

INSPECTION REPORT

RED BARN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Portchester, Hampshire

LEA area: Hampshire County Council

Unique reference number: 116079

Headteacher: Mr Richard N Hales

Lead inspector: John William Paull

Dates of inspection: 26–28 April 2004

Inspection number: 257286

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4–11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	153
School address:	Linden Lea Portchester Fareham Hampshire
Postcode:	PO16 8HJ
Telephone number:	01329 288011
Fax number:	01329 822486
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Cooper, MBE
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- The school joined the *Healthy Schools Scheme* in 1999.
- The school is part of the National Leadership Strategy.
- The school has recently received two awards for good practice and performance – *Education Extra (2001)* and *Awards for All (2003)*.
- A little over ten per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is around average.
- Boys on the roll significantly outnumber girls.
- Nearly 20 per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is above the national average. Most of these pupils experience difficulties that are likely to slow down their rate of learning. In the case of a few pupils, the extent of their difficulty is identified as severe. Another small, although significant, group has social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.
- About two per cent of pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is about average.
- Nearly all the school's pupils are white, although a few are from mixed backgrounds and many parents have not provided the school with information about their family's ethnicity.
- No pupils are recorded as speaking English as an additional language.
- Pupils are drawn mainly from rural and urban settings and also from both private and social housing. A few pupils have parents with a naval background.
- Many pupils who start at the school move away before they reach Year 6, and several places are taken by others who move into the area.
- For a period between this inspection and that of 1998, the school experienced a high turnover of its teaching staff, including senior managers.
- Overall attainment on entry is below average.
- Socio-economic circumstances in the area around the school are about average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22028	John William Paull	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Music Physical education Personal, social and health education and citizenship
1165	Peter Dannheisser	Lay inspector	
16773	Raminder Arora	Team inspector	Science Geography History Foundation Stage
3855	David Langton	Team inspector	English Design and technology Religious education Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Limited

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	13
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	19
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	22
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	38

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Red Barn Primary School provides a sound education overall. It is beginning to pick up its rate of improvement, owing to good leadership, after a difficult period of high staff turnover. Although the quality of teaching and learning is currently good, they are not fully impacting on pupils' achievements, as staff have not yet been in the school for long enough. Nonetheless, overall achievement is satisfactory, as is the resulting value for money.

The main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers' very high expectations of behaviour result in pupils' good behaviour, attitudes and personal development.
- Care and guidance of pupils are strong features and contribute well to their good attitudes towards learning.
- Standards of attainment are generally below average and standards in speaking, writing and science are not as good as in reading and mathematics.
- Information derived from monitoring and assessment is used inconsistently. As a result, teaching methods and planning what is to be taught vary, which has an adverse effect on the continuity of pupils' learning.

Since the inspection of 1998, improvement has been satisfactory. By Year 6, standards have risen broadly in line with national improvements. Strengths, such as good attendance and strong care and guidance of pupils, have been maintained. Key issues for improvement that have been addressed includes better systems for monitoring the school's work; the introduction of assessments that track pupils' progress; and improved provision for information and communication technology. However, high staff turnover has prevented consistency in the usefulness and application of these improvements. The headteacher and governors acknowledge that, for a time in between the inspections, the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' attitudes and behaviour fell away. Current findings are that these aspects are now strong and that further improvement is likely under the good leadership of the headteacher and recently appointed senior managers, who are identifying areas for improvement accurately.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Bearing in mind that their starting points are below average and often well below in communication, language and literacy, **pupils' overall achievements are satisfactory.**

The table indicates that, in 2003, the school's results for pupils in Year 6 were above those of similar schools, and especially so in mathematics. Taking the years 2001 to 2003 together, standards in mathematics are higher than in English and science. The school's overall trend for these three subjects together is broadly in line with the national trend. These findings are reflected in work that was seen during the inspection. Pupils' work is generally below average, although it is a little higher in mathematics than in English, where it is in turn higher than in science. Standards in reading are close to average and higher than in speaking and writing, in which they are below average. Statutory targets in English and mathematics are realistic, although, in recent years, they have not always been met. At the end of Year 2, standards are currently a little below average, although rising in Years 1 and 2. In 2003, results in Year 2 National Curriculum reading tests were below average, while in writing, mathematics and science, results were broadly average. The school's overall trend

for Year 2 is above the national trend. In information and communication technology, while standards across the school remain below average, they are rising. Standards in religious education are average. At the end of the Reception Year, standards are below average, which reflects overall attainment on entry to the school. Pupils' attainment, when compared with starting points, indicates that overall achievement is satisfactory. No significant differences in the progress of pupils with special educational needs, of pupils from different backgrounds or of boys and girls were found.

Standards of behaviour are good. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils understand the need to co-operate and to include each other in activities. Pupils display polite, friendly attitudes. **Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also good** overall. They demonstrate very good ideas of what is right and wrong. Attendance is above the national figure.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is sound and the quality of teaching and learning is good overall.

Teaching and learning are consistently good in English and mathematics. Many teachers have only recently joined the staff, so this high quality has not yet resulted in matching rates of progress. While teaching and learning are satisfactory in science, they are inconsistent. Uses of assessment and information to plan what is taught are also inconsistent. As a result, situations sometimes occur when needs of pupils of different ages and abilities are not fully met. Care and guidance of pupils, including those with special needs, are strong and contribute to good learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership is good. The headteacher, deputy head and senior managers evaluate the school's performance well. Their action plans outline good strategic direction. Management, while satisfactory, is not yet as strong. High staff turnover means that developments to raise standards have not been applied consistently, although recent policies are now improving the school well. Governors make a sound contribution. Acting with the headteacher they appointed new staff to promoted posts, partly as a means of reducing turnover. This decision appears to be working. With the deputy head, these teachers now have a strong impact on leadership. Governors ensure proper compliance with statutory requirements and good financial control.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Very few parents, mostly of children in Year 6, attended the pre-inspection meeting. They expressed concerns about the quality of education, caused especially by high staff turnover. Other parents were more positive and questionnaires, which represented more of them, indicated higher rates of satisfaction. Inspection findings agree that some gaps in learning and inconsistency in practice have occurred. A few parents felt that awards to pupils are not made fairly. Neither inspectors nor pupils agreed. On the contrary, the school's behaviour policy is working well and many pupils stated that they are treated fairly. Those asked explained why awards for improvement in behaviour, as well as for good behaviour itself, are given. These pupils openly stated their belief that all staff do their best for them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Across the school's whole provision, place more emphasis on pupils' spoken English and skills in writing, focusing on the breadth and understanding of general vocabulary and standard forms of English, as a starting point to improving standards both in literacy and in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Raise standards in science, emphasising observational, investigative and experimental skills.
- Use results of monitoring and assessment with more rigour to build up and establish better consistency and continuity, especially, but not exclusively, in planning what is taught in science and religious education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Rates of progress are beginning to speed up throughout the school. However, standards of attainment at present are generally below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall achievement, while satisfactory, does not match the present good quality of teaching in either English or mathematics.
- Results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 have improved since the last inspection and at a similar rate to improvement nationally.
- Over the last couple of years, improvements in Year 2 National Curriculum test results have exceeded national trends.
- Taking results in the past few years together, standards in speaking, writing and science have not been as high as in mathematics.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially when they are working in the school's *Dragon Club*.

Commentary

1. Although teaching is currently good, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The most likely reason for this mismatch is a high turnover of staff in the past few years. The headteacher and governors acknowledge that such staffing mobility caused inconsistency in planning and methods and, as the school's own monitoring systems indicated, examples of unsatisfactory practice occurred. Progress was therefore adversely affected. Teaching is now often good and, during the inspection, several examples of very good teaching were also observed. As a result, rates of progress are picking up again. However, this improved situation has not been in place for long enough to impact fully.
2. In the years around its 1998 inspection, the school's Year 6 National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science were erratic. For example, in English, only a third of pupils had attained the expected level for their age in 1996, whereas the figure rose to well over two-thirds in 1997, which, at that time, was the latest year for which results were available. Nevertheless, if all the results were taken together, and compared with the school's results in recent years, indications are that overall standards have improved satisfactorily. This position is reflected by the school's overall trend since 1999, which is broadly in line with the national trend. The latest Year 6 results, those of 2003, were in line with the national average in mathematics and below average in English and science. Significant movement of pupils in and out of the school occurs each year, but records show that this movement does not significantly affect overall rates of progress, and so comparisons between what pupils know and understand at the end of Year 2 and what they gain by Year 6 are fair. Compared with similar schools, the school did well in 2003 as, on this basis, results were above average in English and science, and well above average in mathematics. Statutory targets are set in consultation with the local authority for each subsequent year group that takes the tests. These targets are sufficiently challenging and realisable and were met in the latest year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (26.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.5 (24.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.9 (26.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 27 pupils registered for the 2003 Year 6 tests. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Current standards of attainment in Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science. However, many pupils entered the school with levels of attainment that were below average, especially in communication, language and literacy. Several pupils in the year group have also been identified with special educational needs of types that are likely to have an impact on their learning. For these reasons, overall achievement and progress are satisfactory. While these overall judgements are similar across the three core subjects, closer analysis reveals that standards in mathematics are closer to average, and therefore higher, than those in English and science. In mathematics, more pupils, even including a few with special educational needs, are likely to achieve the normally expected level and several higher attainers may exceed it. In English, differences are evident within different parts of the subject. In reading, for example, a higher proportion are around the expected level, and more are at a higher level, than in writing. In speaking and listening, although pupils listen to speakers well and provide good, sympathetic audiences, speaking is below average. The main reason is that many pupils, while they are confident speakers, find it difficult to extend ideas into sequenced explanations using a precise vocabulary. Often they use short, simple responses that do not make their meaning sufficiently clear. Often these statements are colloquial, with little use of standard forms of English. This weakness is a feature in the writing of lower attainers and even of a significant number of pupils of otherwise average attainment.
4. The school's trend in performance in National Curriculum test results in Year 2 is currently rising at a faster rate than the national trend. The main reason is that pupils of this age have been in the school for less time and have therefore been less affected by previous staff difficulties. As a result, they have experienced a consistently good quality of teaching and learning, and their improvement reflects this. Test results in 2003 indicate that standards in reading are below the national average, whereas in writing and mathematics, they are average. Assessment in science also indicates average attainment overall. Overall attainment in the present Year 2 is below average in these subjects. However, compared with these pupils' attainment on entry to the school, these standards represent satisfactory achievement.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.1 (16.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.5 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.6 (18.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 24 pupils registered for the 2003 Year 2 tests. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Standards in subjects outside the core subjects were usually around what is normally expected. For example, in age groups that were sampled in geography, and in displays of work in design and technology and art and design, attainment was around average. Attainment was above average in one lesson in physical education in Year 1. In Years 2 and 6, standards in religious education were also broadly in line with what is expected in the locally agreed syllabus. In information and communication technology, pupils' skills and

knowledge of a range of programs are also around average, owing to good teaching in the computer suite. However, use of these skills across the curriculum is below what is normally expected. The main reason is that opportunities to use computers in classrooms and around the school are frequently missed.

