

INSPECTION REPORT

MEDINA HOUSE

Newport, Isle of Wight

LEA area: Isle of Wight

Unique reference number: 118228

Headteacher: Robin Goodfellow

Lead inspector: Mark Evans

Dates of inspection: 17th - 19th May 2004

Inspection number: 265128

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	61
School address:	School Lane Newport Isle of Wight
Postcode:	PO30 2HS
Telephone number:	01983 522 917
Fax number:	01983 526 355
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms. A. Millard
Date of previous inspection:	19 th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Situated in Newport, Medina House is the only special school for primary-age children with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties on the Isle of Wight. The pupils therefore travel to school from all over the island.

The school has just (September 2003) become a primary-phase-only school and the Governing Body is therefore new. The new headteacher, (the previous deputy), was confirmed in post at Easter, after being acting headteacher for two terms. There is currently an acting deputy headteacher.

There are currently 61 pupils on roll, though the school has an approved attendance of 64. All 61 pupils have statements for special educational needs - 52 for severe learning difficulties and 9 for profound and multiple learning. As would be expected, pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average. The ratio of boys to girls is high - 47 to 13, with 1 girl attending part time. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage; a very small number are of mixed British and black Caribbean race. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language, nor are there any children of travellers or refugees. There are 3 pupils 'looked after' by the local authority. At present, 11 pupils are involved in placements at schools other than Medina House - each one up to a maximum of a day a week. There are 8 classes, 1 of which is a maintained nursery with the equivalent of 7.5 pupils in it, 2 classes for 5 to 7 year olds (13 pupils in all) and 5 classes for 8 to 11 year olds (with 40 pupils).

The school is accredited as an Investor in People (2002). There is significant community use of school building, evenings and weekends.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20999	Mark Evans	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology, art and design, the Foundation Stage, music and citizenship
32676	Nick Power	Lay inspector	
23390	Mel Blackband	Team inspector	English, design and technology, geography, history and special education needs
10678	Margaret Paull	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, physical education and religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective school**, with some very good features. It is well thought of by its pupils, who achieve well, and very well thought of by its parents. It is well led, and has a team of talented professionals who provide good quality education and care. Given its high level of funding, it provides **satisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the creativity, flexibility and imaginativeness in dealing with pupils' needs;
- its caring ethos and calm atmosphere, which mean that pupils are happy to come to school;
- The partnership forged with parents is very strong;
- teaching quality is good: the support for pupils' learning and personal development provided by therapists, nursery nurses, learning support assistants, and by medical, administrative, technical and premises staff is very good and in some cases, exemplary;
- the clarity of leadership of the whole-school curriculum and its monitoring are at an early stage of development: religious education is not well planned and planning for the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not effective;
- there is a lack of formal long-term strategic planning: evaluation of the school's performance against other schools, including cost:benefit analysis is limited.

In the context of the enormous changes that have taken place, the school has made good progress since the last inspection, in the nearly all areas. Teaching was unsatisfactory in a significant proportion of lessons at years 1 and 2: it is now good or very good. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress were not effective because pupils' learning opportunities were not planned systematically across the school: planning is now good. Assessment and recording procedures were unsatisfactory: it is now good, though in the early stages of development. Support staff were not always deployed effectively: deployment is now very good. The roles and responsibilities of the senior management team and the governors lacked clarity and there is still some room for improvement. There was no coherent approach to monitoring and supporting the quality of teaching: this has improved. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating educational outcomes resulting from the school development plan were not sufficiently rigorous. This has improved, but is not yet sufficiently secure.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 2	Good	Very good
Year 6	Good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent, very good, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, poor, very poor.

Pupils **achieve well**. Boys and girls make similarly good progress and pupils with English as an additional language and those with the most complex needs achieve equally well. Pupils make **very good progress** in their personal development. More able pupils do not always do as well as they could.

With the exception of the more able pupils, pupils personal development including their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development, **is good**. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good. Attendance is good. Pupils' good progress is due to the high quality of teaching and adult support. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection in achievements in English, mathematics and information and communication technology.

The pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, though it would be more secure if it was planned for. There is a good ethos: there are very good relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils themselves.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education** provided by the school is **good**. The **quality of teaching** is **good** and many lessons are **very good**. This leads to good learning from the pupils: they work hard and enjoy their lessons. The curriculum is good, although there are still some areas that need to be formalised and clarified, in particular, the provision of religious education. The care, welfare, health and safety provided for pupils, both personal and medical, is good. The partnership with parents is very strong: parents are highly supportive of the school and are made to feel welcome.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, new to the post, though as deputy headteacher, very familiar with the former school, has already had a positive impact on the quality of education provided. His collegiate approach is effective and the senior managers of the school are developing into a successful and efficient team. The work of the governing body is also good. Governors are effective, enthusiastic and supportive, but unafraid to question and query. They work well with the headteacher and other staff and ensure the school meets its statutory obligations. Leadership and management of the Outreach provision, although in its infancy, are of a very high quality.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

All parents that returned the questionnaire agreed (or agreed strongly) that the school is led and managed well, and that teaching is good. There was a very strong feeling amongst parents that they would feel comfortable approaching the school with issues that concerned them. They also all indicated that the children behave well at school and they are treated fairly by staff. Almost all parents believe their children like school: certainly, almost all the children appeared happy when they arrived at school and worked with enthusiasm through the day. The pupils reported that they liked school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- clarify whole school leadership and monitoring of the curriculum;
- formalise long-term strategic planning, including developing a review cycle and analysing costs against benefits;
- re-organise the teaching of religious education and then implement the changes;
- evaluate further the school's performance against that of other schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The majority of pupils have severe learning difficulties. In addition, a significant number (about 15%) have profound and complex needs, including pupils with significant autism. For all, their standards of attainment are, understandably, low when compared to national averages. Nevertheless, taking account of previous learning and their special educational needs, the achievement for pupils of all ages and capabilities is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in nearly all subjects is good in all age groups, because of good teaching;
- Religious education is not taught as a discrete subject and achievement is not satisfactory;
- The achievement of pupils in language and communication is good;
- Achievement in personal, social and health education is very good;
- Higher attaining pupils could do even better.

