

# INSPECTION REPORT

**South Hill Primary School**

Hemel Hempstead

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117110

Headteacher: Mrs C Racher

Lead inspector: Mr G T Storer

Dates of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 257504

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	227
School address:	Heath Lane Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire
Postcode:	HP1 1TT
Telephone number:	01442 402127
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Potton
Date of previous inspection:	25 <sup>th</sup> January 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

South Hill Primary School is situated in a residential setting close to the centre of Hemel Hempstead. Most pupils come from homes in the largely owner-occupied housing in the immediate vicinity of the school, although some pupils come from further afield. With 227 pupils on the school roll, this school is similar in size to the average primary school. During the last school year, the proportion of pupils (just over 5 per cent) known to be eligible for free school meals was below the national average. In recent years, children's attainment on entry to the school has declined to the point where the most recent intake was below average for their age. A number of pupils also face difficulties in their learning. There are 33 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and three who need support from a specialist teacher or trained assistants<sup>1</sup>. The overall number of pupils who have special educational needs is below average for a school of this size, although the number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is about average. There are 16 pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and eight speak English as an additional language. This is higher than in schools nationally, but all are fully competent in English and none needs additional help in this area of their learning. The school benefits from a relatively stable and supportive school community. The annual turnover of pupils is quite low. During the last school year, just 19 pupils entered or left the school at times other than at the beginning of the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> or the end of Year 6.

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<sup>1</sup> Three pupils are currently subject to Statements of Special Educational Need that require this additional level of provision.

<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19830	G T Storer	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Citizenship Modern foreign language English as an additional language
11450	L Kuraishi	Lay inspector	
20646	M A Palmer	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music
19120	D Pattinson	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Geography History Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**South Hill Primary School provides a good education for its pupils.** Most pupils achieve well. Many aspects of the school's work are improving rapidly because the headteacher provides good leadership. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in most aspects of English and in mathematics are above average, although standards of handwriting and spelling are not high enough.
- The headteacher leads the school well. Her evaluation of the school's work is very effective.
- Governors are very influential in shaping the vision and direction of the school.
- In most respects, teaching is consistently good. However, in some subjects, teachers do not use assessment information systematically enough in planning pupils' learning.
- The curriculum is stimulating. It brings learning to life and motivates pupils to learn.
- Pupils show great interest in school life and in the very good range of activities provided for them.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils' understanding of Britain's multi-ethnic society and of their own and other cultures is very good.
- The school works in very successful partnership with most parents and with the wider community.

**The school's rate of improvement since its last inspection has been good.** A relatively high turnover of staff since the previous inspection has caused standards to fluctuate, but they are now recovering rapidly. Leadership and management are stronger and so the school has successfully addressed most of the issues from its last inspection. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are all better than they were. In addition, arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs have improved, as have resources and facilities for information and communication technology. The school's partnership with parents has also improved and links with the wider community are now very good. There is, however, still work to be done on the quality of pupils' handwriting and on teachers' use of assessment information in their planning.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

**Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E\* - bottom 5% nationally.** Similar schools are those schools whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

**The achievement of pupils is good.** Children's attainment on entry has declined markedly in recent years. Currently when children enter the school, many perform at a level that is below average for their age and have limited social and communication skills. Nevertheless, almost all make good overall progress in the reception class and for many, progress in personal, social and emotional development is very good. Most are on course to achieve the expected standard in most areas of learning although, despite good levels of achievement, standards remain below average in writing by the end of the Foundation Stage.

In the 2003 national tests for seven-year olds, results in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average and on a par with results in similar schools. Inspection evidence largely confirms these good standards, although standards in writing are currently average in Year 2. This does not indicate a deterioration in the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils are achieving well in Years 1 and 2 and progress is better than at the time of the previous inspection. Results only fluctuate slightly because the current Year 2 pupils started from a lower level of attainment on entry than those who took the tests in 2003. In the tests for 11-year olds in 2003, the school's results in English were above the

national average, whilst the results in mathematics were broadly average. Inspection evidence indicates that overall standards in English are still above average, although more pupils exceed the nationally expected standard in reading and in speaking and listening than do in their writing. Pupils' scores in writing are reduced because standards of spelling and handwriting are not high enough. Pupils' current work in mathematics suggests that standards are set to rise in 2004. More pupils in the Year 6 class are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected standard than in 2003.

Standards in science are in line with national expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement on the results of teachers' assessments and tests in 2003 when standards throughout the school were below average. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in religious education are also in line with national expectations. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about other subjects, although examples of work seen were generally satisfactory. Pupils throughout the school are achieving well. Pupils in Year 2 are making good progress in relation to their attainment on entry, whilst those in Year 6 have made good gains on their results at age seven. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress towards their individual targets. There are no significant differences between the results of boys and girls or of those from different ethnic backgrounds.

**Pupils achieve good standards in relation to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Pupils enjoy learning, are motivated and join in well. They are reflective and sensitive to things of beauty. They respect one another and act on their understanding of right and wrong. Pupils' appreciation of Britain's multi-ethnic society and of their own and other cultures is very good.

#### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good education for its pupils.** Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Teachers plan work that engages pupils' interest and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response. However, other than in the Foundation Stage and in English and mathematics, teachers do not use assessment information systematically to plan for pupils with different capabilities. The current inconsistent approach is unsatisfactory because there are times when pupils do not achieve as well as they might. The school provides a very good range of educational visits, visitors and special events that bring learning to life and make the curriculum more interesting for the pupils. The school's partnership with parents and with the wider community is very good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning and achievement.

#### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The overall quality of leadership and management is good.** The headteacher provides good leadership. She inspires a strong sense of commitment and purpose amongst staff and her approach to school self-evaluation is very thorough. Similarly, governors are rigorous in checking aspects of the school's performance, in holding the school to account for what it achieves and in ensuring that the school meets statutory requirements.

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

**Parents and pupils are very satisfied with the school.** Parents think that South Hill is a good school. They particularly appreciate the quality of teaching, the range of activities on offer and the fact that their children are expected to work hard. A small minority would like more information on their child's progress. Most pupils are happy at school and enjoy good relationships with the staff.

#### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve standards in writing by developing a more consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting and spelling.
- Ensure that teachers use assessment information more systematically to plan for pupils with different capabilities and to give pupils a clearer understanding of how they can improve.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

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

Pupils of all ages and abilities are **achieving well**. Children in the Foundation Stage make **good progress**. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in reading and mathematics are **above average** and standards in science are **in line** with national expectations.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in reception make good progress and achieve most of the early learning goals.<sup>3</sup>
- Standards in most aspects of English and in mathematics are above average.
- Standards of handwriting and spelling are not high enough.
- Standards in science are rising and are currently in line with national expectations.
- Standards in ICT are higher than they were at the time of the previous inspection.
- Most pupils make good progress and achieve well.