6. By the end of the Reception Year, in the important areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, fewer children than usually found attain what is expected in the goals for the age group. In other areas, such as creative development and physical development, attainment is closer to what is usually found. Nevertheless, this attainment represents satisfactory achievement overall, as nearly all children make satisfactory progress from their starting points when they first enter the class. In communication, language and literacy, children's achievements are generally good, as although their starting points are often lower than in other areas of learning, their attainment of goals by the end of the year is similar overall to that in other areas.
7. At the pre-inspection meeting and in a letter, one or two parents of pupils with special educational needs expressed concerns about their children's progress. In general, however, inspectors found that progress is good, especially when pupils are working on literacy in the special needs room (known as the *Dragon Club*). As a result of this provision, progress of these pupils is nearly always maintained at a good rate or at a rate appropriate to individual learning difficulties, albeit not unexpectedly, at lower levels of attainment than pupils in general. This finding also includes pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs. When pupils are withdrawn to work in the *Dragon Club*, the main focus is on standards of literacy and these lessons only take place during Literacy Hours for their classmates. Pupils' entitlement to study, progress and attain in other subjects is therefore unaffected, which was another parental concern. Procedures for ensuring that differently attaining groups are fully included in what is provided, and are thereby enabled to make progress, are satisfactory. Another example is that the headteacher and senior staff are very aware of the imbalance of girls and boys on the school's roll. As a result, they have analysed pupils' performances on the basis of gender. Inspectors verify that, while differences in attainment are apparent from year to year, these are more closely linked to the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, and little overall difference is evident in rates of progress of girls and boys. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are also included well. Teachers and teaching assistants are well aware of these pupils and use rewards and affirmation of good behaviour consistently well. These methods ensure that pupils' needs are generally met effectively, so they are able to achieve and progress at a level appropriate to their prior knowledge and understanding, without significant effect on the work of others. Finally, identification of gifted and talented pupils is under way, also satisfactorily, although provision for their needs is at present inconsistent through the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour, personal development and attendance are all good. Punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By making pupils aware of their *Rights and Responsibilities*, based on the United Nations Children's Charter, high standards of behaviour are promoted, expected and achieved.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are good.
- Behaviour in class, in assemblies, and around the school, is good.
- Pupils' attitudes are good. They have a good understanding of what is right and wrong through doing things "the Red Barn way".
- The number of exclusions has been reduced dramatically.
- The school has very good procedures for ensuring good attendance.
- The promotion of multicultural awareness is underdeveloped.

Commentary

8. Pupils enjoy school and the opportunities it offers. Parents' views in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire are very positive on this point. Nearly all young children in the Reception class respond well to a positive climate for learning set by the adults. They learn to be attentive and eager to carry out activities. By the end of the year, nearly all children achieve the expected goals for their age. They settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss and behave sensibly. Children of different backgrounds work and play in harmony and show developing confidence in trying new activities.
9. Since the previous inspection the attitudes and behaviour of pupils joining the school have been more challenging. A school behaviour management group involving governors, staff and parents has worked hard and successfully to address this issue. This success has resulted in fewer meetings, although it remains open to parents for their views and comments. Pupils listen attentively in class and nearly all parents believe that attitudes have improved considerably after slipping back a few years or so ago. Inspectors agree that attitudes and behaviour in lessons are now good overall, sometimes very good, and provide a good environment for learning. During the inspection, no examples of unsatisfactory behaviour occurred in lessons. Pupils with potentially challenging behaviour or with identified emotional difficulties are dealt with sensitively and promptly and do not disrupt learning. Pupils who work well or display acts of kindness and good citizenship, as well as those who usually find rules difficult, but who nevertheless make progress, are rewarded and celebrated in assemblies. This approach is clearly effective and working well. Inspectors do not agree with a group of parents at the pre-inspection meeting who felt that the policy is resulting in unfairness, as pupils do not understand why a small improvement in behaviour can be rewarded when long-running good behaviour is not. On the contrary, pupils who were asked were very clear about the fairness with which they are all treated.
10. Relationships are good and pupils work well together. For example, pupils in Year 2 allocated parts to one another very amicably for role play in a religious education lesson on the Hindu story of Prahlad and Vishnu. Pupils are clear that bullying and bad behaviour are not tolerated. They have a good understanding of what to do in the event of "trouble", and they know about the series of steps that staff take to deal promptly with any offenders. Pupils said that they like their school, appreciate their teachers' ways of dealing with them, and feel safe and comfortable. One recent arrival made the specific point that he had left his previous school because he had been bullied and he knew that, at Red Barn, any bullying is dealt with. Pupils are polite and friendly towards visitors. Where necessary, support from outside agencies is sought. For example, during the inspection, a behaviour management consultant from the local authority was observed working effectively with individual pupils, improving their self-esteem and thereby their attitudes to others and to learning. General behaviour and attitudes are currently maintained at similar high standards to those reported in the last inspection. However, the headteacher and governors acknowledged openly that these aspects had slipped, with the entry to the school of several pupils with identified behavioural and emotional difficulties. Through good leadership, the school responded effectively, seeking advice and expertise. As a result, good improvement in recent years has restored quality. The inspection confirms the school's claim to inclusivity. As a pupil wrote succinctly, "We have a right to play with our friends; we have a responsibility to be kind and caring."
11. Playtimes are well supervised and older and younger children have separate areas available to them. Teachers and assistants often suggest and lead games, such as the headteacher's organisation of skipping and an assistant's game of "catch"! The school field offers a wide, open space for everyone during dry conditions and, during the inspection, boys and girls were observed playing football together amicably when the weather permitted.

12. Pupils' personal development is provided through a wide allocation of responsibilities, taking registers to and from the offices for their teachers, acting as library monitors and by taking responsibility for operating equipment, during assemblies, for example. Older pupils act as "buddies" to younger ones, helping to supervise them in wet lunchtimes, and they are encouraged to work independently, unsupervised, researching work in the library or on computers. A new School Council, planned to begin next term, is set to enable them to contribute ideas and views about how the school is run. Current examples of pupils being given and accepting responsibility include Year 5 pupils' survey of car parking and Year 6 pupils' organisation of soccer coaching for themselves. Pupils' social development is strengthened through a residential week spent in the Isle of Wight.
13. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. In daily collective worship, appropriate moments for prayer and reflection are provided. During the inspection, opportunities were provided, for example, to think about the starving and ill, emphasising care for others. Provision for moral and social development and an understanding of living in a community are good and provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Response to these opportunities is generally good. Pupils enjoy and respond well to the weekly award of *Darius the Dog* to the class showing the best citizenship by doing something to serve the whole school as a community. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of what is right and wrong and staff are good role models, showing care and understanding for the individual needs of all pupils. Pupils decide upon rules for their class that are sensible, and agree such rules with their teachers at the start of the school year. Pupils are also aware of the three basic rights of safety, respect and learning and they know that these rights also imply a responsibility to protect them for other people. The representation of a Hindu temple in the area for younger pupils has helped them to appreciate some of the ideas of another culture. Plans to extend this type of work are good and are based on a realisation that at present pupils are insufficiently prepared for today's multicultural society.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year – September 2002 to July 2003 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.7
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.

14. Attendance rates are above the national figure. The school works very hard and successfully to promote good attendance. A very small minority of families are responsible for the level of unauthorised absence. However, this figure is higher than the national average because the school takes its responsibilities seriously and does not authorise absence easily or lightly. Pupils arrive punctually at school and registers are marked and returned to the office promptly. Despite this good practice, on one or two occasions during the inspection, lessons began late.

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	91	21	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other background	2	0	0
Parent / pupil preferred not to say	33	0	0

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

15. Although the table indicates 21 exclusions, this figure involved nine pupils. Both these figures are for last year, which is the last complete educational year. The school had just introduced a new behaviour policy, which appears to have been successful, as records indicate that no exclusions have been necessary this year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. While teaching and learning are good, elements of what is taught require further development and aspects of the use of assessment are applied inconsistently from one class to another. Strong features occur in the care of pupils and partnerships with the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attention to learning, to which pupils respond with good application and productivity.
- Teachers encourage and engage pupils well through well-planned lessons.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, especially within the *Dragon Club*, is good.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and writing skills.
- Teaching assistants and other support staff are used well.
- Marking does not always show pupils how they may improve their work.

Commentary

16. In the time between this inspection and the last, a period of unusually high instability in staffing was experienced. Indications are that the quality of teaching was inconsistent during that time, with significant elements that were unsatisfactory. Teaching seen during this inspection ranged from a comparatively high proportion that was very good to just one unsatisfactory lesson and, overall, teaching and learning are now good in all stages of education.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	4 (11%)	21 (58%)	10 (28%)	1 (3%)	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.