Commentary

1. The children in the nursery class age achieve well because staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn. The programme is sufficiently flexible to meet individual needs. Children's progress is closely monitored and the information used when planning further work. In the main part of the school, by Year 2 and Year 6, achievement is good other than in religious education. It was not possible to judge achievement in art and design or in design and technology. Many teachers have pupils of different ages and abilities in their class, and work is usually planned to be of interest and challenge to all. However, some more able learners could be challenged to do more.
2. Although there is an imbalance between boys and girls in most classes, there is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. This is because staff plan activities that match the capabilities of each individual pupil, and ensure that all questions are directed equally to boys and girls. There is no difference in the performance of pupils from different groups, for example, those who are looked after by the local authority achieve well.
3. Since the last inspection, achievement has improved greatly, especially in Years 1 and 2. Previously, much of the progress made by pupils in these classes was unsatisfactory: this time, all pupils achieved satisfactorily and many were doing well. Progress made throughout the school in science was unsatisfactory: it is now good. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics was satisfactory, but now they achieve well. However, progress made in religious education was judged to be good, but now is unsatisfactory, largely because work in the subject is not coherently planned.
4. Achievement in English language, speaking, listening and communication is very good because of the good teaching and the excellent support provided by the Speech and Language therapist. This teamwork is very effective. When considered against the pupils' attainment on entry, progress made in communication is very good. The regular use of varied communication systems are a significant factor in the standards that pupils achieve. Speech, signing and symbols together with the use of communication books and increasing use of more specialised systems, together provide a sound learning environment for pupils with autism. Pupils with the most complex and profound learning difficulties are supported by a range of specialist access devices which supports their learning well. These include touch screens, single switches and alternative keyboards which provide good access to the curriculum for this significant minority of pupils. Writing is sometimes not as well developed as speaking and listening, due to less focused planning.

Medina House places great emphasis on the pupils' personal development: this is evident in its ethos and all the work that it does. The youngest pupils are encouraged to develop their communication skills and confidence through activities like circle time when teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants encourage pupils to participate. Those older pupils with more maturity and confidence, engage in discussions within the class setting. The school's very good provision for personal, social and health education gives ample opportunities to promote all aspects of personal development: these are used well and pupils achieve well as a result.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

5. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, as are their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The caring ethos and calm environment lead directly to pupils who like coming to school;
- The imaginative use of positive reward strategies mean that pupils' personal qualities develop well;
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to experience a contemporary, culturally diverse society;
- Attendance is higher than average for this type of school, although there are some minor inconsistencies in recording attendance.

Commentary

6. The school has a pleasant atmosphere. All staff enjoy working at the school, are kind, and care for the pupils well. As a result, the pupils enjoy coming to school and are pleased to see their teachers and other adults at school. This also leads to pupils trying hard with their work. The calm and ordered environment within the school helps the pupils to work with a minimum of distraction.

7. The staff use a wide variety of behaviour management strategies to reinforce positive characteristics and good achievement. For example, in one class pupils can earn 'sweets'. These are, in fact, pictures of sweets on cards. They are placed in the pupil's jar and when four have been earned the pupil is entitled to a 'treat', which will be something they particularly enjoy.

8. Although pupils develop well spiritually, morally and socially, there are few opportunities for them to experience cultures other than their own. In particular, there is little that takes place that is planned to give them an appreciation of a multicultural society. As there is no formal planning for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, some opportunities to maximise pupils' development in these areas are missed.

9. Attendance is higher than average for this type of school. The Education Welfare Officer and the school do a good job in ensuring that pupils attend school when they should. Recording of attendance is unsystematic and needs to be formalised. There were no exclusions in the last reporting year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.9	School data	0.4
National data	8.5	National data	0.5

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

Teaching and learning

10. The quality of teaching and learning is good. As a consequence, pupils learn well and make good progress in developing and reinforcing skills, knowledge and understanding. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers manage pupils very well and expect high standards of behaviour: high quality relationships underpin the teachers' high expectations of pupils' attitudes;
- Nursery nurses and learning support assistants make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning;
- Pupils' communication skills are encouraged well through the adults' skilled application of communication strategies, including the use of information and communication technology;
- Staff have adopted a new whole school assessment system, which is beginning to show dividends in the quality of target setting and individualisation of planning, which is a significant improvement compared with the last inspection.