#### Commentary

##### Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.9 (16.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.9 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

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

##### Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.7 (27.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (25.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.3 (27.2)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. Children's attainment on entry has declined considerably over the last five years. When children in the current reception class entered the school, many were at a level that was below average for their age and had limited social and communication skills. Nevertheless, most are making good progress and are on course to attain the early learning goals in almost all areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. In aspects of personal, creative and physical development, children are on course to exceed these standards. However, although children make satisfactory and often good progress in developing their writing skills, their standards in this aspect of their work are below those expected for their age.

<sup>3</sup> These are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.



2. In the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, the school's results in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average and equal to those in similar schools. Inspection evidence is largely consistent with these good standards, although standards in writing are currently average in Year 2. This does not indicate a fall in the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils are achieving well in Years 1 and 2. Results only vary because the current Year 2 pupils started from a lower level of attainment on entry than those who took the tests in 2003. In the tests for 11-year olds in 2003, the school's results in English were above the national average, whilst the results in mathematics were broadly average. Inspection evidence indicates that overall standards in English are still above average, although more pupils exceed the nationally expected standard in reading and in speaking and listening than in their writing. Pupils' scores in writing are lower than their scores in reading because standards of spelling and handwriting are not high enough. Pupils' current work in mathematics suggests that standards are set to rise in 2004. More pupils in the Year 6 class are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected standard than in 2003.
3. Standards in science are in line with national expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement on the results of teachers' assessments and tests in 2003 when standards throughout the school were below average. Standards in ICT have improved since the previous inspection and are also in line with national expectations, as are standards in religious education. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about other subjects, although examples of work seen were generally satisfactory. Pupils throughout the school are achieving well. Pupils in Year 2 are making good progress in relation to their attainment on entry, whilst those in Year 6 have made good gains on their results at age seven. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress towards their individual targets. There are no significant differences between the results of boys and girls, or of those from different ethnic backgrounds.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Most pupils have **good attitudes** to school and **behave well**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the reception class settle to school routines and grow in confidence.
- Pupils have good attitudes and are keen to do well.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
- Relationships are good.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils' understanding of Britain's multi-ethnic society and of their own and other cultures is very good.
- Attendance is above the national average.

### **Commentary**

4. The school has good arrangements for introducing children to school life. Visits made by reception staff to the local nursery school, along with visits to the school made by children and their parents, ensure that children and their parents know what to expect and are familiar with the adults who will be working with them. Staff create a welcoming atmosphere and the classroom assistants do a particularly good job in establishing routines and expectations, and supporting those children who have little experience outside the home. As a result, children feel secure in the reception class. They settle and soon begin to adopt helpful patterns of behaviour. Most are happy, respond well to all adults and work and play co-operatively.
5. The pupils' questionnaire indicated that most pupils like their school because teachers show them how to make their work better, because teachers are fair and listen to their ideas, and because there are trusted adults to turn to if they are worried. Inspection evidence supports

these views. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are good, they are keen to learn and try hard. These positive attitudes improve pupils' learning and progress.

6. Pupils behave well because teachers and supervisory staff insist on good standards of behaviour. They use rewards and sanctions consistently and take the time to explain why a particular action is unkind or wrong. Consequently, most pupils understand the consequences of their actions. No pupils have been excluded from school for fixed periods during the last school year.
7. The playground is a lively, yet harmonious place. Pupils play happily in groups that are mixed in terms of age, race and gender. Older pupils look after and play with younger pupils. Pupils confirm that they do not suffer abuse or harassment at school. Most pupils respect the school site. There is very little litter and no evidence of damage caused by pupils.
8. Relationships are good. Conversations are characterised by mutual respect. Staff seldom shout or speak aggressively to pupils and most pupils follow their good example. Pupils get along well with one another and so collaborate easily in joint activities. For example, pupils in Year 5 were keen to help each other by sharing tips that enabled friends to overcome ICT problems. This level of co-operation and mutual support improves pupils' learning considerably.
9. The school promotes pupils' personal development successfully. Pupils achieve good standards in relation to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Arrangements that foster pupils' spiritual and moral development are effective. Pupils have lessons in personal, social, health education and citizenship every week and other subjects such as geography, history, science and religious education make a good contribution to this area of the school's work. Pupils are reflective and are sensitive to each other's feelings and to things of beauty. They respect one another and act on their understanding of what is right and wrong. Current teaching also prepares pupils very well for life in Britain's multi-ethnic society and gives them a very good understanding of the richness and diversity of their own and other cultures. This is a very strong aspect of the school's work.
10. The rate of pupils' attendance is good. Parents and carers ensure that their children attend regularly and arrive punctually at school. The school has effective monitoring systems in place and as a result, attendance has remained above the national average since the previous inspection. In many classes pupils achieve the weekly target of 100 per cent attendance.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.8	School data:	0.0
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** education for its pupils.

#### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school.
- Pupils' positive response in lessons helps them to learn.

- Teachers manage pupils well and insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Teachers use resources effectively to help pupils learn.
- In most subjects, other than English and mathematics, teachers do not use assessment effectively to plan the next steps in pupils' learning.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	4 (11%)	23 (60%)	11 (29%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

- Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection. Seven out of every ten lessons seen were good or very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Throughout the school, teachers plan and structure their lessons carefully. They are clear about what they want pupils to learn in the course of the session and share this with pupils, so that lessons are purposeful. Teachers have good subject knowledge. As a result, they are confident and almost all teaching is accurate. The school makes good use of teachers' expertise. Timetable arrangements and teacher exchanges enable pupils to benefit from teachers' expertise in subjects such as science, music and Spanish.
- The quality of pupils' learning is good and is boosted by the good attitudes and behaviour shown by pupils of all ages. All teachers establish good relationships with pupils. They manage pupils effectively, insist on good standards of behaviour and establish classroom routines that promote effective learning. Teachers consistently encourage and praise pupils' efforts. This very successfully motivates pupils and enhances their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are keen to participate and apply themselves to their tasks with interest. They persevere with their work when they are not directly supervised and co-operate sensibly when they are working in small groups. Throughout the school, pupils readily undertake investigative and problem solving activities that effectively consolidate their understanding and skills, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Teachers use resources, including ICT equipment, effectively to engage pupils' interest and improve their learning. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were quick to grasp the concept of organising data in a Carroll diagram, when the teacher demonstrated the task using projected images. Teachers carefully plan how teaching assistants can support pupils as they carry out their tasks and as a result, contribute significantly to pupils' learning. However, teachers do not ensure that teaching assistants are used effectively during lesson introductions. Support staff successfully ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive the help and encouragement that they need to overcome their difficulties, take an active part in lessons and make the same progress as others in the class.
- The school's assessment procedures are satisfactory overall. The Foundation Stage teacher assesses children's skills thoroughly and creates a helpful range of records. This information is used well in identifying individual children's development and learning needs, and in planning targeted activities for individuals and groups. The school conducts the annual statutory and optional National Curriculum tests and supplements these with additional assessments, chiefly in English and mathematics. Procedures for assessment are also being established in science and ICT. The headteacher maintains detailed records and then uses this information effectively to track pupils' progress and to target additional support to meet the needs of specific groups of pupils. Assessment and recording procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good and enable pupils to make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.