17. This good quality has not yet had sufficient time to impact significantly on standards, especially amongst older pupils, for whom it represents less of the time that they have been at school. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents in Year 6 were critical of the quality of teaching and learning that their children have experienced and, to the extent that teaching has not been as good as it is now, inspectors agree with them. However, current teaching in Year 6 is good and pupils are now making good progress.
18. Teaching in the Reception class is good, with very good teaching and learning in information and communication technology. In Years 1 and 2 teaching is good, with examples of very good teaching in religious education and mathematics. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is also good overall, especially in English and mathematics. Another example of very good teaching occurred in the latter subject. Science is less well taught, owing largely to teachers' less secure subject knowledge, and lack of emphasis on experimentation and practical work. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, and encourage and engage pupils well. They vary their methods effectively, making good use of times when pupils sit on carpets together to instruct and question the whole class. Independent and group work is also used well, often to move lessons along at a good pace, maintaining the pace of consolidation and learning, and keeping pupils' interest. Across the school, pupils' learning and progress currently match the quality of teaching and are good overall. Very good management of pupils, whereby teachers insist on and receive good attitudes, respect and behaviour from pupils, contributes considerably to this positive picture. As a direct result, pupils listen well, co-operate with each other and work well independently, in pairs and in groups.
19. Lesson planning is generally effective, although explanations of what pupils will be expected to learn in lessons are not always shared with them. As a result, pupils are not consistently involved in the assessment of their own learning, which is one reason why assessment and evaluation of lessons is not fully effective. However, in the very good teaching and most of the good lessons, this aspect was correspondingly more apparent and helped pupils to understand what was taught more effectively. Planning usually takes account of the different levels of prior attainment in each class. Overall, work is well matched to the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. However, in some lessons, more often in science than in English or mathematics, tasks are not sufficiently tailored to such different needs and so not all pupils are challenged at their own level of understanding.
20. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, especially in the *Dragon Club*, is good. Teachers and assistants put pupils at their ease and base tasks very closely on targets in Individual Education Plans. As a result, work moves forward at a good pace. In these circumstances, good use is made of praise which, in turn, raises pupils' self-esteem and encourages them to even further effort. However, in lessons in classrooms, some of the teaching that was otherwise satisfactory did not always make sufficient use of Individual Education Plans. On these occasions, it was less apparent that specific needs were fully met. Nevertheless, teaching assistants, both when supporting work generally, and when supporting pupils with special educational needs, make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, giving teachers good support by employing sound questioning techniques and helping to manage and supervise groups. It is clear that many of the school's assistants have been well trained and use their acquired knowledge skilfully and to good effect. A telling example occurred in a very good lesson in Year 1. This lesson featured the creation story, as told by Christians. The

teacher worked with one group of pupils writing the story, while the assistant worked with the rest of the class, focusing on artwork that reproduced the stages of creation. Teaching assistants also help significantly in supervising pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulty, encouraging, coaxing and keeping them on task, so that they can be fully included in what is taught. Furthermore, in this way, they support the learning of all pupils, as interruptions that might otherwise arise are kept to a minimum.

21. Standard forms of spoken and written English and opportunities for the enrichment of pupils' general vocabulary in subjects across the curriculum are neither sufficiently planned nor taken. For example, several instances were observed when pupils used imprecise speech in response to questions or appeared to struggle for a word. Too often the situation passed without comment by the teacher, and so such occasions were not used to develop flexible, richer ways of speaking. Conversely, in very good lessons, these same elements contributed strongly to the quality of learning that resulted. In Year 2, for example, pupils are frequently reminded to think first, not speak, then to improve and say. The same type of routine is used in written exercises in this class – think first, improve, write a full sentence and then read it back. Such good practice is worthy of dissemination throughout the school. Part of the good vision of the headteacher and senior staff is that, as stability of staffing increases, monitoring, evaluation and support of performance will be used fully to find and spread good methods and eliminate weaker practice.
22. The school has effective systems for the assessment and recording of attainment in English and mathematics. However, this finding is not repeated consistently across the curriculum. In some subjects, portfolios of pupils' work, assessed to National Curriculum levels, are in place or being formulated to enable teachers to better assess standards and progress. In other subjects such practice is not in place. When it is, it is still not always used routinely to drive planning, whereas in other classes, this feature is good. Pupils' self-evaluation is also unsatisfactory, owing to inconsistencies in its use. The main points of lessons are not always discussed or displayed at the outset, nor reviewed consistently at the end. In such cases pupils' knowledge about their own learning is restricted, making any attempt to introduce procedures for self-evaluation rather futile. However, in this aspect also, examples of very good practice were also observed. In Year 3, for example, pupils are constantly reminded of the purpose of the lesson and asked whether they have understood it. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, offering comments about pupils' efforts and the general quality of their work. However, inconsistency is again apparent as such comments do not always offer suggestions about how to improve.
23. Good co-ordination of procedures for assessment, which are managed by the deputy headteacher, has identified all the above weaknesses, alongside others that she has already begun to address vigorously. In English and mathematics, for example, individual targets are now set and updated for all pupils, so they know what is expected of them. More widely, data is analysed to predict levels of attainment and to set targets for each year group. Good use has been made of assessment to identify and provide in-service training to improve guided reading across the school, and several teachers are beginning to identify opportunities for assessment as part of their planning and to use the resulting information to amend their next lesson. This good practice was seen clearly in an English lesson in Year 5.

The curriculum

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements, including those of providing personal, social and health education. Satisfactory accommodation and sufficient resources enable the National Curriculum to be taught effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Literacy and numeracy are planned effectively.

- Insufficient emphasis is placed on the use of standard forms of spoken English and the development of writing across the curriculum.
- Lack of continuity in what is taught was found in religious education, in Year 4.
- The wider community makes a good contribution to what is taught.
- Provision for information and communication technology has been improved since the last inspection.

Commentary

24. Programmes for teaching literacy and numeracy are firmly based on the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Their effective implementation has ensured a positive contribution to raising standards. However, insufficient emphasis is placed on the use of standard forms of spoken English, which has an impact on pupils' writing across the curriculum, as weaknesses in their speech are frequently reflected in the way that they write. Nevertheless, since the last inspection, planning has been improved by the adoption of nationally recommended guidelines in most subjects. All subjects of the National Curriculum are provided for, including provision of citizenship and personal, social and health education. The curriculum includes education on sex and human relationships and uses and abuses of drugs and alcohol. The school has appropriate sex education and drugs education policies in place, which meet statutory requirements. Lessons known as *Circle Time* focus effectively on personal and social education and make a positive contribution to pupils' overall development, helping them to build good relationships.
25. Planning is satisfactory overall, with a sensible emphasis on literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology. However, planning does not as effectively ensure a continuous development of skills in some foundation subjects as it does in English, mathematics and science. A significant example was found in Year 4 in religious education. The school's long-term plan indicates that certain topics should be studied in this year group. However, a scrutiny of work and discussions with teachers show that different areas have in fact been taught. Statutory requirements in religious education are, however, met. Less significant weaknesses are apparent in history, geography and design and technology, although, in these subjects, it is opportunities to write factually and links with literacy that are the issue.
26. Good use is made of the wider community to support teaching and learning. For example, the school works regularly with the local police. The *Healthy Schools* initiative is actively promoted and the school's range of extra-curricular activities, which includes both sporting and musical opportunities, is well supported by local groups and helpers who provide expertise, coaching and supervision, alongside teachers. This provision, including sports such as table-tennis and football, musical groups such as recorders and a choir, and others, is attended by both boys and girls, providing extra learning opportunities. Pupils are also provided with opportunities to participate in competitions and charitable events. Educational visits, including a residential school journey, are well linked to planned classroom topics and therefore make a strong contribution to extending pupils' academic knowledge, as well as providing valuable social and personal experiences.
27. Much work has been carried out to reorganise provision in information and communication technology. It was decided to put new computers together into a networked suite, so that the teaching of skills could be planned and carried out more effectively. A space adjacent to classrooms for older pupils was identified as suitable, and this provision is now fully in place. It is working effectively and pupils' acquisition of skills has improved. However, several computers in classrooms around the school are ageing, which reduces both their use and usefulness.
28. The school's accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The premises are well maintained by an effective site manager and are basically a safe environment for pupils and staff. Sufficient, well-qualified staff are available to meet curricular demands and the

previously high levels of mobility amongst teachers have reduced, improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are well cared for. Governors and staff have good procedures for checking that pupils and staff work in a healthy and safe environment. Pupils have very good relationships with adults in the school. They are given good support and advice.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of its pupils are very good.
- Older pupils help the younger ones.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are very good.
- There is no School Council but there are plans to introduce one.

Commentary

29. As reported after the previous inspection, governors and staff are closely involved in regular safety audits to ensure that all areas of the school are consistently and frequently checked. Senior staff have a good awareness of child protection procedures and members of staff exercise responsibilities with vigilance and care. Although recently appointed teachers have not, as yet, had formal training in local child protection procedures, arrangements are in hand. The school is well prepared and sensitive in dealings with pupils who do not live with their families. First-aid provision is good and trained staff provide assistance in the event of minor accidents and are prepared to cope with emergencies. Records of mishaps are kept carefully in order to monitor whether any patterns suggest that changes to accommodation, routines or procedures should be made.
30. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Records of significant interactions with pupils and their families are kept. Most pupils say that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to progress. They understand and use the targets they are given, often placed within their exercise books, and their perception is that teachers always mark their work well. A weekly celebration assembly reinforces positively pupils' expectations of life at school – the Red Barn way – and success is rewarded and applauded. The school's senior managers make the boundaries of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour very clear for pupils, applying a new behaviour policy strictly. This policy was agreed by a behaviour management working group of teachers, governors and parents. As a result, pupils understand how to conduct themselves and even levels of automatic short-term exclusions have fallen to none in recent terms.
31. Pupils are well cared for at lunchtime. Older pupils known as *guardians* look after younger ones when they first come to school and pupils say that this provision works well. Older monitors help to look after pupils during wet weather, and staff keep an eye on pupils who take turns to be indoors during playtime and play games or use the computers.
32. Pupils with special educational needs are well cared for. Good records are kept in Individual Education Plans and are monitored by a specialist teacher and the headteacher who is also the special needs co-ordinator. Teachers and assistants develop close relationships with these pupils, encouraging them to take a full part in school life. The special needs room, known as the *Dragon Club*, provides good support for those who need it, as it did at the time of the previous inspection.
33. Enrolled Reception children and their parents are invited to visit the school in the term before their children join. Many of these children already know the school well, as they attend its own pre-school class. Children are also visited in other playgroups and in their homes. When children start school, the staff help them to develop good and trusting relationships. Adults know pupils in their classes well, responding very well to their emotional needs.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnerships with parents and the community are satisfactory. Links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A clear majority of parents expressed positive views about what the school provides.
- A few parents, mostly of children in Year 6, do not feel that the school informs them well about its activities or their children's progress.
- The school reports to parents frequently about their children's progress and takes seriously its responsibility to do so.
- The school's links with its own on-site pre-school group and with other primary schools are good.
- A partnership with the local secondary school supports pupils' transfer well.

