series of lessons and this lesson enabled the pupils to use these in drawing "matchbox people". They also had a very good understanding of how tints, shades and colours can be used to create desired effects. The teachers' high expectations and very skilful teaching resulted from her strong subject knowledge. There was excellent use of music for creating mental images of Lowry's "matchbox men" as the children created their pictures. This teacher worked alongside all other teachers last year in order to develop other teachers' subject knowledge and to raise standards in art and design. This has had a very positive effect. Subject management is very good. Although the co-ordinator has not yet monitored the teaching of her colleagues, she has been very influential in raising standards in art and design throughout the school. There is a thorough programme of art and design throughout the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is now at least good. Standards in art and design have improved very well since the previous inspection, when they were average. All evidence suggests more capable pupils, including talented pupils, are given sound opportunities to excel because of strong subject teaching throughout the school.
86. Examination of planning for **design and technology** indicates a good balance of materials, including textiles, food and construction. Design and technology projects are systematically undertaken in all year groups. The work of pupils in Year 5, who made moving models using cams, was of an average standard. In this project, opportunities for pupils' creativity were more limited than the development of practical skills. The models suggested pupils gained a good knowledge of mechanisms but links with art and design were a weaker element. In a satisfactory Year 5 food technology lesson, pupils satisfactorily increased their knowledge of a range of food dips and nutritional food values through tasting tests. However, there were lost opportunities for the pupils to apply science enquiry skills and use the "fair test" when sampling their dips. In both these projects, there were missed opportunities for higher-attaining pupils to learn at higher levels. There is a new and enthusiastic subject manager and she is aware there has been little recent practical training.
87. Planning for **physical education** indicates that what is taught meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Records show that pupils swim in Year 5 and that a large majority succeed in meeting the government's minimum safety standard of 25 metres. Furthermore, many pupils considerably exceed these requirements.
88. In the lessons that were observed, focusing on skills in games in Years 4 and 5 and gymnastics in Year 6, the quality of teaching and learning was consistently good. It was very good in Year 5. As a result, attainment and progress in these lessons were generally good. The main reason is that planning is effective and teachers' subject knowledge is good. In Year 5, the teacher used very good ongoing assessment to adapt the lesson to the needs of different pupils, which enhanced teaching and learning to a very good quality. Those of higher attainment were challenged to work at a high level and to demonstrate their skills to other pupils, helping all of them to aspire to higher standards.

89. The subject manager is knowledgeable, has a good action plan and has ensured opportunities for pupils to experience extra-curricular opportunities in dance and competitive sports. The take-up is high and these opportunities enhance learning opportunities as well as furthering pupils' personal development. Opportunities for pupils to develop personally are also made available. For example, pupils have skipped in support of the British Heart Foundation and opportunities to experience minority sports, such as table-tennis and trampolining, have been available from time-to-time.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths

- Specialist teaching of instrumental tuition, choir and orchestra is excellent.
- There is much good teaching in the non-specialist class teaching of music.
- Pupils develop their composing skills and creativity well.
- They control sounds well through the performance skills of singing and playing.
- They successfully develop the ability to evaluate and improve their learning.
- The combination of orchestra and choir in performance produced a spiritual occasion for all.

Commentary

90. By Year 6, standards in music are above average. Pupils' achievement is good. A significant minority of pupils reach very high standards in performance skills involving voices and instruments. This stems from the very high quality specialist teaching of instruments and choir. By Year 6, pupils control their voices well and sing joyfully and tunefully. They have a good ability to adjust their own performance to fit the needs of the group. They understand how key musical elements and structure help to produce the mood in music. They respond very sensitively to changes in mood by adjusting their own performance, for example, when singing hymns during hymn practice. Pupils have a good understanding of European and non-European composers. During the inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils showed appreciation of the traditional Irish folk songs of Sinead O'Connor.
91. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with excellent features. Strong teaching in Year 3 enables pupils to make good progress in their understanding of dynamics, duration, pitch and tempo. In a very good Year 3 lesson, pupils used the large and well-displayed wall diagrams in the music room, subject specific vocabulary and their wonderful varied collection of home-made instruments. The pupils successfully grouped their instruments into different categories according to how they were to be played. Pupils experimented with the instruments and this, together with the teacher's clear teaching of score notation and dynamics, resulted in pupils reading their scores well and playing well. Pupils' learning in the lesson was very good due to the teacher's expert knowledge, expectation and her very good relationships with them. Good progress was also made in Year 4 where, as a result of the teacher's good teaching, pupils used their skills of composition to create and develop musical ideas. In Year 5 teaching was accurately matched to pupils' prior attainment and, as a result of the interesting work provided, all pupils learned productively. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. This has previously been enhanced by the provision of specialist teaching of music for every teacher in every class.
92. Excellent specialist teaching was observed in a rehearsal with choir and orchestra for the Easter concert. Specialist skilled teaching resulted in singing of a very high quality with layers of sound and excellent timbre, together with an orchestra that performed very well. Co-ordination of music is extremely well managed by the subject manager. All staff are required

to choose music that is important to them to share with the school. This provides an opportunity for pupils to appreciate a wide range of music and know that different styles of music are important to different people.

93. A significant number of visiting teachers offer provision of music for pupils who wish to opt for extra-curricular music. There are opportunities for tuition in recorders, keyboards, brass, woodwind and stringed instruments. The school choir has performed at a number of venues including the Salvation Army Citadel and Portsmouth Civic Halls. The recorder group had a sponsored marathon play in the library. The co-ordinator has, through work scrutiny, enabled teachers to choose to teach alone, if confident and skilled, or to be involved in team teaching. She plans to instigate monitoring of class music from the start of the summer term. In a relatively short time the subject manager co-ordinates well the roles of the visiting instrumental teachers of music. The teaching of music continues to have a high status in the school and the school has maintained high quality provision since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, whilst progress for gifted and talented pupils is sound. The specialist teacher ensures that talented pupils have opportunities for extra enrichment through outside agencies.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

94. Only one lesson was seen in this area and so no judgements have been made about overall provision. However, pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship are major parts of all the school's work. There is a good curriculum for pupils' personal and health education and it has a good impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. It includes work on diet, drugs, health and personal safety. The school is involved in community projects and, in particular, is linked with a school in Chernobyl. Children from Chernobyl have visited the school. Older pupils are proud to be "reading buddies" to younger pupils for a short time each week and this gives them opportunities to take responsibility.
95. The School Council provides good opportunities for pupils to exercise responsibility. In subjects such as science, ICT, physical education and some mathematics lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to develop their team-work and problem solving skills. Science and ICT lessons often provide very good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning and stimulate a desire for self-improvement. The curriculum provides effectively for pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex and relationships education and attention to alcohol and drug misuse.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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