15. In Years 1 to 6, although teachers check pupils' understanding by questioning them in the course of lessons and regularly marking their work, they do not consistently assess and record what pupils learn in subjects other than English and mathematics. Therefore, they do not have the accurate information that they need in order to plan tasks that meet the needs of pupils with different abilities by building carefully on their prior learning. This inconsistent approach is unsatisfactory because it leads to some work being set that is too easy for some pupils and too difficult for others, and at times prevents pupils from doing as well as they can. Almost all teachers set targets for pupils in English and mathematics and regularly check their progress towards them. However, this initiative has little impact on pupils' learning or on their understanding of how they can improve because teachers do not yet routinely discuss targets with the pupils concerned.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a **good** curriculum, which is enriched by a wide range of additional activities.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides a good curriculum and effective links between subjects strengthen pupils' basic skills.
- A very good range of additional activities helps to bring the curriculum to life for pupils.
- The curriculum provides well for pupils who have special educational needs.
- Curriculum review, evaluation and development are now high profile.
- The accommodation is used well, and resources have improved since the previous inspection.

### **Commentary**

16. The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. All statutory requirements are met, including provision for religious education and collective worship. Pupils in the reception class take part in a wide range of carefully structured activities, which take account of the early learning goals and give them a good start to their education. Thorough planning ensures that all of the required subjects are securely represented in Years 1 to 6 and that English, mathematics and science receive good emphasis. As a result, most pupils achieve well. The school also teaches Spanish to all pupils in Years 3 to 6. This is an exciting addition to the statutory curriculum, made possible by the specific expertise of one of the teachers. Pupils enjoy these lessons, which add significantly to their linguistic and cultural development. There are good links between subjects, which make learning more relevant for pupils. Pupils reinforce literacy, numeracy and ICT skills effectively through work in other subjects. However, inconsistent approaches to the teaching of spelling and handwriting are holding some pupils back.
17. A very good range of visits, visitors, activities and special events enriches the curriculum. Visits include a residential trip to the Isle of Wight that makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development and extends their learning in geography, history and science. Visitors include an African drummer, a ceramics artist, staff from local industries and local sportsmen, all whom bring learning to life for the pupils and contribute to their social and cultural development. These aspects are further enhanced by special events such as book week, science week, school productions and orchestra performances. Furthermore, a very good range of after school and lunchtime clubs, including basketball, recorders, gardening, drama, science and ICT substantially benefit many pupils and extend their interests, as do opportunities to engage in competitive sports, such as in football, rounders and cricket. Overall, the curriculum and related activities are better than at the time of the previous inspection.
18. The school is sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and levels of inclusion are generally satisfactory. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Work is carefully matched to their needs and enables them to make good progress towards the targets set for

them. The activities that the school offers are open to all and teachers try hard to ensure that pupils do not miss out, even when they are occasionally absent from lessons, for example, for music tuition. However, work is not always matched carefully to pupils' needs in some subjects, which prevents them from making the best possible progress.

19. There are good arrangements to enable subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate how curriculum plans are put into practice and how well they support pupils' learning. Such arrangements improve curriculum development and innovation because they allow subject leaders to judge how well pupils are achieving based on first-hand observations. Subject policies are reviewed regularly. This helps to ensure that the curriculum contains all that it should. For example, personal social and health education is good, includes sex education and covers issues relating to the use and misuse of drugs, and is embedded in the school's work.
20. Internally, the accommodation provides good facilities for teaching and learning. The spacious hall, equipped with a stage, provides ample facilities for the creative, aesthetic and physical subjects and the new computer suite is used well and is contributing to improved standards in ICT and in other subjects. Attractive displays motivate pupils, extend their learning and celebrate their work. However, externally there are areas, such as boundary hedges and pathways, which require attention. Resources are good. Teachers use computer projection equipment effectively to improve classroom presentations and an increased availability of artefacts in subjects such as history and religious education is improving the quality of pupils' learning.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is a safe place where all pupils feel valued.
- Children have good relationships with adults in school with whom they have the most contact.
- All pupils receive very good levels of support although academic advice is not always based on targets that have been set.
- Pupils' views are sought through the recently constituted school council.

### **Commentary**

21. The school monitors health and safety well. Regular risk assessments of the premises are undertaken. Teachers and support staff promote hygiene and healthy life-styles as part of the curriculum. The good care taken by the premises staff ensures that the buildings are clean, safe and free from hazards. Staff are trained in first aid and parents are confident that a qualified person will look after their children if there is an accident. The headteacher is trained in child protection and the school complies fully with the child protection procedures recommended by the local authority.
22. Parents are happy with the care and support provided for their children. Pupils form constructive relationships with teachers and with other staff because they consistently encourage and praise pupils' efforts. Teachers and support staff ensure that a good level of personal support and guidance is given to all pupils and pupils know that help is available in cases of need. However, at present, teachers do not routinely engage pupils in dialogue about the quality of their learning and progress, and this omission reduces the impact of pupils' personal curricular targets.
23. Staff value all pupils, and their opinions are often invited and taken into consideration when formulating school policy. The formation of a school council has improved this aspect of the school's work. Parents and pupils are happy that the staff listen to them and act on their

concerns. Induction procedures are good and parents are pleased with the arrangements for settling new children in the school.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents, with other schools and with the community.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very high opinions of the school and the school is very successful in engaging parents in the life of school.
- Written and informal information given to parents is very good.
- The school works in very successful partnership with local businesses.
- The school has very constructive links with the local nursery and with secondary schools.
- Community provision is very good.