Commentary

34. The previous inspection report's findings suggested that parents were involved well in paired reading and that regular meetings with the headteacher were held for them in the afternoons. Current links with parents are sound. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, a clear majority of parents indicated positive views about the school and the education that it provides for their children. The headteacher and other teachers make themselves accessible to parents and informal consultations are easily arranged. Reading record books are available for communication between parents and staff and this helps strengthen relationships between families and teachers. Despite this, a small number of parents expressed concerns, suggesting that they do not feel closely involved with the school. Nearly all of these parents were of children in Year 6. At the pre-inspection meeting, these parents pointed out that recent instability in staffing resulted in interrupted teaching of their children, lack of consistency in methods and policies, and disrupted relationships between the school and home. Inspectors agree with these parents, to the extent that some instances of inconsistent practice were confirmed during the inspection and, during the time of instability, pupils' behaviour was not always as good as at the time of the last report. A few parents felt that poor leadership was to blame. However, inspectors do not agree that the headteacher responded unsatisfactorily. On the contrary, good leadership ensured that pupils' overall achievements remained satisfactory during a very difficult period. Furthermore, the opportunity to make good appointments to the senior management team has been taken successfully, and teaching and learning are now good, with progress speeding up.
35. Parents receive information about the curriculum at the start of each year. The school provides parents with three written reports about their children's progress. Although poor communication with them is one of the concerns that was expressed, this provision is unusually high and includes one detailed report that inspectors believe informs parents well about the work that their children have completed. These reports also contain comments about pupils' attitudes and attendance. However, it is fair to point out that not all these reports are fully clear about pupils' levels, in relation to national averages or expectations in each subject. One or two parents complained that the reports are not handwritten. However, inspectors found them to be attractively produced, personalised to the pupil concerned, and appropriate in terms of demand on the use of teachers' time.
36. Parents of pupils with special educational needs, together with the specialist teacher and class teachers are involved in producing pupils' Individual Educational Plans, which are well considered and updated regularly. These plans include specific targets, which are renewed appropriately. However, parents are not always invited when updates are planned. Nevertheless, they receive information about any changes. The school has satisfactory arrangements for determining parents' views. For example, parents' forums are provided both at the school and in the village hall at Southwick, where a significant number of pupils live. These meetings offer opportunities for parents to share their views. However, only very few

parents have attended recently. The school also has a Friends' Association, which holds social events for pupils, their parents and the wider community. Although this association has only a few active committee members, it is successful in raising funds for extra activities, books and equipment. Relationships with the immediate community are positive. The town's community association lends support and pupils make several local visits and take part on a float in the annual Portchester gala.

37. Close links are maintained with the school's own on-site pre-school class, which provides a strong link with parents of future pupils and the wider community. Children from this group visit the school regularly, which helps them to begin smoothly in the Reception class, as they are already familiar with some of the routines. Another good link of this kind is provided in a voluntary group that provides extended care beyond school hours. This school-initiated enterprise provides employment for seven people and has 51 children on roll. Staff from the school also visit other playgroups and offer to visit enrolled children's homes before they begin school. Because of this, the school knows a great deal about many of its children before they arrive. Partnerships with other schools are good. Teachers from Red Barn take an active part in the *Portchester Partnership*, a group that brings together teachers in a number of local schools, so that they can swap ideas of good practice and expertise. Senior staff have also made good use of a neighbouring beacon school, which has been a useful source of information about a range of organisational issues. A link has also been established with a school in Scotland and with another in Canada. The latter has been a useful partner in the use of material related to the United Nations' Children's Charter. Another useful link is with a local secondary school, supporting the transfer of pupils with opportunities for them to visit and gain insights into the next stage of education. Staff from the secondary school return these visits to pupils while they are still at Red Barn.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Good leadership on the part of the headteacher has brought the school effectively through a difficult period of high staff turnover, and the new senior management team are working well together. Management is satisfactory, although elements of some policies are not consistently practised. Governors carry out their role successfully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of the senior management team share a strong vision for future developments.
- Owing to instability of staffing and changes in senior management, improvement since the last inspection has been slower than it might otherwise have been.
- The school's planning of improvement is detailed and manageable, including policies to promote good behaviour and educational inclusion.
- The amount and uses of monitoring and assessment to plan what is taught and to make further improvements vary from subject to subject.
- The whole staff, including senior managers, are good role models of co-operation and fairness for pupils.
- Governors support the staff well and are good at checking the accuracy of finances and that statutory responsibilities are met.

Commentary

38. The headteacher has led the school well through a period of considerable staffing change since the last inspection, six years ago. He has recently appointed a committed senior staff that work together well for the good of pupils. Governors were included well in decisions to offer promoted posts to attract such staff in an attempt to reduce the impact of staffing turnover. The headteacher and governors identified that this turbulence was slowing down progress, affecting the school's rate of improvement since its previous inspection. For example, the quality of teaching and learning dropped for a time and adversely affected

standards of behaviour. Both the local authority's and the school's own monitoring indicated that elements of unsatisfactory practice – a rarity at the last inspection – were beginning to occur. Although measures were taken to deal with such practice, these took time to become effective and slowed the rate of improvement. Nevertheless, teaching and learning are now of good quality again. To address issues in the last report, new systems for assessing pupils' progress and for raising the impact and performance of subject co-ordination were introduced. However, staff changes resulted in inconsistency of practice, reducing the usefulness of such developments. Current evidence is that this situation is now being corrected. Considerable improvement in the provision for information and communication technology has been made. Nonetheless, a legacy of inconsistency in applying systems and policies still exists, although overall improvement is satisfactory. Trends in National Curriculum test results, for example, indicate that pupils' attainment has generally kept pace with national improvement by the time they leave the school in Year 6. Furthermore, indications are that the school's strategy to increase staffing stability is beginning to take effect. The movement of staff expected at the end of this year is lower than for some time. The present staff are committed to raising standards and have united well behind the senior management team.

39. With the support of the governing body, the school is now moving forward with a clear vision that involves improvements in standards and closer ties with parents. The promotion of strategies to include pupils of different backgrounds and needs, with a wide range of identified special educational needs including several pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, is good. These initiatives help to ensure both social and educational inclusion. For example, the school has developed a strongly inclusive behaviour policy, which includes a powerful definition of fairness. This emphasis means that pupils who make small steps in improving their attitudes and behaviour are rewarded effectively, alongside others whose standards are high. Although a few parents expressed concern about elements of this policy, feeling that it sometimes appears to reward poor behaviour, inspectors found it was laudable and effective. Pupils who were asked understood fully why some pupils receive awards, even though their actual standard of behaviour might not be at the same level as their own. These pupils also felt that all pupils are generally treated fairly. Another good feature of this policy is that parents were consulted about it and a behaviour forum has remained open to them to make their present views known. Behaviour and attitudes in the school have returned to the good standards that were observed in 1998 and several examples of very good behaviour were seen in lessons.
40. Planning for improvement is both detailed and manageable. By producing documents for different levels of management, including a five-year plan, strategic plans and related action plans for co-ordinators, responsibilities for carrying out decisions remain clear at each level, without the documents being too bulky to be useful. However, not all co-ordinators have been in the school for long enough to have monitored their subject effectively. As a result, the knowledge of strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum is inconsistent and, in subjects where it is weaker, insufficiently advanced to correct all shortcomings. This weakness has a particular impact on aspects of curricular planning. In religious education, for example, weekly planning is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that pupils in Year 4 always study what is laid down in the long-term plan for the subject. Nevertheless, senior staff are aware of such deficiencies and related issues. They are currently establishing new routines to check, monitor and develop appropriately what is taught in those subjects that have not recently been reviewed.
41. The headteacher and governors have been successful in recruiting teachers who are good practitioners; they are supporting each other well. Training in literacy and numeracy has been focused well, with a particular emphasis on how to use groups of pupils to teach and encourage skills in reading. This work has been successful, as pupils' attainment has improved well in this aspect. Teachers are working well together with good teamwork in the

different stages of education and across the school. As a result, they provide good role models

for pupils, setting examples of good co-operation and collaboration for them to emulate. This feature helps pupils to understand the importance of good attitudes towards others.

42. The management of finances is satisfactory and governors support this aspect of the school's management well. They understand the importance of ensuring that funds are used to make purchases and to finance features of the school that will support improved standards. Optimism that such improvement can be made is high and governors use and support the principles of best value. For example, they realised that the appointments of key stage co-ordinators on promoted posts would be costly in terms of the budget, but would be likely to create a basis for more stability in staffing and, as a result, would be a force towards raising standards. As a result, good value for the extra expenditure would be achieved.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	488,983
Total expenditure	480,958
Expenditure per pupil	3,044

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	14,665
Balance carried forward to the next	22,690

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Four-year-olds are admitted to the Reception class each September. At the time of inspection, 18 children were in the Reception class. Most of these children had pre-school experience in the school's own, on-site provision. In most years, overall attainment on entry to the Reception class is below what is normally found, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development. However, the range is quite broad, including a few children with high attainment and rather more of below average attainment.