Commentary

11. The overall quality of teaching and learning is a significant strength. Teachers manage the pupils well, based on the strength of relationships and trust that feature in all lessons and around the school. Much teaching is very good. Staff have high expectations of behaviour, and of pupils' application to their work, increasingly so as the pupils mature.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	12 (40%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)	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; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

12. The pupils' learning is underpinned by the emphasis on communication shown by all adults. All are skilled at using augmentative and additional communication systems such as signing and symbols, as well as text. This is not to the detriment of promoting speaking and listening skills: staff switch between systems seamlessly and appropriately, based on their assessment of the pupils' needs. Older and more able pupils express their views orally and listen to those of other pupils. The staff use questions very effectively, wording their interventions to challenge individuals and stimulate. Writing skills are sometimes taught with less clear planning than other aspects of English. Staff use the full range of technological aids to support pupils' communication. These devices enable pupils to participate in lessons from which they would otherwise be excluded. The use of them also encourages personal development as pupils can express choices and make independent contributions.

13. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour mean that pupils gradually learn to listen carefully to what they are asked to do: in most instances, they respond positively. Pupils generally work very hard and approach the tasks with interest and good concentration. They are encouraged to do this because of the range of interesting activities that teachers provide. Teachers are committed to developing pupils' personal qualities as well as their academic knowledge, and thus activities often require pupils to work independently: it is less common for them to require collaborative effort. There is very good teamwork between teachers and support staff.

14. Resources are used well to stimulate the pupils' learning. Specific multisensory resources, often teacher-made, are used equally effectively to promote the learning of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and autism: the school adopts a commendably flexible and creative approach which is based on the need of the individual pupil at that time. Links amongst the staff and the collegiate approach to teaching ensures that teachers can access regular support, when needed.

15. Lessons are well organised and the highest quality plans clearly identify tasks that are chosen to meet individual pupils' needs. Planning for these lessons is based on the teachers' detailed knowledge of pupils' prior learning. Consequently, all pupils are included and challenged, ensuring the lesson is a worthwhile experience for all the pupils. Occasionally, planning does not provide such individual detail, although most pupils still learn acceptably because of the adults' knowledge of their pupils. However, this leads to some of the more able pupils being less effectively challenged in their learning.

16. The assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory and improving. At the time of the last inspection, there was no consistent, structured approach to the use of assessment to inform planning in Key Stages 1 and 2. Practice is much improved and it continues to be good for the nursery children.

The school now makes very extensive use of digital photography to record pupils' experiences and activities. During lessons and at structured playtimes, teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants are good at observing how well and what the pupils are learning. Often, staff adjust what they are doing in accordance with what they see. Achievements and attitudes are noted after (or during, if staffing levels allow) a lesson and these notes are increasingly specific. This assessment information is increasingly used to decide what needs to be taught next, and how. In a number of subjects, such as art and design, design and technology, geography and science, this system is not as effective yet as it is for English and mathematics where it is good, but the school is well on track.

The curriculum

17. The curriculum framework and delivery are **good**: the school has been successful in improving the provision since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning for curriculum development and innovation is good: the curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education is very strong;
- The rich and varied curriculum is supported by relevant visits, but some subjects and the balance between subjects is not well enough planned;
- The curriculum does not challenge the higher attaining pupils enough;
- The staff are well qualified and very experienced, but they are not good enough at sharing resources.

Commentary

18. The school is still in the process of reshaping the curriculum after transition from all-age to primary age pupils. Personal, social and health education is a strength within the school because provision for it is well planned. Assistants and nursery nurses are particularly good at helping pupils learn in this area. Links with mainstream schools add an extra dimension. These include good outreach provision available for some pupils. Good use is made of visits to other sources of relevant experience, such as the local farms and gardens. These help bring the curriculum alive for pupils and provide them with good opportunities to practise social and other life skills.

19. There are many cross-curricular links, and particular attention is paid to literacy and mathematical skills as well as information and communication technology skills, in lesson planning. Teachers rarely miss an opportunity, whether in formal lessons, or swimming or play, to build upon

and extend these skills in varied and different contexts. In some other subjects, particularly religious education, planning is not clear enough to ensure an appropriate focus on what is to be learned. This tends to work to the disadvantage of the higher attaining pupils, because without clear planning which expressly addresses the needs of this group of pupils they are not given work which suitably challenges them at their own level. Timetabling is not always clear, and on occasion, time is not used to the best advantage. There are not, as yet, many extra-curricular activities, although the new gifted and talented sports club is proving popular.

20. Teachers are well qualified and confident in teaching the different subjects of the curriculum. Resources are good, especially those for teaching information and communication technology. However, teachers tend to acquire their own stock of resources, which leads to unnecessary duplication in individual classrooms. More openness and increased sharing of centrally stored resources would be more beneficial to promoting pupils learning more efficiently.

21. Learning is strengthened throughout the school by well-designed and bright wall displays, most of which are clearly the work of pupils. Some have a better focus for learning than others within a classroom, but in general space is used well in this way. Resources are not always sufficiently adapted to meet individual learning needs, and expectations could be higher for some pupils, especially higher attainers. Communication aids used with pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, are being further evaluated and developed. There are clear plans to build in more opportunities built in for collaborative work between pupils, to further extend communication skills and language.

22. Resources and accommodation are good overall. The school is in the process of building up the facilities even further so that the gym, for example, can be better used to accommodate the curriculum needs of primary age pupils in the future. Information and communication technology provision in classrooms and the computer suite is now good. Teachers are confident in their delivery of the curriculum, although several are new to their subject co-ordinators' posts and therefore at an early stage of planning the development of the subject across the school. Clearer co-ordination of the whole school curriculum would provide greater consistency, as well as an even better match to individual learning needs. Increased sharing of curriculum resources, stored centrally, rather than being duplicated in individual classrooms, would be beneficial.