### Commentary

24. Parents are extremely happy with the work of the school. Parents think that South Hill is a good school. They particularly appreciate the leadership of the headteacher, the quality of the teaching, the range of activities on offer and the fact that their children are expected to work hard. The school works very closely with parents and takes every opportunity to involve them in the life of school. The governing body regularly seeks parent's views and deals promptly with any concerns. Parents respond very well by supporting school initiatives and by helping their children at home and in the school. Parents also participate willingly in the Parent Teacher Association to arrange social events to raise money for school funds.
25. The school keeps parents very well informed. Regular newsletters inform parents about what is going on in the school, about the content of the curriculum and about how they can get involved. This information puts parents in a very good position to support their child's learning. The school also provides information and 'training' to keep parents abreast of educational initiatives, for example, in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils' annual progress reports are very good. They highlight clearly what pupils can do and where they need to improve. Staff respond positively to requests from parents, with the result that many formal and informal meetings take place with parents to discuss their children's academic and social development.
26. The school has established very successful partnerships with the local business community. A small minority of parents has concerns about the merits of business links. However, inspection evidence indicates that they are entirely beneficial to the school and its pupils. These businesses donate time, resources and expertise and in doing so, enhance the curriculum for all pupils, for example, in science and in design and technology, and bring added management experience to the governing body. Forming these links has been a priority for the headteacher and it has been successful in increasing pupils' understanding of being part of the wider community.
27. The school has very constructive links with other schools. Links with the local nursery result in a smooth transition for children moving into the reception class. Pupils join with others from neighbouring primary schools, for example, for mathematics 'master-classes' and for sporting and musical events, and staff participate in shared training initiatives. Local secondary schools, which specialise in sports and in the performing arts, provide expert teaching that enriches the curriculum and contributes to staff development. Older pupils receive very good support from local secondary schools and this results in a smooth transfer to the next phase of learning.
28. The school welcomes the local community into the school and provides its buildings and grounds for use for a range of social and educational activities. There is a family learning programme that is established in the school's computer suite and a music school uses the school stage for performances. Community activities such as aerobics, slimming groups, children's football team and the local church also use the school facilities on a regular basis.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher and governing body are **effective**. Leadership by senior staff is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has high aspirations and a clear vision for the school.
- The committed governing body carries its responsibilities well.
- Senior staff help to shape the school's direction, but are not yet fully effective.
- Management is good. School self-evaluation is very effective and strategic planning reflects the school's aims and values.
- The headteacher and governing body monitor the school's finances very carefully so that they make the most of the money they have.

### Commentary

29. The headteacher provides strong, purposeful leadership. She has clear priorities and has established a rigorous agenda for improvement. Her energy and enthusiasm inspire a sense of shared purpose among staff and governors, who are keen to make the school successful.
30. The governing body provides good support for the headteacher and carries out its statutory duties very well. Governors are playing a central role in moving the school forward. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because they take a keen and active interest and are fully involved in the school's monitoring and self-evaluation procedures. The good knowledge they have of the school and their constructive relationship with the staff, place them in a strong position, both to support and challenge decisions and to work effectively with the headteacher and staff to identify ways to improve teaching and learning.
31. Senior staff make a satisfactory contribution to school improvement. The headteacher is successfully developing the managerial role of the newly appointed deputy headteacher and other senior staff to ensure that they are effective. Several have received training and the school provides them with the necessary time to monitor aspects of the school's work, to plan and to implement improvements. However, not all subject leaders are equally effective at present. The English co-ordinator provides sound leadership, but requires further training and support to enable her to lead the subject well.
32. School improvement planning is very effective. The current plan sets a clear and measurable agenda for improving achievement, teaching and learning. It is used well to determine the best use of funds available to the school and is closely linked to the planned provision of training for teachers and support staff. Precise costs of planned developments are specified to enable spending patterns to be rigorously monitored. The headteacher has put into place very good systems for school-self evaluation, which have given renewed impetus to the drive to improve. The headteacher monitors teaching systematically. She also regularly analyses pupils' performance in order to identify and overcome weaknesses, and tracks the achievement of individual pupils regularly to ensure that they are making progress. This is a considerable improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when management did not give a clear direction.
33. Financial management is very good and funds are administered efficiently. Careful and regular monitoring of spending patterns helps to ensure that the budget is used to benefit pupils. Spending decisions are taken carefully and due thought is given to the impact they will have on pupils' education. Current figures appear to indicate the school has a large budget surplus, but this is because the account contained a large amount of money that was already committed to the recent computer suite project. The secretary works tirelessly to ensure that the school



runs smoothly and that day-to-day financial management does not impinge on teaching and learning. Financial control is efficient and effective, and the school gives good value for money.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	588,502.00
Total expenditure	561,740.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,542.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	37,692.00
Balance carried forward to the next	64,454.00

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

34. Children enter school with below average skills, most notably in their personal, social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy skills. They make good progress in the reception class because teaching is good and the children are actively involved in a good range of stimulating activities that successfully extend their knowledge, skills and understanding. The teacher carefully assesses what individuals know, understand and can do. She effectively uses this information to identify and plan the next steps in children's learning and development. As a result, most are on course to attain the early learning goals for children of their age in almost all areas of learning. The teacher and teaching assistant work effectively together to support children's learning. The teacher also successfully prepares and involves parent helpers so that they support children's learning purposefully. These findings represent an improvement since the previous inspection.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

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

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

- The school makes good arrangements for introducing children to school life.
- The teacher and teaching assistant value each child's efforts and boost their self-esteem.
- Children become confident, well-motivated learners.
- Almost all children co-operate well with the staff and with each other.

#### **Commentary**

35. The teacher and teaching assistant successfully ensure that each child feels included and valued so that they settle securely into the reception class. Parents meet the class teacher and headteacher and children visit the reception classroom before they start. In addition, the class teacher visits the local nursery school and those children who are going to join the school visit the reception class with nursery staff. These arrangements successfully promote a smooth transition into school. The teacher and teaching assistant ensure that the reception class is welcoming and classroom systems are firmly established. They sensitively meet the needs of those children with special educational needs and carefully implement their individual education plans. As a result, all boys and girls are achieving the standards expected for their age and are growing in assurance in their approach to activities and daily routines.
36. Staff give lots of individual praise and encouragement, as when the teacher shares and celebrates children's completed work at the end of a session. As a result, the children are motivated to do their best and show pride in what they have achieved. The teacher plans topics, such as *Ourselves* that extend the children's self-knowledge and awareness of others. Many activities involve working or playing co-operatively with others, as when they collaborate on large drawings or use 'two man' wheeled vehicles outdoors. These activities successfully build children's confidence in learning and in their relationships with others. However, a small number of children frequently have difficulty in taking turns and sharing. The quality of teaching is good. The teacher ensures that all children have opportunities to be involved in a good range of very carefully planned and prepared activities. The children are keen to participate because they see learning as fun. They settle quickly to tasks and concentrate hard for short periods, when working independently.
37. The teacher has high expectations of the children's behaviour. She consistently reinforces the classroom standards and school's *Golden Rules*. The children make good progress in learning what is expected of them so that they accept the boundaries that are set in school.