Children, parents and carers are introduced to the school well and children are given opportunities to visit frequently before they begin. Good links have been forged with parents, who feel welcome in the Reception class and consider that they receive good information. Parents and staff work in partnership to improve children's learning.

By the time they reach Year 1, nearly all children make good progress and achieve satisfactorily, based on good teaching, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. Despite good teaching and progress, although children attain many of the goals for the age group in the areas of creative and physical development, several do not do so in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children with special educational needs receive good support to enhance their progress. The Reception class teacher has a good understanding of how young children learn, and works together effectively with the classroom assistant.

What is taught is carefully based on the requirements of *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* (a nationally produced document that explains what should be taught in Nursery and Reception classes) and uses adapted literacy and numeracy strategies that prepare children well for what they will meet in Year 1. Children are provided with a wide range of interesting activities. However, the outdoor play area is relatively small and limits opportunities to organise outdoor experiences in all areas of learning together. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff are fully aware of the principles that underpin good early years practice. A rigorous means of monitoring children's progress has been devised. The information gained is suitably used to plan work that builds on what children have achieved already.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop good relationships with each other and with adults.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Children's attitudes and behaviour are good.
- Children are given good opportunities to use their initiative and develop their independence.

Commentary

43. Several children enter school with immature personal and social skills, although a few are very mature. As a result of skilful teaching, children settle down quickly and feel happy and secure. The staff create a supportive atmosphere where each child feels very special. Nearly all of them respond well to this climate and soon become attentive and eager to learn. Children know routines well, settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss and behave sensibly. Clear boundaries and good role models are set by the adults. Children of different backgrounds work and play in harmony and show developing confidence in trying new activities. They are

purposefully engaged and show consideration and respect for property and each other. Children enjoy coming to school and take pride in their achievements. They are excited by stickers and stars that they receive for trying hard and succeeding, which boosts their self-esteem.

44. A good range of activities is planned to ensure that curiosity is stimulated. Children are given every opportunity to develop their initiative and to manage tasks for themselves. They select activities and work on them for good lengths of time. Their play and responses are supported and extended sensitively through good questioning. Children are skilfully managed and purposefully occupied. As a direct result of this generally good provision, nearly all of them are likely to reach the expected goals for their age by the end of the Reception Year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have plenty of opportunities to develop their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.
- Children achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of the good teaching of basic skills.
- Teachers talk to children with respect, encouraging them to express themselves.
- Many children display speaking skills that do not reach the expected goals.
- A good home reading system is very well established.

Commentary

45. On admission to Reception, most children have skills below those usually found, especially in speaking. All children make good gains in learning because they are taught well and have access to a variety of well resourced activities. The well-planned curriculum provides interest, stimulation and challenge. The staff show that they value children's efforts in language and literacy. Children talk about their experiences when encouraged to do so and develop new vocabulary in many aspects. For example, they engaged well in dressing up and role-playing the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* in the class's *Bears' House*. Role play, puppets, "props" and pictures are used well to stimulate imagination. Constant encouragement to do well in all 'stepping stones' in this area of learning ensures that all children achieve well. Nevertheless, owing to the relatively high proportion that begin from a low starting point, several children are unlikely to attain the expected goals. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is therefore likely to be below average overall.
46. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is good. Good planning ensures that most children in the class gain satisfactory control in developing early writing skills and achieve well in comparison with their starting point. They draw and paint letters with increasing control and a few higher attaining children write meaningful short sentences. Most children write their own name unaided and copy simple sentences accurately. Very good progress is made when adults work in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. All adults use talk to good effect and are good listeners, offering facial cues and expressions that encourage speaking. However, while a few children are very articulate, speaking with clarity and conviction, many others have weaknesses in this aspect, despite the good provision. These lower attainers are often hesitant and are indistinct in their formation of words.
47. Children handle books carefully and know that print runs from left to right and down the page. Many children associate sounds with letters and recognise a few familiar words. All of them are encouraged to take books home and to share them with adults. Teachers effectively familiarise children with written vocabulary through stimulating activities to focus on key words. Modified literacy lessons to suit the young age group effectively promote the development of

early reading, writing and spelling. The class teacher and the assistant make continuous assessments of children's progress and have a good understanding of individual strengths and weaknesses.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are sound opportunities for children to use mathematics in a range of contexts.
- Children learn well owing to good teaching.
- Children have good attitudes to mathematical work.

Commentary

48. Children start with standards in mathematical development that are below what is usually found overall, although a few are already attaining well. The quality of teaching is good in this area, based on good knowledge of young children's needs and good provision of activities to stimulate counting and to develop interest in shapes, sorting and matching. As a result, nearly all children make good progress. More are likely to attain the expected goals in this area than in communication, language and literacy, although, overall, attainment is still likely to be below average.
49. Resources are used very well, which helps children to develop their mathematical understanding and to ask questions. Mathematical vocabulary is thus taught well. The teacher plans activities carefully and uses a good range of teaching methods to make learning interesting. For instance, sorting socks of different lengths and other items of clothing, according to whether they are large, medium or small, develops early mathematical ideas and vocabulary. Most children count reliably to 10 and are beginning to understand 'more than/less than' the given number. Number rhymes, games and songs are enjoyed by all and used well to reinforce counting, recognition and understanding of numbers. Children are encouraged to apply what they know to practical problems and a few have begun to record simple additions up to five. Children recognise basic shapes well and gain knowledge of capacity and weight from practical experiences with sand and water. Some more able children describe objects by position, shape, size and colour. In a good lesson, children learnt positional language, including 'behind', 'in front of', 'next to', and so on. Children enjoy working with large and small construction equipment, such as Mobilo, Lego and jigsaws. There is effective adult involvement in children's activities and useful timely assessments made of individuals' progress.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are keen and eager to find out about the world around them.
- Good teaching ensures that children achieve well and have good attitudes to learning.
- The teaching assistant provides good quality, valuable support in lessons.
- Resources are used very well to broaden children's knowledge and understanding.
- Little use is made of the outdoor space to enhance children's learning.

Commentary

50. Many children begin in the Reception class with a comparatively low general knowledge. As a result, despite good teaching and overall provision, overall attainment at the end of the year is likely to be below what is typically found. A sizeable group of children is unlikely to attain the expected goals for the age group by the end of the year, although several others will. The present Reception class also contains a few who will reach the goals easily. This standard represents good achievement compared with starting points. During the inspection, activities such as making salt-dough and taking a group of children round the school to observe and record features were well led by the teaching assistant. Her skills in keeping children well focused on developing their knowledge and understanding, and her use of related vocabulary were of good quality. The children showed interest in their environment and enjoyed learning about it. They remained totally absorbed in the range of planned activities, talking, for example, about "Travelling Ted" and his journeys to other countries and places. A topic about the senses has been developed well to enhance children's understanding of materials and living things. The children have recently planted some seeds and talked about what plants need in order to grow. The outdoor area, however, does not have a lot of space to use for a wide variety of growing and natural things, alongside its uses in other areas of learning, such as creative and physical development.
51. Good adult interventions in activities and encouragement of children's ideas are used to support learning effectively. This intervention focuses on anything that the children do which indicates curiosity and interest in further exploration and finding out. Opportunities to experience work with sand, water and malleable materials are frequently provided. Computers are also used well and children receive a good level of individual support to help them acquire skills satisfactorily. Pupils also design and make objects and models using a variety of materials, including card, recycled articles and textiles.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are well co-ordinated.
- Children handle tools with care, using them correctly.
- Outdoor play space is small and not well developed, which limits the range of activities that can be planned.

Commentary

52. Children are on course to reach many of the goals expected at the end of the year. They are confident and well co-ordinated in the use of equipment. Children have limited opportunities to develop their skills in the outdoor play area, although they love to act out stories and, when playing outside, choose games that suit the space and context. They have good attitudes and behave safely and sensibly. However, space is at a premium, preventing large rolling toys and similar equipment from being fully used. This deficiency is recognised and, at least partly, ameliorated by the regular, timetabled use of the school's hall. Children have regular opportunities, therefore, for movement, including the use of music and floor apparatus. In a good lesson, children were effectively taught skills of jumping and landing safely, as well as using ropes with appropriate control. Children move about imaginatively, demonstrating developing body control and awareness of space. Children enjoy these physical education lessons and clearly respond very positively to the praise and encouragement that they are given. The teacher ensures that good opportunities are provided for children to repeat and practise what they have learned, helping them to acquire techniques securely. All children make good progress in manipulating small objects and tools such as scissors.

53. Hand and eye co-ordination are developed satisfactorily with many uses of small tools such as scissors, scrapers, pencils and so on. Children are shown how to use such items correctly and make sound progress through the nationally required stepping stones towards the goals expected.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children work in a well-ordered environment in which creativity and expressiveness are valued.
- Children are provided with quality resources and make good gains in learning.
- Adults provide plenty of opportunities for children to develop their creative skills.
- Children have positive attitudes to learning because they feel confident in expressing themselves creatively.

Commentary

54. By the end of the Reception Year a clear majority of children are likely to achieve the expected goals and to achieve satisfactorily overall. Nearly all the children are able to use a range of materials and media to produce attractive and interesting creative work. Teaching and learning are sound, which is producing the expected progress towards the goals for the age group. During the inspection, children particularly enjoyed their role-play in well set-up corners that stimulated their imagination. For example, they were observed playing different roles in the *Café Corner*. They acted out scenes together, such as *The Teddy Bears' Picnic*, displaying confidence and co-operating with each other's ideas. Children are given opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form, creating paintings, patterns and three-dimensional collage, such as their *Chinese New Year Dragon*. Children are also adequately introduced to musical skills. They sing enthusiastically and work with total involvement when using musical instruments and investigating the best way to play them.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good across the school and pupils are currently learning and progressing well in lessons.
- Pupils' good attitudes contribute well to their good learning in lessons.
- Standards in speaking and writing are below average.
- Standards in reading are improving well and are beginning to close in on those expected.
- Library provision is good.
- The presentation of written work and the quality of pupils' handwriting and spelling are inconsistent.