Care, guidance and support

23. The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The support, advice and guidance offered to the pupils is satisfactory. The school takes satisfactory account of pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are given high priority by all at Medina House;
- Pupils' views are highly valued, but the school is not active enough in seeking out and acting on their ideas and feelings;
- There are very good relationships;
- Induction arrangements for pupils new to the school, and their parents, are very good;
- Good quality individual education plans help pupils make good progress towards their personal targets.

Commentary

24. There is a real feeling of community within the school. The pupils develop trusting relationships with all the adults. They quickly learn what is expected of them, in terms of behaviour. Most of the time, they demonstrate respect for one another and for staff. The school has a strong ethos of care which is supported by all the staff. Staff are also developing the other side of this caring attitude: that of seeking pupils' views and acting upon them, especially as they get older. For example, it manifests itself as helping pupils to manage social situations, and gradually increase the amount of time they spend in situations such as assembly, or in supporting individuals who only

integrate with the rest of the school for certain set periods. This works well in special cases, but it is not part of the day-to-day routine of the school, or available for all pupils.

25. Genuine teamwork from education, medical and therapy staff means that all pupils are made welcome and comfortable. This begins when school starts: support staff and teachers greet each pupil, exchanging banter. Daily care routines such as toileting and moving around the school, are managed sensitively and unobtrusively. The correct child protection procedures are in place and well organised, with appropriate staff induction and training. There is good attention to health and safety, though a number of minor issues were drawn to the attention of the headteacher.

26. Induction arrangements for pupils new to the school are good. The skills of the nursery staff enable pupils to get used to school routines and to settle into their learning. Pupils who join the school at a later stage are also well provided for. All pupils have clear, well-written individual education plans that identify suitable targets for learning and personal development. The plans are monitored effectively, as pupils learn and develop. The staff offer further support and encouragement through the school's recognition of pupils' achievements in the classroom and in celebration assemblies.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

27. The school has very good links with parents. Links with the community are good: links with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information sent to parents is thorough, relevant and appreciated;
- The rapidly expanding Friends Association organises many useful events to support parents and the school;
- Links with other schools are at an early stage of development.

Commentary

28. The school has a number of very effective ways of communicating with parents. The weekly newsletter is developing into a good forum for staff and parents to communicate with each other. It celebrates pupils' work and informs parents about forthcoming events and other matters relevant to school life. It includes contributions from staff, parents and pupils. The home-school link book is a good tool for teachers to keep parents informed about their child's progress, as well as for parents to communicate with their child's teacher. However, its effectiveness is not always as it should be because it is inconsistently used.

29. The Medina House Friends Association is a very good feature of the school. It is growing rapidly because it provides very good support for parents, is very well run and organised and is valued by the school. The association exists mainly to support parents through the regular speakers it engages and the social events it organises that allow parents to support each other. It does raise funds for the school, but this is not the association's primary purpose.

30. Links with other schools although at an early stage of development are beginning to provide opportunities that enrich some pupils' educational experience.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

31. The school is governed and led well by the governors and headteacher. The management of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the direction of the school and leads and motivates the staff well;
- The governing body has managed the setting up the primary school well;
- The senior management team has started to pull together well and is having a positive on the quality of education provided at the school and in supporting other schools;
- The school's evaluation of its own performance is at an early stage of development;
- Administrative staff are very efficient and are a significant aid to the senior staff and teachers in providing and caring for the pupils.

Commentary

32. The recently appointed headteacher is very clear about how he wants the school to develop. He involves and motivates staff and governors well: they are very supportive of him. They respect his knowledge and commitment and are keen to be involved in the school's further development. The senior management team contains a good breadth of knowledge and experience: it appropriately includes the school's nurse and administration officer, as well as teachers. This results in a co-ordinated approach to school development and is a significant benefit to the pupils' experience of school.

33. The governing body is managing the complexities of a changed school well. Newly appointed with the start of the focus on primary age phase, the governors are committed, knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They have not yet carried out a great deal of work comparing the school with others like it, but they have a good idea as to the strengths and weaknesses of Medina House, and know that self-evaluation is at the centre of the school improvement process.

34. The outreach work of the school is at an early stage of development, but is already highly regarded by participating schools and parents. It is well organised, and managed with enthusiasm and ability by the deputy headteacher. All the signs are that its effectiveness will increase.

35. The management structure is appropriate and the school improvement plan is a useful working tool. The school is rightly looking forward, but it does need to pause from time to time to evaluate whether the action it is taking is the most appropriate, and to see how effective the actions taken already have been. There is currently no review cycle, which suggests insufficient evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's structure and planning. For example, the school does not evaluate the cost effectiveness of the actions taken or do any cost-benefit analysis of proposed expenditure, to ensure that the money it spends is used to its best effect.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,140,846	Balance from previous year	101,006
Total expenditure	1,152,054	Balance carried forward to the next	89,798
Expenditure per pupil	14,583		

36. The school office is very well led and staffed by competent and enthusiastic people. This is important as the school manages its own budget and bank account so good control of financial

matters is essential. The school is well funded by the local education authority, which requires a flexible approach from the school. Current financial figures are skewed heavily by the amount of refurbishment and commissioning that the school has done in the setting up and initial running of the primary age accommodation: taking this into account, it offers satisfactory value money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There are eight nursery children on the roll of Medina House, one of whom attends part-time. During the inspection week, absences meant that the evidence it was possible to collect was insufficient to form judgements about each area of learning.

Provision for the Foundation Stage is **good**.