Almost all respond promptly to instructions and are beginning to clear away equipment efficiently. They behave sensibly in the classroom, although they are often noisier when they move around school. They handle books and equipment carefully.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children make good progress in learning letter sounds and developing early reading skills.
- The children regularly engage in activities that successfully promote their communication skills.
- The teacher carefully plans worthwhile opportunities for the children to improve their writing skills but standards are below those normally expected at this age.

### **Commentary**

38. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good. The children learn well because the teacher successfully implements a programme of lively, early reading activities. The children are keen to practise their letter sounds and make good progress in associating letters and sounds. They enjoy sharing a varied range of stories and rhymes, and eagerly recognise familiar words. From their earliest days in school, they regularly take home a range of books and reinforcing activities to share with their parents.
39. The teacher plans varied, well-structured early reading activities that successfully stimulate children's interest and awareness that books are fun. They begin to associate letters and sounds and recognise familiar words. From their earliest days in school, the children regularly take books to share at home. This very effectively boosts their confidence. They achieve well and many are on the initial stages of reading.
40. The teacher plans regular opportunities for children to talk purposefully to adults and each other, such as during Circle Time activities. In addition, she takes every opportunity to extend their vocabulary. Children also participate in occasional activities which involving speaking briefly to a larger audience, as when they dressed up appropriately and announced their favourite book, during the school's Book Week. These arrangements successfully boost children's speaking and listening skills. They gain confidence in speaking in small and larger groups and attain the standards expected for their age.
41. Children regularly practise writing patterns and form their letters carefully when supported by the teacher or teaching assistant. The many labels around the classroom successfully promote their recognition that writing conveys meaning. The teacher plans imaginative activities, such as practising writing patterns in sand or on the computer, using a 'painting' program. These strategies motivate children and encourage them to gain control of their movements and form recognisable letters. When working with an adult in a small group, they try hard and make good progress. Most children write their own name and a small number write simple words and phrases independently. However, most children's writing is below average and only a small number of higher attaining children are likely to reach the early learning goals in writing by the end of the reception year.

## **Mathematical development**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children make good progress in counting and recognising numbers.
- The teacher plans stimulating activities that successfully promote children's mathematical development alongside other areas of learning.

## Commentary

42. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teacher is clear about what she wants the children to learn, planning is detailed and sessions are purposeful. Children achieve well and almost all will attain the early learning goals in mathematical development. They develop a secure sense of number, order and sequence through regular counting routines. The teacher plans a good balance of games and practical activities to encourage children to practise these skills. They regularly join in lively number rhymes and songs, which successfully reinforce their learning. Many children enter school with below average mathematical understanding and basic vocabulary. The class teacher and teaching assistant consistently check and build on individual children's mathematical language. Consequently, children make good progress in learning the names of colours and shapes and understanding concepts, such as 'longer' and 'shorter'.
43. The children engage in thoroughly prepared activities, such as baking, which promote their counting and measuring skills. The children also have good opportunities to recognise and count coins whilst playing in the class Café and on a shopping trip to purchase vegetables to make soup. Such activities successfully extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world and support their physical development, whilst promoting their mathematical development.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children acquire a secure knowledge and understanding of the world through practical activities and well-planned topics.
- The teachers successfully use information and communication technology to support and extend the children's learning experiences.

## Commentary

44. The quality of teaching is good so that children achieve well and are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. They discover the properties of sand and dough by handling and working with them. The children learn about living things when they plant and care for seeds and beans, hunt for minibeasts and collect leaves on walks in the school grounds. The teacher successfully extends children's experiences by arranging stimulating visits, for example, to the environmental centre. The children begin to gain an awareness of cultures other than their own through practical activities, such as baking breads from different parts of the world.
45. The children have frequent opportunities to use computers and simple computer programs, in the computer suite and in their classroom. In the course of their activities the children also confidently use equipment, such as a digital camera and simple programmable toys.

## Physical development

Provision for children's physical development is **good overall**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children enjoy regular opportunities to be active both indoors and out.
- The children make satisfactory progress in developing manipulative skills.

## Commentary

46. Children move safely and confidently in and around the classroom. The teacher consistently encourages children to be independent. They put on and take off their coats for outdoor play, put on baking aprons and change for physical education lessons with a minimum of adult help. The well planned and resourced outside play area provides the children with daily opportunities for vigorous and imaginative play. This marks a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Children manoeuvre wheeled vehicles skilfully. Most play co-operatively and take turns when required to do so. Children regularly participate in physical education sessions. They enjoy responding to music and demonstrate good creativity. Almost all display a good awareness of space as they travel safely around the hall, changing direction when prompted to do so they demonstrate good co-ordination and control, as they skip, jump, tiptoe and gallop, without bumping into each other. They follow instructions promptly and behave sensibly. Overall standards of physical development are average, although many children's movement in response to music exceeds national expectations for children of this age.
47. The quality of teaching is good overall. The children learn well because the teacher plans a satisfactory range of activities to promote children's skill and control in the handling of mark-making implements and simple tools. Children frequently use construction materials and simple tools, including scissors, and engage in activities such as threading beads. All adults sensitively encourage the children so that they work carefully and safely. However, many children's manipulative skills are below average.

## Creative development

48. There was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching, children's achievement or the standards that they attain. The teacher plans thoroughly to ensure that the children have opportunities to engage in a stimulating range of creative activities. It is evident that children have frequent opportunities to paint, print and use an imaginative range of materials to create collages. They join in enthusiastically with action songs and number rhymes, building up a wide repertoire. The children have ready access to very good quality percussion instruments and have carefully planned opportunities to extend their musical development children readily engage in imaginative play in the well-thought out role-play area. The teacher regularly changes the theme to stimulate children's involvement, for example, as a doctor's surgery or a flower shop. This successfully engages children's interest, encourages collaboration and promotes their use of imaginative language. Children are keen to join in action songs and have opportunities to use a range of musical instruments.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress to reach above average levels by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The emphasis given to reading and to speaking and listening skills results in good standards.
- Pupils write for a broad range of purposes, although approaches to the teaching of handwriting and spelling require development.
- Teaching and learning is good overall, but teachers do not use assessment systematically enough, to help pupils make the best possible progress.
- The subject is soundly led, but the co-ordinator is not yet fully effective.
- Literacy skills are being increasingly promoted through other subjects.