Commentary

55. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils enjoy reading and have a good attitude to what is taught in lessons. As a result, they are currently progressing well. Nevertheless, standards are usually below average. Differences were observed in different elements of the subject. Standards in reading, for example, are improving quickly and are close to average overall in many classes. However, speaking and writing are below average.

Overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory compared with their knowledge and understanding when they began the National Curriculum. This achievement and rate of progress over time does not match the good quality of teaching and learning observed currently. The most likely reason is that, in the past, teaching was not always as good as it is now.

56. Pupils are good listeners, and teachers ensure that classes are well managed, so that all pupils can concentrate well on what is being taught. Pupils provide others with a sympathetic audience and take turns to speak and listen well. They understand the importance of focusing on and listening to speakers carefully. However, the inspection report of 1998 identified speaking as a weakness, although it did not include it as a key issue for improvement. Speaking remains a weakness now. Currently, while a few pupils throughout the school are very articulate for their age, a significant proportion use a restricted vocabulary and express themselves rather hesitantly. This group of pupils often give the impression of trying to seek a word that they do not know. A few pupils are also unclear in their diction, often speaking too quietly and indistinctly. Often, when such situations occur, they pass without comment or correction. For example, a pupil's comment, "He's took the 'C' off and it's like he put a 'K'," was commended as just what the teacher wanted (the answer had indeed addressed the teacher's specific question accurately). However, no reference was made to the colloquial form of the reply and the opportunity to focus on the suitability of a more standard form of spoken English was missed.
57. Standards in reading are improving and are now close to average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils heard to read from both age groups read satisfactorily. The school has good resources for teaching reading, with a wide variety of books, which are arranged in order of difficulty, clearly marked with coloured stickers, and easily accessible to pupils. A strong focus on the teaching of reading, including approaches to guided reading, has had a positive effect on increasing teachers' expertise and thereby raising standards. Weekly lessons in the library are timetabled for all classes. Many pupils show good knowledge of library usage, and can find information well, which is further evidence of good teaching methods that result in good outcomes. Older pupils are allowed to work independently in the library to retrieve information for themselves. Year 2 pupils use phonic and picture cues to identify new words. Higher-attaining pupils especially recognise and correct their own errors, because they realise when what they have read does not make sense. Nearly all pupils explain differences between fiction and non-fiction. By Year 6, nearly all pupils build new words confidently, sounding out different syllables in long words that are new to them. For example, an otherwise below average attainer built the word "partition" very competently in this way, correctly using his knowledge of phonics. Pupils understand the terms "glossary", "index" and "blurb". Several higher-attaining pupils read challenging text fluently and with reasonable understanding. They also know how to scan factual text quickly to find a place that is likely to give the detailed information that they want to read more carefully. Reading-record journals are provided in younger classes to write down comments from pupils, parents and teachers. They also offer a useful record of what pupils read and whether its level of difficulty is appropriate. All classrooms have their own stock of books.
58. Teaching assistants support reading well, often working with pupils with special educational needs. They keep them on task and prompt them to use strategies to decode words patiently and skilfully. These assistants are often well trained and also use their skills to assist with writing. Teaching of literacy skills is good in the *Dragon Club* and, as a result, pupils with special needs, including those with statements, make generally good progress in this context, which includes their written work.
59. Standards of writing are only a little below average at the end of Year 2, which is an indication of the improving rate of progress that is currently resulting from good teaching. It is, however, more clearly below average at the end of Year 6. At this age, not enough pupils are attaining at a level higher than that normally expected to push overall standards up to the national average. Nevertheless, current teaching in Year 6 is consistently good, leading to good learning and

rising attainment. Throughout the school, the challenge to higher-attaining pupils to write more and to be more adventurous and flexible in their use of vocabulary is inconsistent. By Year 6, although some pupils set out their work very neatly and use well developed, legible handwriting, several others are less careful. Examples of unjoined handwriting were observed, which is below average for this age group. Spelling standards also vary widely. Owing to a relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, who tend to struggle with this aspect, overall attainment is below average. In Year 2, in both handwriting and spelling, standards are improving rapidly. Nearly all pupils write carefully and are able to use their knowledge of phonics to spell unfamiliar words recognisably and many pupils spell words of single syllables and those that are familiar to them with reasonable accuracy.

60. During the inspection, the overall quality of teaching and learning in lessons was good overall. Literacy Hours are used well. However, the points of lessons are not always shared with pupils at the beginning, which restricts their insights into the effectiveness of their own learning. In nearly all of the good lessons, teachers used effective questioning to lead pupils' understanding and to make them think. On one or two occasions, opportunities were provided for pupils to develop speaking skills by discussing their ideas with partners. Owing to their weaknesses in speaking, however, this type of activity is not used as frequently as it would otherwise be.
61. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The rates of progress of boys and girls have been analysed and compared, which is particularly good practice in the context of gender imbalance in many of the school's classes. The results indicate that the respective rates vary in different year groups, with sometimes boys doing better and sometimes girls. The number of pupils with special educational needs appears to be more significant in affecting progress, so it is unlikely that teaching contains any significant gender biases or inequality. The co-ordinator has monitored work, planning and teaching, and analysed national data and other tests to find and target areas of weakness. A good action plan has been developed to improve the subject further. A good balance of information and examples of pupils' own written work is apparent in displays around the school and poetry features strongly. A drama studio and an attractive, prominent library help provide good accommodation for the subject, although the studio was not observed in use for English during the inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Information and communication technology is used in all classes for word-processing, to import illustrations, and to make lists and labels. However, examples of imprecise uses of vocabulary and colloquial forms of spoken English, when a standard form was more appropriate, occurred on several occasions in a range of classes in lessons across the curriculum. Occasions also arose when teachers themselves were not good role models in this respect. Confusions of plural nouns with singular verbs and similar grammatical errors were occasionally observed. Opportunities to encourage pupils to project their voices in assemblies were also sometimes missed and vocabulary is not always targeted in lessons in other subjects across the curriculum. For example, in geography lessons, word lists were not available on pupils' tables and, although some classrooms had such lists on display, attention was drawn to them infrequently. In religious education, opportunities to use expressive writing about responses to religious artefacts or matters of spirituality are missed. In other subjects, the use of worksheets sometimes prevents pupils from using their own words in the presentation of factual writing or empathetic writing in, for example, history.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are nearly always good, including examples of very good teaching.
- The rate of pupils' progress is currently good and overall achievement is beginning to improve.
- Overall attainment is below average, although it is getting close to average in Years 1, 2 and 3.
- Management and co-ordination of the subject are good.

Commentary

63. Currently, pupils' overall achievements are satisfactory. While attainment is below average, so is attainment on entry to the school and the school's systems for tracking and monitoring progress clearly indicate that, over the years, nearly all pupils have made progress at normally expected rates. However, this overall satisfactory achievement does not match the current generally good quality of teaching and learning that was observed during the inspection. Lessons that were of very good quality were also seen and outnumbered those that were satisfactory.
64. Overall, teaching and learning are good because teachers know and use the National Numeracy Strategy well. As a result, planning is effective and good adaptations of what is taught match the needs of pupils of different prior attainments. Lessons are interesting and pupils respond accordingly, paying attention and learning effectively. In the examples of very good teaching, all these elements were present with an even stronger emphasis on the use of ongoing assessment. In a very good lesson in Year 3, the teacher constantly asked pupils questions about their own learning. A typical exchange resulted in pacy teaching about mental arithmetic. It went: "Did you do that in your head or put it on your whiteboard?" – "On the whiteboard." – "All right..." (to another pupil) "... you did it in your head, so tell this group what you did to get there." As a result, progress was tangible in a very short time. The most likely reason that good teaching is not matched with good overall achievements is that many teachers are new to the school, so their teaching has not had enough time to impact fully on pupils' learning. Evidence to support this view is apparent from some very good understanding by pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3. In these classes, the proportions who are beginning to attain at levels higher than those normally expected are beginning to increase. As pupils in these classes have spent less time in the school, the consequent impact on them of past inconsistencies in teaching (probably due to high rates of mobility of staff) will have been less. The impact of current good teaching is therefore correspondingly greater. As these pupils move on, overall achievement is likely to rise, as this better attainment is built on.
65. Despite their improving achievements, pupils' overall attainment remains below average towards the end of Years 2 and 6. Another reason, apart from the previous inconsistent teaching, is that in both these age groups a relatively high proportion of pupils have identifiable special educational needs that impact on learning. Understandably, the attainment of these pupils is lower than that normally expected of the relevant ages. The effect is that standards overall are lower than they might otherwise be. Nevertheless, in Year 2 especially, several higher-attaining pupils demonstrate very secure understanding of place value. They are also competent with calculations using all four mathematical operations with numbers up to 100 and beyond. In another very good lesson observed, these pupils were also very adept at sorting and naming two-dimensional shapes, even when irregular, by referring to mathematical properties. Arrangements for average attainers and those of previously lower attainment, including those with special needs, were also very well planned. For example, a lower-attaining group was taken outside, where they were well supervised by a learning support assistant. In and around the playground, pupils used their knowledge to recognise and record different shapes in the environment. Pupils in Year 6 also progressed well in a good lesson. Higher-attaining pupils received opportunities to think for themselves, creating a simple database of

their own, and deciding its range and mode. Different tasks, adapted to pupils' different levels of understanding, were also available. As a result, both average and lower-attaining pupils were enabled to make good progress and to gain understanding of required mathematical terminology. Such well planned tasks ensure that pupils are challenged, so their attention is gripped and they work busily. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are consequently also good. Records indicate that about a quarter of pupils in this year group have special educational needs. These records also show that, while their progress matches that of other pupils in the class, their attainment begins from a lower base and therefore outcomes are also likely to be lower. Samples of pupils' work show that standards in number, shape and space and investigative mathematics are similar to those in lessons.