- The teaching and support staff are positive and skilled: they provide a caring and supportive atmosphere for the children;
- Induction procedures and practice are of a high standard: children who are sometimes frightened and disoriented are helped to adapt to school routines with great patience;
- The children achieve well because the curriculum is planned well, but undertaken flexibly, meeting the needs of all within the group;
- Opportunities for children to play, learn and socialise outdoors are well organised;
- Provision has improved since the last inspection.

Commentary

37. Children join the class with a wide range of special educational needs, but almost always have difficulties communicating with one another. This leads to the children finding new situations difficult, but the calm and well-planned classroom ensures that children settle as quickly as possible. Progress made in their **personal, social and emotional development** is very good. The children grow in confidence and gradually become more of a 'class', rather than a disparate group of individuals. Some remember simple routines such as when to move onto the next activity whilst others are helped by verbal prompts from staff. Adults provide calm and consistent role models: this also helps children to develop their understanding of what is expected of them. Provision in **communication, language and literacy** is good. Staff are knowledgeable and take every opportunity to improve the children's communication skills. Very good support by the speech and language therapist contributes significantly to pupils developing skills. Planned activities based on individual assessment focus on the use and the understanding of language. Throughout the day, children are encouraged to talk or sign. For children who are not yet communicating, the adults encourage responses through daily routines and planned individual activities.

38. The provision for **mathematical development** is good. The staff plan and organise a wide range of activities that help to develop children's mathematical skills. Number rhymes and songs support their developing skills and children enjoy the familiar words and rhythms. Mathematical understanding is further developed as adults reinforce colour and pattern. Some of the children improve their personal and social development taking turns and making choices. It was not possible to judge the provision for **knowledge and understanding of the world**, as there was not enough evidence. However, it is clear that the adults make good use of questioning to develop understanding and activities are planned to promote children's curiosity. There are attractive displays in the classroom and care is taken to make the outside area eye-catching and exciting too.

39. Provision for **physical development** is good. Children have access to a safe but exciting outside play area. Their natural play is enhanced and extended well by staff who join in the activities, either with one individual or with a small group. Children observed at playtime demonstrated satisfactory achievement. This time was unstructured, but adults made very good use of the opportunity to encourage children to propel vehicles independently and to be aware of others: at the same time, they dealt sensitively with a child who was very distressed. Staff initiate activities with children, encouraging climbing, riding and running. Opportunities to develop personal and social skills were sometime taken, but more could be done to encourage children to share the toys and to respect one another's play. The children develop physical and manipulative skills indoors, too,

through the use of pencils, pens and brushes. They have opportunities to draw and paint. However, it was not possible to make a judgement on the provision of **creative development**. The classroom shows that children have suitable opportunities to use a range of materials, producing their works of art. No role-play was observed during the inspection.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

English

The provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in their lessons and they enjoy them;
- The quality of teaching is good: lessons are well planned and interesting;
- Curriculum planning is developing well and teachers are working successfully towards greater consistency;
- Higher attaining pupils could do more.

Commentary

40. Lessons are effective because of good classroom management. This creates a happy working atmosphere in which pupils can learn well. The library is also particularly effectively used to promote interest in books and develop pupils' language and reading skills in a quiet, companionable atmosphere. Pupils are developing respect for books as a result, and the variety of strength, size and presentation of books ensures that even the most disinterested pupil, begins to take pleasure in handling and looking at them.

41. Teachers make very good use of different resources, including the whiteboards and computers. Pupils can work in different ways that suit their needs as groups or as individuals for different tasks. This makes for a lively, happy atmosphere within lessons that are well planned and structured. Nevertheless, some greater care is needed especially regarding the development of writing skills. This can be a little haphazard at times and as a result, pupils' attention is not always as fully focused on this task compared with development of speaking and listening skills, or reading.

42. Learning in English is promoted through good daily plans, supported during the lessons by skilfully deployed teaching assistants. The latter are very good at knowing when to help a pupil and in what way. All staff work very hard to encourage clear speech and communication skills in pupils, including very good liaison with the speech therapist for advice in this respect. In some lessons higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. They complete their work with relative ease and thus do not always learn as much as their abilities would allow.

43. The English co-ordinator is effective and is rightly working towards greater whole school consistency in monitoring and teaching English, with particular reference to following progress in reading at the upper levels to maintain and extend reading skills. There is good consistency between a pupil's statement or annual review and their individual education plans, although feedback for pupils regarding what they have learnt in a lesson is not consistent enough.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

44. English is well represented across the whole curriculum. Teachers encourage the use of books and promote reading and recording or writing during other lessons, including with computers, developing early word-processing skills. Teachers seldom let an opportunity to develop language skills pass by. In the nursery, children were fascinated with the teacher's presentation of the properties of water and ice, their vocabulary extending very appropriately into the language of

science. As well as during formal lessons in other subjects, language and communication skills are taught through play, swimming, and other activities, to the benefit of all pupils.

Mathematics

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good quality of teaching: teaching is very good in Key Stage 1;
- The curriculum is effective, incorporating the National Numeracy Strategy within a sound scheme of work;
- Pupils achieve well;
- Assessment in mathematics is well developed and is now a strength in the subject.

Commentary

45. Overall achievement in mathematics is good in both Key Stage 1 and 2. All pupils benefit from a highly structured curriculum, which provides a secure level of breadth and balance. The National Numeracy strategy has been adapted well to the needs of the children and has added rigour to their learning.

46. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well. They make good gains in understanding number symbols and in learning to count. This continues in Key Stage 2. More able pupils in these classes can count in twos, are becoming confident in simple addition and subtraction and are starting to make good progress in multiplication and division. The pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and respond well.

47. Lessons were characterised by a high standard of planning. Tightly structured objectives for the lessons were clearly stated and teachers provided comprehensive details on the work to be undertaken and how each pupil would be encouraged to work at a level appropriate to his or her ability. In most lessons the very able classroom assistants were well directed by the teacher in ensuring a high level of support for each pupil. What makes the teaching in Years 1 and 2 particularly good is the use of excellent, stimulating resources for the pupils. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and with high expectations of the pupils' achievement. The pupils greatly enjoy the challenge and respond well.

48. In some lessons in Years 3 - 6, the whole group sessions which precede the pupils' individual work were sometimes too long. Although the aims of the lessons were clear and appropriate, the pace was not fast enough and some pupils tended to lose concentration. Teachers are concerned to give each pupil the opportunity to contribute to the oral discussions on number and counting, but sometimes the pupils who were not directly involved at this stage become restless. However, teachers provide a high standard of individually based work for the pupils and at this point, the pace quickens and pupils become more motivated to give of their best. The high quality support the pupils were given by the teacher, nursery nurses and the classroom assistants enable them to make good progress within the lessons.

49. Assessment of pupils' achievement has become strength in the subject. The ability and attainment of the pupils has been very carefully noted. Teachers provide focused and relevant short term targets for pupils to aim for and from which each child benefits. Much of the teaching is specifically geared to meeting these targets and as a result the pupils make good progress. Targets in Mathematics are well represented in pupils Individual Education Plans. They are carefully monitored and adjusted frequently as the pupils make progress.

50. Pupils do well because the subject is managed effectively. There is a recently amended subject policy and an appropriate action plan for the development of the subject. The subject co-

ordinator has monitored teaching and scrutinises all planning termly. She has ensured that each classroom is well resourced and that there is a central stock of good quality teaching material.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. Numeracy skills are well taught in other subjects of the curriculum: many examples were seen during the inspection. In physical education and swimming, teachers use count frequently, to develop pupils' water confidence by encouraging them to immerse themselves in the water. In food technology, the teacher and assistants count repeatedly - strawberries, cups, children - all to help embed the numeracy skills. In information and communication technology and music, too, staff and pupils count and match objects, pictures and ready themselves for a song.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory;
- The curriculum is soundly based and has both breadth and balance;
- Assessment of pupils' progress is not strong enough;
- There is a good range of resources;
- There is a need for staff training to make teaching of the subject even more effective.

Commentary

52. Pupils' satisfactory achievement is an improvement on the last inspection when the curriculum and standards in Key Stage 1 were unsatisfactory. Pupils now benefit from increased time allocation for the subject and from a broadly based and appropriate curriculum which covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. In many classes, science is linked to geography and sometimes to design and technology, in a topic-based framework. This approach is effective in reinforcing the pupils' grasp of the knowledge and understanding required in the subject.

53. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. It was only possible, however, during the inspection, to observe one science lesson. The available evidence from teachers' planning, from displays in classrooms and from the wealth of photographic records shows that pupils enjoy the subject and make satisfactory progress throughout the school. The teaching observed, in a year 3 class, demonstrated that the teacher had a good command of the subject. The lesson was very well prepared and the teacher had ensured that all the necessary resources, including potting compost and paper cut-outs of flowers were easily accessible. In this lesson, the learning support assistants were well briefed and were able to make a significant contribution to the success of the lesson. Pupils were well supported and the degree of individual attention afforded to each child meant that there was a good level of achievement by the pupils. The pupils were interested in their work and behaved responsibly. By the end of the lesson, the higher achievers could name the parts of a flower and had learned how to care for a bean shoot using a plant pot and compost.

54. At present, assessment is focused on the experiences that pupils have during lessons. These experiences are well-documented in photographic evidence but as yet there is no specific record of how pupils make progress in the subject. The subject policy needs to be updated to take account of improvements in the assessment strategy of the school so that teachers have a clearer picture of each pupil's progress in the subject. There is a good range of resources, spread between classrooms and a central resource base and staff use the resources well to enhance the pupils' achievement. The co-ordinator is rightly aware that the subject knowledge of some teachers, including herself, is weak in some aspects of the science curriculum. This lack of knowledge is currently a hindrance to the development of the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants are confident and ensure that information and communication technology is fully integrated into their teaching;
- It is used well to facilitate pupils' communication;
- Leadership and management are good;
- Whole school monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has started only recently, and is therefore not fully embedded.

Commentary

55. It was only possible to observe one information and communication technology lesson during the inspection but there were many examples of staff and pupils using technology in different subjects of the curriculum. Teachers are confident about using new technology and they are well supported by the range of high quality resources. They are similarly well supported by the subject co-ordinator and the technician. Together, they provide expertise and leadership from which the whole school is benefiting. There is a very good range of computers in classrooms, as well as a computer suite for class activities: there is also a good range of equipment such as digital cameras. Provision of special access devices ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils, in accessing computers. The teaching of communication throughout the school is supported well by the use of information technology. Staff use it frequently, both to produce learning aids and resources, and for their own lesson planning.

56. Pupils achieve well at levels appropriate to their capability. Those with more complex needs make choices and give responses through using touch screens or switches. Some pupils know how to use a range of equipment including digital cameras, television, video players and photocopiers.

57. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator works hard and is an enthusiastic proponent of information and communication technology and its many uses. Medium and short term planning is relevant to the needs and abilities of individual pupils, combining challenge with achievable targets. He works with the co-ordinators of other subjects to develop a whole school approach and understanding. The information and communication technology technician is a significant part of the school team: he makes an important and valuable contribution to the computer infrastructure at Medina House and this benefits all the pupils. Teaching in the subject is monitored by the co-ordinator, but this has only been a recent development and has yet to show significant benefits in terms of the active sharing of good practice.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. Information and communication technology is used best in English, mathematics and science. Teachers do plan a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in the other subjects of the curriculum, but there is still some variation in the regularity and quality of use in these other subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography

59. Geography is not taught as a separate subject in the school, and there is insufficient evidence from this inspection for a full evaluation. During the inspection, geography appeared as a cross-curricular aspect of science, where pupils explored different environments, including visits

outside the school. Teachers check pupils' learning and progress in these lessons through the monitoring systems that are in place for geography. The geography co-ordinator is newly in post and is currently checking through resources prior to the forthcoming review of the subject. Appropriate and timely plans are in train for increased and more consistent monitoring of the subject throughout the school, both in terms of teaching and pupils' progress, in order to make whatever adjustments are deemed necessary for next year.

History

60. History is delivered in a cross-curricular way, and there was insufficient evidence during the course of the inspection to provide secure judgements. History is dealt with in a way that is meaningful for the pupils as, for example, when visits made in the context of science are followed up in class the following day, and pupils are reminded about the time gap, and asked to think about what happened yesterday. The subject is offered on a two-year cycle, and a clearer identity for history within a topic framework is rightly planned within the curriculum in future.

Religious Education

Provision for religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outline scheme of work is new and has not yet become established within the school;
- There are no established programmes of study;
- The subject is presently too closely linked to personal, social and health education and does not cover the learning required by the Agreed Syllabus;
- There is insufficient timetabled teaching time.

Commentary

61. Pupils' achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory and has not built on the standards reached in the last inspection. At present, there is only an outline scheme of work based loosely on the Isle of Wight Agreed Syllabus and adapted from the 'Equals' curriculum. These two curriculum schemes are difficult to reconcile into a coherent whole. There is no established system of teaching religious education in the school and programmes of study have not been created. At present there is inadequate time allocated to the subject within the teaching cycle. The close links to personal, social and health education weaken the specific focus on knowledge, skills and understanding contained in the study of religious education. There is no assessment of pupils' progress within the subject beyond the recording in photographs of pupils' experiences. Although the new outline scheme includes a consideration of other faiths besides Christianity, there is evidence only in one classroom that these have been included in the teaching. Pupils do not therefore make satisfactory progress.

62. It was only possible to observe one lesson of Religious Education. In this year 4 lesson, pupils learned about the rituals of a Hindu wedding. They were given the opportunity to experience dressing up as a Hindu bride and groom and to 'take part' in a Hindu wedding celebration. Pupils were enabled to see the differences in dress between a British traditional wedding and a Hindu wedding but made little progress in learning about the ceremony or its meaning, since this important aspect was omitted from the lesson.

63. Teaching in the lesson observed was satisfactory. The teacher was well prepared and had made great efforts to provide dressing up clothes and appropriate music and she had created a most impressive wall display of Hindu customs, dress and religious artefacts. The teacher had a good knowledge of Hindu wedding ceremonies and she was able to describe details of the saris worn and their colours. Some opportunities for language development were missed as the pupils chose their 'wedding clothes'. The pupils used appropriate descriptive words and phrases to make

their choices such as 'I want to wear this red one', 'this one is nice' but the language was not followed up by the teacher or classroom assistants. The lesson proceeded at a variable pace. When the teacher introduced practical activities or engaged the pupils in relevant questions they were well behaved and interested. At other times the pupils became restive, since they did not yet understand the differences between traditional Christian marriage ceremonies and Hindu celebrations. Classroom assistants were underused on this occasion and restricted their involvement to helping the children dress up. The pupils learned that Hindu wedding celebrations are happy occasions but gained little understanding of any religious significance.

64. The management of the subject is presently inadequate. The subject policy is in draft form only and little progress has been made in constructing the termly planning cycle. Teachers are thus not able to plan adequately for teaching the subject. Until planning for the subject is improved, it will not be practicable to assess pupils' progress in the subject or to support their achievements. Some progress has been made in involving outside agencies in the school's provision. The school has celebrated Christian events such as Harvest and Christmas and has recently held a Mothering Sunday and an Easter assembly. There has, however, been very little celebration of other faiths as required by the Agreed Syllabus. Staff have not been adequately trained to teach the subject. Resources for the subject available in the school do not give sufficient scope for teaching about the Jewish, Islamic or Hindu religions.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

65. Insufficient work was seen to judge the overall quality of provision in **art and design** and in **design and technology**. However, work around the school, discussions with staff and pupils, and photographic evidence suggest that pupils learn appropriately and enjoy what they do. They benefit from opportunities to work with food and, in art, to use a range of techniques, materials and tools.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teacher's and subject co-ordinator's enthusiasm for music has a tangible beneficial effect on the pupils' learning;
- Pupils develop their personal and social skills well through music;
- The management of the subject is complicated by the fact that the co-ordinator does not at present teach it.