## Commentary

49. In the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, the school's results in reading and writing were above the national average and in line with results in similar schools. Inspection findings for the current Year 2 pupils confirm the picture of above average standards in reading, but indicate that standards are broadly average in writing. Despite this slight variation in standards, pupils are achieving well in Years 1 and 2 and are making better progress than at the time of the previous inspection. In the tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2003, the school's results in English were above the national average and the average for similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that overall standards in English are still above average, although pupils do considerably better in reading and in speaking and listening than they do in writing.
50. The development of pupils' reading has a high profile throughout school. The introduction of a new reading scheme, books specifically for boys, regular 'book weeks' and good support from parents have all helped to raise standards. Teachers also place good emphasis on the development of speaking and listening skills. A regular 'diet' of role-play, question and answer, drama, discussion and work with talking partners means that many pupils of all ages speak confidently and respond well to the spoken word.
51. Pupils write for an increasingly wide range of purposes including letters, instructions, poems, stories, diaries and newspaper reports. However, pupils' scores in writing are lower than their scores in reading because standards of handwriting and spelling are not high enough. Teachers give too little attention to the development of pupils' handwriting. This results in standards of presentation, which are unacceptably varied, as at the time of the previous inspection. Some pupils are taught to join letters too early, before the letters are clearly shaped and correctly positioned, while others do not hold their writing implements properly for ease of writing. Similarly, spelling is not taught as part of an agreed carefully structured approach. Consequently, teachers miss opportunities in lessons to help pupils with their spelling, for example, by encouraging the use of dictionaries, thesauruses, and pupils' own vocabulary books.
52. In most other respects, teaching is good. Good teaching was observed in most classes during the inspection. Features of the good teaching that was seen include a confident approach based on secure subject knowledge, good questioning of pupils, a brisk pace, high expectations of pupils' behaviour and response and good relationships, all of which create a positive working atmosphere and successfully underpin learning. As a result of these positive features, pupils achieve well and have good attitudes to learning.
53. Teachers regularly assess pupils' attainment and keep detailed records. The headteacher analyses this data carefully in order to identify and overcome weaknesses. This work is having a positive impact because it has resulted in the school's current focus on raising standards in writing. Teachers' use of on-going assessment is also getting better. For example, marking is improving, with teachers often identifying how pupils can improve as well as celebrating their best efforts. However, whilst teachers make some use of the information they have in setting personal targets for pupils, they do not routinely engage pupils in dialogue about the quality of their learning and progress and this omission reduces the impact of pupils' personal targets in English.
54. The subject is soundly led and managed, and there are clear plans for its continued development. However, the co-ordinator requires both training and support to become fully effective. This is because she does not regularly observe lessons and scrutinise pupils' work, to help her identify what works well and what needs to be improved.

## Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to speak, listen, read and write as part of their work in other subjects. For example, good questions, answers and explanations played an important part in a Year 1 science lesson, whilst Year 2 pupils wrote about Florence Nightingale in a link with history and practised research skills in ICT. Year 4 pupils wrote a newspaper report of the Easter story and practised editing and re-drafting skills in ICT. The approach to developing literacy skills across the curriculum is developing well and is a key factor in improving standards.

## MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Teachers use the assessment information effectively to plan work that closely matches pupils' needs.
- The co-ordinator leads the development of the subject successfully.

### Commentary

56. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain above average standards. In the 2003 national tests for seven-year-olds, standards were above average. The work of pupils in the current Year 2 confirms that these standards are being maintained. Many pupils are achieving well and are on course to exceed national expectations. In the 2003 national tests for 11-year-olds, standards were average. In the current Year 6, overall results are set to rise with a similar proportion as last year on course to attain the average standard but a greater proportion on course to exceed this level. This represents good achievement for these pupils, compared to the standards they attained when they were seven-year-olds.
57. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they are clear about what they want pupils to learn. They share these aims with the pupils at the beginning of lessons so that lessons have a sharp focus, teaching points are clearly made and reinforced and pupils make good progress in learning. Sessions are well structured. Lessons usually start with lively mental agility work that successfully engages pupils' interest. Teachers ensure that lessons proceed at a brisk pace so that pupils remain focused on their tasks. They bring pupils together at the end of lessons for a worthwhile recap of what has been achieved. They use this opportunity effectively to reinforce what pupils have learned, praise their efforts and boost their confidence.
58. Teachers and classroom assistants are responsive to pupils' individual needs and readily give explanations. This promotes pupils' involvement and positive attitudes towards mathematics and their behaviour is good. Pupils make the most progress in lessons when teachers encourage them to explain the methods they use in completing tasks. For example, Year 6 pupils explain how they use factors to mentally multiply two and three digit numbers together. This strategy successfully extends pupils' thinking, whilst enabling the teacher to assess their understanding. Teachers also make more use of investigative work than they did at the time of the previous inspection and as a result pupils' understanding is more secure.
59. Teachers prepare lessons very carefully. They regularly use the results of their observations, marking and regular assessments to plan pupils' work. As a result, tasks are usually challenging for the different levels of attainment within the class. This successfully motivates pupils. They apply themselves effectively and make good progress. Although in almost all classes teachers set mathematics targets for individual pupils, they do not use them consistently to motivate pupils or to promote their understanding of their own learning.

Teachers and teaching assistants are consistently encouraging and sensitive to individual pupils' concerns. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support so that they too achieve well.

60. The co-ordinator provides good leadership for her colleagues. She is committed to raising standards in the subject. She regularly monitors teaching and learning, rigorously analyses test results and meticulously tracks pupils' progress through the school. These activities lead to the allocation of support to pupils and improvements in the curriculum, such as a greater emphasis on data handling and shape and space. These strategies are helping to raise standards over time.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. Teachers make satisfactory use of mathematics to reinforce and extend pupils' learning within other subjects. There are worthwhile examples of pupils' work in ICT, science and geography. For example, Year 6 pupils use a well selected and challenging computer program to reinforce their understanding of number sequences. In science, pupils use equipment, such as Newton meters and thermometers to make accurate measurements of force and temperature. In geography, Year 3 pupils used their data handling skills well to present the results of their traffic survey as a graph.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- Standards in science are rising and are currently in line with national expectations.
- Good teaching is improving pupils' attainment and progress.
- Throughout the school, investigative projects improve the quality of pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not assess pupils' skills systematically enough and are, therefore, not modifying tasks to meet the needs of pupils with different capabilities.
- The science co-ordinator leads by example. He monitors the subject effectively and has clear plans for its further development.