66. Co-ordination of mathematics is currently good. Records and procedures to assess and track progress are used well to set targets for each subsequent year group. The co-ordinator's action plan contains good ideas to continue raising pupils' achievements and to ensure that the present quality of teaching and learning is maintained. Audits of resources have been successful in ensuring that funding is wisely spent on necessary items to support teaching and the acquisition of skills through the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Opportunities to use mathematics as part of learning in other subjects are taken as and when they occur. In work around the school, graphs, tables and charts provide evidence that pupils' mathematical skills are used effectively in information and communication technology and in science to display results and record outcomes appropriately. In displays of pupils' art and design, shapes and patterns are frequently evident.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Recently, subject management and co-ordination has begun to identify weaknesses and to plan effective remedies.
- There is a lack of rigour in approaching assessment of teaching and learning.
- Teachers do not consistently challenge the more able pupils.
- There is insufficient emphasis on investigations in science.
- Standards are below expectations in both Key Stages 1 and 2.

Commentary

67. Achievement is satisfactory overall. However, current progress in lessons is also satisfactory, unlike in English and mathematics, in which it is good. This difference is occurring because the overall quality of teaching and learning, while satisfactory, are not as good as in the other two core subjects. Standards in the subject are below average for pupils in Year 2 and by the time pupils leave in Year 6. Nevertheless, standards and pupils' achievements are well placed to improve, owing to more stability in staffing and identification of weaknesses in provision that are being addressed through careful action planning. A new subject co-ordinator is very keen to make an impact. Measures to initiate improvement include the setting of targets for individual pupils, based on clear analysis of results, and a greater focus on experimental and investigative science. Resources have recently been updated and organised centrally for ease of access in readiness for this more innovative approach. All teachers are good at making sure that pupils' attitudes to work are good and this aspect is no different in science. Teaching already focuses effectively on pupils' learning of scientific facts and information, including the correct subject vocabulary. However, because teachers have tended to plan separately, some inconsistency in methods and the quality of teaching has occurred and, to some extent, still does where confidence and knowledge of the subject are weaker. On these occasions,

teaching is less effective, usually because topics are not studied in sufficient depth from an observational, experimental and investigative perspective. However, these shortcomings have been identified and the co-ordinator has good ideas for addressing them.

68. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although it varied considerably between good teaching and unsatisfactory teaching. For example, it was good in Year 6, where pupils were seen working on light, making their own observations and trying to generalise ideas and findings of their own from what they saw. This type of activity exactly addressed weaknesses in these pupils' skills. Pupils were very excited by their experiences. It was clear, however, that gaps in past learning were causing difficulties for them in presenting their results. Their teacher had recognised the deficiency and was providing much input to improve pupils' performances. Samples of work and lessons support this finding, which also matches the subject co-ordinator's view, indicating below average attainment. However, pupils are progressing well in Year 6, with the support of consistently good teaching. Although strengths are apparent in teaching in other classes, weaknesses are also evident. For example, pupils do not consistently receive guidance on how to carry out observations and experiments systematically. The outcome is that skills are limited in seeking patterns in experiments and making sense of them, so pupils' skills in producing scientific reports is adversely affected. The overuse of commercially produced worksheets is apparent in many situations, which reduces pupils' opportunities to take responsibility for learning. For example, while these resources contained accurate scientific information, from which pupils acquired elements of factual knowledge, they did little to support pupils' research or to teach approaches to scientific reporting that are systematic, yet sufficiently flexible to use in a range of experimental situations. In an unsatisfactory lesson, such weaknesses were compounded when pupils were kept for far too long on the mundane task of drawing and colouring a title.
69. The work of pupils with special educational needs is affected in much the same ways as that of other pupils, although they do receive adequate focused support from teachers and teaching assistants. This support ensures that they remain on task and generally complete what they are asked to do successfully. Similarly, higher-attaining pupils are not consistently challenged at levels appropriate to their abilities as, in science, work is not as well adapted to the requirements of different groups as it is in the other core subjects. Nevertheless, teachers are good at inspiring all pupils to work hard and they strive to achieve this end, often succeeding through challenging questions in discussions. Teachers place high demands on pupils to work hard and pupils respond well. They have good attitudes to the subject, particularly when they are questioned and engaged in offering their ideas. Such responses were, for example, notable in Year 4 in a lesson that was generally satisfactory. Pupils took part in a scientific investigation and were challenged effectively to complete a circuit with a switch. Pupils concentrated well during discussions, explanations and instructions. However, they found it quite hard to work independently on the investigative task itself, acting in ways that suggested little past experience in working this way. This lack of experience slowed the pace of teaching and thereby the rate of learning. Nevertheless, the teacher was correct to persevere with her plan for the lesson, as it provided just the sort of practice that pupils require, filling such gaps.
70. The subject co-ordinator, although very new, has quickly established a strong vision for the future direction of the subject. The need for more focused evaluation of lessons and support of teaching has been recognised, in order to further improve and share good practice, especially in the area of observational and experimental work. A need to improve the consistency of assessment arrangements has also been identified, in order to enable the same rate of progress as in English and mathematics.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements have been made in resources, planning and teachers' expertise since the last inspection.
- During the inspection, classroom computers were not used enough in lessons.
- The quality of teaching and learning that was observed is good.
- Pupils often achieve well in the computer suite, although they do not use their skills enough to support their work in subjects across the curriculum.
- Good subject co-ordination provides a good vision and direction for further improvements in provision.

Commentary

71. Considerable amounts of work are displayed in the school, involving the teaching of skills in all elements of the subject. It indicates sound rates of progress as pupils move up the school. This progress is stemming from recent improvements in resources, including the conversion of a space adjacent to classrooms into a computer suite. Most of the displayed work appears to be generated in this suite, so it has clearly been a good development of available accommodation.
72. Pupils' skills are developed well as they grow older. Planning and good co-ordination have ensured that teachers' expertise is sufficient to build on what has previously been taught and that adequate programs and software are available to support learning. All pupils are included well in these arrangements and, in the school's Dragon Club, further programs are available and used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs. However, during the inspection, computers in classrooms were not used often enough to support work in other subjects. This shortcoming reduces opportunities for pupils to practise the skills that they acquire. The subject co-ordinator is aware of such issues and has good ideas to rectify them. The main barrier is that several classroom computers are ageing and unreliable. Nevertheless, the involvement of a parent with expertise is helping to ameliorate the difficulty.
73. The quality of teaching and learning that was directly observed in lessons is good. It is based on good planning and good use of available resources, support staff and accommodation. Teachers often split their classes into two groups, so that teaching can focus on a smaller number. For example, as one class worked on information technology, pupils from a room adjacent to the suite were outside in a physical education lesson. The empty room was used well by the other half of the information technology class, so they were near to their teacher while working on a different, but related activity. This type of organisation is working well, as nearly all pupils are currently making good progress in the suite. Nevertheless, as is the case in the main core subjects, this present good rate of progress is not matched over time.
74. What was seen in lessons in the suite and what pupils in Year 6 were able to recall of their work indicate that overall standards are a little below average at the end of both stages, largely because skills are not sufficiently applied to general work and activities in lessons around the school and partly because progress was not as good in the past as it is now. Nevertheless, in the computer suite, pupils' achievements are nearly always satisfactory and often good. In a good lesson in Year 1, for example, pupils used TextEase to type and set out a range of questions about the seaside. The teacher's instructions about how to access the program and to use its various applications were clear and effective. As a result, nearly all pupils were able to use menus and toolbars to click buttons on and off, thereby controlling the program well. By the end of Year 2, pupils are confident in their control of programs, demonstrating willingness to experiment with buttons to achieve the effects that they desire. In another good lesson in the suite, for example, pupils in this age group used drawing tools within a version of Word to

create images based on Matisse's *The Snail*. Following their teacher's clear demonstration, nearly all pupils accessed the application themselves and experimented to good effect. As they move on through older age groups, pupils use the computer suite to acquire skills in Excel, learn to design presentations in PowerPoint, and frequently use CD-ROMs and the Internet to download information. For example, pupils in Year 6 explained accurately how they could find help for topics in geography and history.

75. Co-ordination of the subject has been good since September at least. A new co-ordinator acted quickly to attract technical support to rectify problems with both hardware and software. Her role has now moved on well from "trouble-shooting" to developmental and improvement work, including the development of a new website that is nearly ready. Clear action planning has ensured full entitlement to the curriculum for all pupils and initial monitoring is indicating that standards in younger age groups are now progressing rapidly. Another good feature is the use of the Kingswood Centre during a residential school journey to the Isle of Wight. Pupils in Year 6 were very excited about what they had learnt while on this trip. Skills involving control technology and finding solutions to problems with the help of modelling techniques had clearly been focused well. These pupils explained how a wide range of new technologies involving animation and photography had been explored and demonstrated very good recall of what they had done.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is hampered by ageing equipment in some classrooms. During the inspection, little use was made of such machines. However, work on display indicates that pupils use computers to support writing when they word process stories and use programs effectively to produce titles and labels for displays in other subjects. In Year 2, computers were seen in use supporting work in art and design. Programs that generate charts and graphs are also used well to support work in mathematics, although such applications were less apparent in science.

HUMANITIES

Only two lessons were seen in geography and none in history, so overall judgements of provision have not been made in these subjects. It has been possible, however, to provide overall judgements in religious education.