Commentary

66. Only one lesson was observed in music. However, singing was heard in assembly and DVDs of previous performances were analysed, along with the examination of the subject co-ordinator's files. It is evident that the provision for music is good. The co-ordinator has developed appropriate units of work from nationally recognised schemes. Records show that suitable attention is given to all elements of the subject. However, the assessment and recording of knowledge and skills is an area that be improved further. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate music in other subjects and during acts of worship. Some teachers use music to support learning in other subjects, such as English and mathematics.

67. The current leadership situation for music has arisen after a series of staffing issues. The headteacher, who is a talented musician, teaches the subject to all classes, but does not co-ordinate the subject. The school is aware that although the practical outcomes of this situation are good at present, it is not a situation that can continue for too long.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Water related aspects of physical education are good or very good;
- Gym area is in need of refurbishment;
- The physical education curriculum needs developing further.

Commentary

68. Pupils enjoy their physical education sessions, especially those that take place in the swimming or splash pools. During these sessions teachers not only strive to develop confidence in the pupils but they also build in many concepts and thinking skills as well as social and collaborative skills in the course of the session. Even during the times when pupils are free to swim or enjoy themselves in free activity, staff are encouraging skills such as throwing, catching, counting, and awareness of space around them whilst pupils are playing in the water. Swimming is encouraged in the school at all ages, and more able pupils have the opportunity to swim in the local swimming pool also.

69. Only one gym session was observed, and this was satisfactorily carried out with a group of combined classes. Pupils clearly enjoyed the session, although they showed little concept of teamwork, or of throwing or passing a ball. The gym hall is a very large space for younger pupils to cope with and its general fixtures are not yet entirely suitable for primary age groups.

70. Resources are satisfactory and are building up. There are refurbishment plans for the gym and outside physical education areas. The newly appointed co-ordinator has introduced a well-attended club with a view to improving further the skills of more gifted and talented pupils. Evaluation of physical education skills is ongoing although assessment is in need of further improvement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education is taught successfully in specific lessons and through each curriculum subject;
- Assessment in the subject is very good and gives valuable information on how well pupils are making progress;
- There is a positive atmosphere throughout school in which all pupils are valued for their achievements;
- The school frequently celebrates pupils' achievements;
- There are several specific initiatives to improve provision further.

Commentary

71. Achievement in this subject is a strength throughout the school. Provision is very good and has built on the good standards observed during the last inspection. Pupils are able to make very good progress through sensitive teaching in specific lessons and because elements of Personal, Social and Health Education are emphasised in daily classroom work. The school is characterised by an atmosphere of celebration of each pupil's achievements, however small. Pupils and staff are seen to be valued and to respect each other's contribution. Teachers and other staff demonstrate a high regard for their pupils and this is reciprocated by the trust pupils place in all the adults. The

recent improvements which the school has made in the assessment of pupils' progress, has enabled staff to construct relevant and specific targets for each child. Teachers and other staff are aware of each small gain in their pupils' achievement. The progress is built on and duly celebrated in lessons and in well planned celebratory assemblies. Staff have enhanced the provision through initiatives such as the 'Healthy Schools Award' and training for staff in 'Emotional Literacy'. There is planned development in the enabling of pupils to make appropriate choices through the concept of 'Plan-Do-Review' and in the introduction of 'Circle Time'. The school has sound policies and structures for Sex and Relationships Education, Drugs Awareness and in its Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies. The creation of a very successful 'Breakfast Club' in year 6 gives pupils opportunities to choose from a menu and encourages their independence in helping to prepare their own food. The pupils enjoy both the responsibility they are given and pleasant social nature of eating together.

72. Teaching in Years 1 - 6 is characterised by an emphasis on the personal, social and health needs of each individual child. In a very good mathematics lesson in Key Stage 1, each pupil was encouraged to contribute to the lesson and was praised accordingly. A successful lesson in year 3 formed part of a series of lessons on the 'Plan-Do-Review' programme. The pupils were given clear guidelines on choosing an activity, which they then pursued. Throughout the lesson pupils were reminded of their entitlement to choose between alternatives and in a plenary session at the end of the lesson were encouraged to understand how they had decided what they would do. They were then encouraged to decide what they would do in the next session. Pupils shared materials and worked in co-operation with each other. A lesson in year 6 was part of the planned course in 'Sex and Relationships' education. The lesson was well prepared and had appropriate resources. The teacher and support assistants worked effectively with the pupils in discussing peoples' 'private parts' and why these were private. The teacher had a good command of the subject knowledge and was able to ask effective questions to extend and reinforce the pupils' understanding.

73. Lessons in personal, social and health education are enhanced on frequent occasions by linking teaching to aspects of religious education. In a very successful Key Stage 1 assembly, the pupils were taught to say 'thank you' for lovely things such as birthday presents and to say thank you to people and to God for the things they did for us.

74. Assessment in the subject is very secure. Pupils' baseline' ability and attainment has been established and each child has specific and measurable targets for personal, social and health education. These targets form part of the pupils' individual education plans and are regularly reviewed. Teachers and other staff work consistently to encourage children towards their targets. This has had an important influence on the pupils' high standards of achievement.

75. The subject is well co-ordinated. Relevant policies and procedures are up to date. The co-ordinator is successfully managing the whole school involvement in seeking to gain the 'Healthy Schools Award' and she has co-ordinated a 'Healthy Schools' week, involving healthy eating and hygiene. Teaching in the subject is well planned and monitored by the co-ordinator. She has constructed a sound and relevant action plan for development of the subject. This is regularly reviewed and progress noted.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	8
Pupils' achievement	3
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	3
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	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	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).