#### **Commentary**

62. In the 2003 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, standards were below average in comparison with schools nationally and with similar schools. In the national tests at the end of Year 6, standards were below the average for all schools and well below the average for similar schools. However, inspection evidence indicates that, following a decline in standards in 2001 / 2, standards are once again rising. Standards are satisfactory because almost all pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 classes are on course to achieve the nationally expected standards this year and some will exceed them. Performance data indicates that the steady improvement is set to continue. In recent years, the school's scores in science have been low because too few pupils have achieved the above average level. This year, the proportion of pupils on course for the higher levels is also set to rise in the current Years 2 and 6, and is likely to be close to that in schools nationally. As a result, overall standards in science are now in line with national expectations throughout the school.
63. The teaching of science is good. Pupils learn effectively because teachers prepare their lessons carefully. They know what they want pupils to learn and gather the necessary resources to illustrate their teaching effectively. They make good use of classroom assistants to support the learning of less able pupils or those with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils are able to succeed and make good progress alongside others in the class. Throughout the school, teachers establish the habits of good behaviour and positive response that allow them to manage complex practical activities effectively and so investigative work becomes a much more regular part of pupils' 'diet' in science lessons. This approach improves



the quality of pupils' learning and adds to the progress that they make. For example, in Year 1, pupils gain good insights into why objects float or sink, because the teacher allows them to choose freely the objects they want to test and asks searching questions about what they have observed and why things have happened as they have.

64. The science co-ordinator teaches two of the classes in Year 3 to 6, and this planned use of teacher expertise is helping to raise standards. His teaching is consistently good, and at times very good, because he has very good levels of knowledge and understanding, and his teaching is authoritative and accurate. He uses correct scientific vocabulary and questions pupils skilfully to make them think more deeply, to extend their scientific understanding and to improve their use of technical language. This very constructive use of questioning is a strength of the teaching of older pupils.
65. The most important weakness in the teaching of science is that teachers do not use assessment information to modify tasks to meet the needs of pupils with different capabilities. In most lessons, all pupils undertake the same tasks and there is little to extend the learning of more able pupils. This lack of specific planning is unsatisfactory because it restricts the progress that some pupils make.
66. The science co-ordinator is doing a good job. The quality of his teaching sets a good example to all staff. He has also provided staff with improved guidance for their planning and has led 'in-house' training that has helped less experienced colleagues to improve the quality of their teaching. He monitors standards and quality issues conscientiously and has clear plans for improvements aimed at raising standards further.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school has improved its resources and facilities for teaching ICT.
- Teachers have the knowledge, understanding and confidence to teach ICT skills effectively.
- Teachers are not using assessment data thoroughly enough in planning work for pupils with different capabilities.
- Very effective subject leadership is improving standards and the quality of teaching.

### **Commentary**

67. Pupils reach nationally expected standards in all aspects of ICT. A similar judgement was made at the time of the previous inspection, but in actual fact standards now are considerably higher than they were then. Pupils of all ages are achieving well. They competently use a much wider range of programs, applications and ICT equipment, and the use of ICT is more integrated into the curriculum as a whole. Overall, pupils are on course to attain the nationally expected standard by the time that they leave the school and a growing number already have above average skills for their age. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection.
68. Pupils are learning well because the school's resources and facilities for teaching ICT are better than they were at the time of the previous inspection, and teachers are more skilled in teaching the subject. The co-ordinator plans the use of the new computer suite very effectively, so that pupils in Years 1 to 6 have carefully planned sessions in the suite each week. This improves the rate at which pupils acquire and develop their basic skills. In addition, pupils have ready access to computers in their classrooms. The school has the necessary programs to teach all aspects of the ICT curriculum thoroughly and pupils have planned opportunities to use a good range of ICT equipment, including programmable toys, computer microscope, sound recording equipment and a digital camera. Teachers have successfully undertaken a range of

training and receive regular input, advice and support from the co-ordinator. As a result, they are competent and self-assured when teaching ICT. This promotes pupils' involvement and motivation to learn.

69. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and share it with them, so that lessons are purposeful and time is used constructively. Teachers structure sessions carefully and use computer projection equipment competently to engage pupils' interest and demonstrate new skills and techniques. They successfully establish good patterns of behaviour and a sensible approach to work so that pupils are attentive to instructions and share equipment co-operatively. Pupils' keenness to be actively involved effectively improves their learning and results in good progress in ICT lessons. Teachers and classroom assistants sensitively support pupils with learning difficulties and often plan extension activities for pupils who complete their tasks quickly. However, these arrangements do not ensure that all pupils, including the more able, consistently work at the levels of which they are capable. Even though teachers assess and record pupils' attainment regularly, they do not consistently use the information they gain to plan work that takes account of the pupils' widely differing capabilities. Consequently pupils do not always make the progress that they should and this is unsatisfactory.
70. Standards are rising rapidly because the co-ordinator for ICT is doing a very good job. She works very hard to lead colleagues in implementing planned improvements in the subject. She has introduced a programme of work that successfully supports staff and has monitored teaching and pupils' learning at first hand. This has enabled her to play an important role in establishing the computer suite and boosting colleagues' skills and confidence.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

71. Teachers make good use of ICT to reinforce and extend pupils' learning within other subjects. Examples seen or discussed during the inspection include:
- Reception children using the *fill* tool to colour in their Rangoli patterns and learning *to drag and drop* by dressing Teddy.
  - Year 1 pupils using the computer microscope to look inside fruit.
  - Year 2 pupils using creative tools to make pictures in the style of Mondrian and learning to carry out Internet *searches*.
  - Year 4 pupils using *word processing* tools to extend their drafting and editing skills.
  - Year 5 pupils using *graphic modelling* to solve classroom layout problems.
  - Year 6 pupils using a dedicated mathematics program to develop their understanding of number sequences.

### **HUMANITIES**

**History and geography** were not included in the main focus of the inspection, and only a small number of lessons were seen. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about provision, standards, or the overall quality of teaching and learning.

72. Planning indicates that both subjects are secure within the school's good curriculum and there is a clear framework for developing knowledge, skills and understanding.
73. The curriculum in geography and history is enhanced by links with other subjects, including literacy and information and communication technology, which are developing well. For example, in history Year 3 pupils complete topics on the ancient Greeks, which provide good opportunities for extended writing and the use of ICT for research purposes. Similarly, Year 5 pupils devise play scripts about working children in Victorian times. In geography, Year 1 pupils search the Internet to find photographs and pictures of different homes from around the world. Teachers also make good use of educational visits in the local area and further afield to bring both subjects to life. Year 1 pupils identify types of leisure facilities in their town and visit the

local leisure centre and Year 4 pupils draw maps of their routes to school. The residential visit to the Isle of Wight gives older pupils valuable experience of a location beyond their home town.