History and geography

77. What analysis of pupils' work that was possible indicates that lessons in history and geography do not provide sufficient links with language development and literacy to make a strong impact on pupils' speaking and writing skills. For example, much written work was fairly brief and lacked developed arguments about, for example, the possible motives of different people and commentators living in the past and thereby the veracity of historical evidence. However, good links with art and design were observed in well displayed representations of *The Great Fire of London* and work on mosaics that supported a topic on Roman England.
78. In the two observed lessons, pupils showed positive attitudes to geography, especially so in Year 6, and acquired good factual knowledge. Teaching in the Year 6 lesson was of good quality throughout. Pupils learnt well about many features of rivers. Good use of resources and enthusiastic teaching helped pupils to represent a river in the playground and to mark its different stages as they developed their work. In the lesson in Year 4, teaching and learning were satisfactory. Pupils responded to questioning rather hesitantly, which slowed the pace of the teaching. Short, rather colloquial, responses were not always pointed out or alternative answers modelled for pupils. As a result, opportunities to improve vocabulary and to improve speaking skills were missed. Nevertheless, organisation and management of pupils were good features.

79. Action plans for both subjects indicate that appropriate improvements are being formulated. What is taught is based on national guidance and satisfactory resources, including books and artefacts, are available to support learning.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their writing skills.
- What is taught in Year 4 does not currently match the school's long-term plan for the subject.
- The new subject co-ordinator has a good grasp of how to take the subject forward.
- The school has good links with the local church.
- Assemblies are used well to support the subject.

Commentary

80. Pupils' knowledge and understanding at the end of Years 2 and 6 is average overall, although, across the school as a whole, insufficient emphasis is placed on writing. As a result, opportunities to write expressively about religious leaders, saints and what their beliefs might mean to members of different faith communities are missed. Similarly, while specific vocabulary for the subject was observed being taught well, opportunities to correct errors in general language were just as often missed, except in one very good lesson. That said, pupils' overall achievements, including those of pupils with special educational needs, are satisfactory, except in Year 4, where they are unsatisfactory. The main reason for weakness in this year is that elements of what should be taught are missed. The school's long-term curricular planning indicates that certain topics should arise at this age. However, samples of work and discussions with teachers indicate that many of the planned topics have not been taught and so do not follow smoothly and continuously from what has gone before. It is understood that the school's present arrangements for planning religious education in Year 4 have not occurred in previous years and will not do so again. The local authority is on the point of publishing a new locally agreed syllabus, so a review of what is taught in the subject is anyway imminent. Furthermore, a newly appointed subject co-ordinator has already begun much good work, following the formation of an action plan. She has already met the local adviser and, based on information from this meeting, has written a new policy and scheme of work. However, this policy will not apply until the new syllabus is published and in place.
81. The overall quality of teaching and learning seen was satisfactory, although it ranged from satisfactory lessons to one that was very good. This very good teaching was very well planned with the needs of pupils of three different levels of prior attainment well considered. Pupils were excited, stimulated and well engaged in the lesson, which made innovative use of role play and drama to reinforce learning of the Hindu story of Prahlad and Vishnu. Carefully planned written tasks involved answering questions in sentences to enable pupils' understanding to be assessed. Specific vocabulary was targeted, and many opportunities were taken to improve pupils' grammar and awareness of vocabulary. These aspects are an element that were often missed in other subjects and lessons that were observed. Pupils were told what they would be expected to learn by the end of the lesson, methods were displayed and discussed at the outset and learning was reinforced in a session at the end, in which pupils performed their playlets, promoting good discussion and development of speaking skills. The teacher used effective, open-ended questions, insisting that pupils make well considered answers in full sentences. This very good practice is an exemplary model of the type of teaching that improves pupils' speaking skills across the whole curriculum. Pupils were also very well managed with, for example, effective use of music to signal their movement to the carpet. In a Year 1 lesson the teacher made good use of her support staff to divide the class into two

groups; one of these groups used written work and the other used art work when describing Christian ideas of creation.

82. The local parish church of St Mary provides a useful partnership, and members of the congregation support the school well. During the inspection, for example, they presented a dramatic rendering of *Jesus and the Five Thousand*, which also involved pupils in role play. This type of provision promotes effective learning across the whole school. Year 5 pupils have a planned visit to the church as part of their studies. The use of visits and visitors to support other faiths, however, is less well developed.
83. Currently no monitoring of teaching or planning is taking place, and no assessment procedures are in use to track the effectiveness of pupils' learning. In these respects, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. However, a new co-ordinator has already identified these and other weaknesses, and the potential for future improvement is now good, owing to her strong vision of the future direction of developments. Procedures for managing provision are simply satisfactory at present, as these developments are only just under way. However, provision supports pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. Contributions to cultural development are not as strong. While a good Christian emphasis is evident, a higher profile for other religions has been identified as a requirement for the new scheme of work. The co-ordinator has already begun modelling such improvement with the representation of a Hindu temple beside her classroom. This good practice is already making an impact, as pupils in younger age groups impressed inspectors with the quality of their questions about, and their knowledge of, Hindu customs. The subject is well resourced following the purchase of artefacts to support the revised scheme of work.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

During the inspection only a few lessons were seen in creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects and so no overall judgements have been made. However, comments have been made about attainment and the quality of education with respect to those examples of work that were seen.

Art and design

84. Displays of artwork around the school are well presented and skills appear to be developing well as pupils move on through the age groups. In Year 2, for example, their paintings *Through the Window* are careful and skilful, with many that demonstrate good attention to detail. Good cross-curricular work is also evident in this class in a large scale, partly three-dimensional mural of the Great Fire of London. Pupils had clearly researched the appearance of timbered structures of the era, before carrying out their work. Cross-curricular skills and links are developed further in Year 3. For example, in information and communication technology *Dazzle* was used to generate artwork and, with mathematics, links included good exploration of symmetrical patterns and rotations. Skills of appraisal and study of famous artists include observations of works by Picasso, David Hockney and Matisse. Standards in these activities are again similar to those found nationally at the appropriate age groups. Planning indicates that National Curriculum requirements continue to be met in Years 5 and 6. Recent work shows similar uses of links with other subjects and further developments of skills. For example, pupils first sketched and then used the designs to produce posters that promoted their favourite books. This work is careful and includes both humorous and skilful detail.

Design and technology

85. Discussions about design and technology were held with pupils in Years 2 and 6. What they said was broadly typical of the knowledge and understanding of pupils in the relevant age groups. Pupils design, make and evaluate a variety of objects. In Year 6, for example, pupils recalled the stages for designing and making an effective cage for the class's stick insects. Pupils in Year 3 made photograph frames, having first drawn up appropriately labelled

diagrams. These drawings demonstrate that they considered the suitability of hinges, materials and colour, using formal evaluation sheets. In Year 2, pupils' shadow and finger puppets are around the expected standard for the end of that year.

Music

86. Two class lessons were observed and one other lesson that featured instrumental tuition in playing the violin. In all these lessons, the quality of teaching and learning was good. In Year 2, for example, pupils appraised Rolf Harris's *Sunrise*. The teacher showed good subject knowledge when she explained how the tune was based on Australian Aboriginal sounds and rhythms. Pupils listened well with some humour and identified that Rhythm Sticks and drums were used. Another pupil identified that a didgeridoo was also playing. Pupils' identification of instruments and their ability to reproduce the rhythms that they heard represented very good achievement. Their ideas in this aspect of appraising what they heard were indicative of standards above those normally expected for their age. The class teacher then introduced an innovative use of dance and movement to help pupils appreciate the structure of the composition, encouraging them to use their bodies to picture the sunrise in the music. As a result of this good methodology, learning was also good. Another good lesson was observed in Year 3. The teacher's good subject knowledge ensured that pupils learnt about musical notation, while clapping rhythms and using instruments. Pupils' singing in this lesson was generally accurate in pitch and progressed well. Another good feature was how teaching assistants supported pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, so that they were included in what was taught and also made good progress. A weaker aspect of all these lessons, including the violin tuition, was that on occasions pupils used rather imprecise, even colloquial, expressions. These opportunities to correct or model standard forms of language were usually missed, as they passed without correction or comment.
87. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Opportunities are provided to develop co-operation and confidence as pupils perform songs together in class, during assemblies and in a choir. Music from different parts of the world raises pupils' cultural perspectives. For example, experience of steel pans was provided through a partnership with a local secondary school and music from other cultures is played in assemblies, as well as taught in class lessons. Opportunities to learn an instrument are also available. A lesson in the violin focused on three boys in Year 3 and addressed their needs as relative beginners well.

Physical education

88. One lesson in physical education was observed and teaching and learning were good. This lesson involved pupils in Year 1 and focused on basic skills to develop awareness of space, leading on to movement in dance and gymnastics. Good management of pupils and subject knowledge led to teaching that produced good progress and achievements. Planning of the subject indicates that statutory requirements are met and that all elements of the subject are taught, including swimming. Records indicate that nearly all pupils attain the government's minimum swimming requirement for safety, while several exceed this standard considerably. Towards the end of last year, for example, a pupil represented the school in the County Championships.
89. Strong contributions to learning are made through extra-curricular clubs and other provision. These activities include a good range of sports, including football, table-tennis and a sports and games club. These activities are all open to boys and girls, and are generally well attended. Opportunities to take part in competitive activities are also provided.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

90. Lessons were not observed in this area, and so overall judgements have not been made. At the previous inspection, a statutory policy for sex education was in place and the provision for personal, social and health education was judged as satisfactory. A lot more is expected now than was the case six years ago, and it is clear from the school's planning that considerable development has occurred. Development of pupils' personal, social and health education, as well as ideas of what it means to be a good citizen, are currently provided in timetabled lessons known as *Circle Time*, as well as on occasions when such matters arise across the curriculum. The programme meets requirements and includes work on matters of health, personal safety and sex education. This programme helps pupils gain confidence, mix successfully with other people and know how to have a healthy lifestyle. Information about the dangers of the misuse of drugs is also provided. Good use is made of visitors with expertise in how to remain safe. Examples include representatives from *Rail Safety*, a health-promotion nurse, the Southampton harbourmaster, the local community police officer and the local road safety officer. Good citizenship is also promoted in visits from the local MP and charitable groups and by taking part in local activities such as providing a float in the Portchester Gala. Currently, a School Council is not provided for pupils, but planning indicates that one is proposed in the next school year.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
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	4
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	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
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	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).