74. The good teaching seen during the inspection was characterised by teachers' secure subject knowledge, their effective questioning of pupils and the constructive relationships between pupils and all of the adults who give much encouragement and help them to learn. In a particularly good history lesson in Year 3 about events in the life of Boudicca, the class teacher used role-play very effectively to motivate pupils and improve their learning. Most marking is good and helps pupils to move forward. However, approaches for assessing pupils' progress and matching tasks to their differing capabilities are not yet securely established.
75. The indications are that both subjects are soundly led and there are clear plans for further developments. These include increasing the emphasis given to mapping skills in geography and extending the use of ICT in history. Displays of work, especially in history, help to motivate pupils and celebrate their efforts. Resources to support learning in both subjects are good.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall, although teachers do not use assessment information effectively to plan for pupils with different capabilities.
- The curriculum places a good emphasis on teaching pupils about other faiths.
- Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Subject leadership is effective.

### Commentary

76. Standards in religious education remain unchanged since the school's previous inspection. Pupils throughout the school attain standards in line with the locally agreed syllabus in all aspects of their work and achievement is satisfactory.
77. The teaching of religious education is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan a balanced programme of work that ensures that pupils learn about religion and through religion. They encourage pupils to learn from religious stories, to reflect on their meaning and make personal responses to knowledge gained. For example, Year 5 pupils considered how a lighted candle made them feel and wrote their own Commandments. However, teachers do not always match work to the needs of pupils with different capabilities. This is because consistent approaches to assessing pupils' progress have only recently been introduced and have yet to make an impact on teachers planning. Consequently, in most lessons, pupils undertake tasks that are set at the same level because teachers do not have the information that they need to match tasks closely to pupils' prior attainment. This is unsatisfactory because it limits the rate at which some pupils' progress.
78. The multi-faith aspect of the curriculum is strong. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they can compare the main characteristics of different religions, such as Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. Teachers make good use of education visits to places of worship in the locality. For example, by attending a baptism in the local church, pupils in Year 1 gain a clear understanding of the symbolism of this ceremony. Similarly, visits to the mosque give older pupils greater insight into the beliefs, practices and symbols of different faiths. Teachers use the school's good collection of religious artefacts effectively to illustrate their teaching and displays help to motivate pupils and celebrate their work.

79. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils have regular opportunities for prayer, reflection and personal response, which contribute to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are thoughtful and sensitive to things of beauty. They learn that values such as courtesy, care and consideration for others are common to most cultures and this, along with their understanding of the beliefs and practices of other faiths, adds to their social and cultural development and prepares them well for life in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society.
80. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator and good teacher of religious education. There are clear plans for its continued development through the further use of information technology and subject specific training for teachers.

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

81. Inspectors observed five lessons covering design and technology, music and physical education. Art and design was not on the timetable during the inspection. Inspectors also examined samples of completed work, spoke to pupils about aspects of their work, attended assemblies and examined planning documents. However, there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about provision, standards or the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects.
82. Pupils regularly sing, perform, compose and listen to music. Pupils have a wide repertoire of songs and hymns, which they sing tunefully and with good expression, although it was clear in interviews that most have little knowledge of famous composers. During the year, pupils take part in a very wide range of activities, which include musical assemblies and productions, carols in the local church and concerts and workshops with other local schools. Occasional initiatives, such as the Year 6 involvement in a schools gala at the Royal Albert Hall, contribute effectively to pupils' positive attitude to the subject. Pupils have opportunities to learn to play a good range of instruments, sing in the choir and join the well-established school orchestra. These activities very successfully reinforce and extend the skills of those involved and boost pupils' interest in the subject.
83. Pupils are keen to talk about the range of models that they make in design and technology, such as Year 1's newspaper tower, Year 3's pneumatic and hydraulic powered monsters and Year 6's shelters. Pupils' initial work incorporates a strong element of investigation and research and projects are evaluated on completion. Their completed work indicates that pupils are developing satisfactory skills as they move through the school. Teachers often plan work in design and technology which links with other subjects, such as Year 2's work on Joseph's Coat, which links with mathematics and religious education. These arrangements give added meaning and purpose to pupils' work and improve their learning.
84. Together, the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. As well as the events and activities mentioned above, experiences, such as visiting a sculpture park, promote pupils' interest in **art and design** and inspire an appreciation of the beauty and magnificence of works of art. Pupils' work in the varied styles of artists such as William Morris, Claude Monet, Piet Mondrian, Jackson Pollock and Henry Moore. These projects give them insights into western cultural traditions, whilst non-western art linked to religious education and visiting musicians, such as an African drummer, help pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures.
85. Teachers' planning and policy documents indicate that all elements of the National Curriculum for **physical education** receive regular attention. In the lesson that was observed, pupils made good gains in developing their dance skills in response to the music and movement styles associated with the silent movies.
86. There are no consistent arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment in the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects. In most lessons, all pupils complete the same

activities because teachers do not have the necessary information to match tasks closely to pupils' prior attainment. This limits teachers' capacity to fully challenge and extend individual pupils' learning.

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

87. The school promotes this area of pupils' learning satisfactorily. There are regular lessons that provide pupils with planned opportunities to develop self-awareness and confidence by discussing issues that they face as part of everyday life. Many topics focus on the uniqueness and value of each individual and on the importance of self-respect as well as respect for others. These topics are consistent with the school's fundamental values and foster the positive attitudes, behaviour and response, which are a strong feature of the school.
88. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the overall quality of teaching, but in the lessons that were inspected, teaching was good. Teachers plan interesting activities for the lessons. For example, the role-play in Year 4 really stimulated pupils' imagination and enabled them to understand how they might help a friend who was feeling 'down'. Teachers make effective links with subjects such as geography, science and physical education to ensure that pupils develop a healthy lifestyle and understand environmental issues.
89. Pupils receive a considerable amount of teaching that helps them to understand the multi-ethnic nature of modern society, the daily lives of people in other societies and the beliefs and practices of people who follow different faiths. Through topics in art and design, history, design and technology, and religious education, teachers bring pupils face to face with their own cultural heritage and with the richness and diversity of other cultures. As a result of this thorough coverage, pupils develop the positive attitudes and values necessary for life in a diverse society.
90. The co-ordinator is doing a sound job. Planning for the subject ensures that it includes work on diet, health and relationship education, the misuse of drugs, personal safety and citizenship. The Healthy Schools award is leading to further worthwhile developments in the subject. The co-ordinator is already investigating alternative schemes of work and resources to support teachers' planning more effectively.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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