

## INSPECTION REPORT

**BITTERNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY  
CONTROLLED JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Bitterne

LEA area: Southampton

Unique reference number: 116339

Acting Head teacher: M. Seymour

Lead inspector: D. Gosling

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005

Inspection number: 266437

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Junior School  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 7 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 240

School address: Brownlow Avenue  
Bitterne  
Southampton  
Hampshire  
Postcode: SO19 7BX

Telephone number: 023 80499494  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Dr. S. Roberts

Date of previous inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> January 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Bitterne is a voluntary-controlled Church of England junior school situated on the outskirts of Southampton. It is about the same size as other primary schools with a roll of 240, 119 boys and 121 girls. There are eight classes in the school, two in each year group. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The pupils come from a range of social backgrounds which, taken together, are more favourable than the national picture. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start in Year 3 is what is expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average but none has a statement to outline specific needs. The needs of the pupils with special educational needs are mainly related to dyslexia and emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are few pupils from ethnic minorities on roll and none at an early stage of learning English. The school has an Investors in People Award for the care and development of its staff, the Basic Skills Quality Mark for its special educational needs provision and the Healthy Schools Award for its health education and provision for pupils' health. The current head teacher is currently on long term maternity leave and an acting head teacher has been temporarily brought onto the school from another school in the Local Authority.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7118	D. Gosling	Lead inspector	English, history, geography, special educational needs
9646	G. Osment	Lay inspector	
30244	R. Tapley	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, art and design and technology
32556	S. Greenall	Team inspector	Mathematics, religious education, physical education, music, physical education, citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Bitterne is a very effective school** with some outstanding features. The pupils achieve very well because teachers are very skilful and because they have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils work very hard and they have outstanding relationships with each other and with adults. The leadership of the school by the acting head teacher and other key staff is very good, with a sharp focus on raising standards. Management is very efficient at all levels and some of the evaluations produced by the curriculum leaders are outstanding. The school is characterised by a very positive culture in which both teachers and pupils strive to do their best. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils achieve very well in most subjects and reach well above average standards
- Teaching is very good, with planning, classroom management, the use of information and communication technology, and the use of rewards for pupils major strengths
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work are excellent, mainly because of very good teaching, support and guidance
- Attainment in mathematics has been lower than that in other subjects in recent years
- The acting head teacher, deputy head teacher and curriculum coordinators have an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, partly through very rigorous tracking of pupils' progress
- Although the school has identified underachieving pupils, there is not enough targeting of work on them in lessons

**Since the school was last inspected, improvement has been good.** High standards have been maintained in a number of aspects of pupils' work. Results in the Year 6 national tests have improved. Teaching has improved and an excellent system for tracking pupils' progress has been introduced.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	B	A	B
mathematics	C	B	C	D
Science	A	A	A	B

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

**Pupils' achievement is very good.** When pupils start school in Year 3, overall attainment is normally about the same as expected for their ages. By the end of Year 6, attainment is well above national averages. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average and this has lowered overall standards and the benchmarking grades in the table above. This was particularly the case in 2004 when 23 per cent of pupils, the highest figure for several years, had special educational needs. Achievement throughout the school is very good. The pupils achieve particularly well in reading, speaking and listening, science and information and communication technology. Achievement in mathematics is good but is not as good as in English and science. Despite pupils performing below the average for similar schools in mathematics in 2004, current pupils' work and the school's value added data show achievement throughout the school to be good in mathematics. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well, though they

achieve better in English, and those from ethnic minorities do as well as other pupils. More able pupils achieve very well.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are fostered extremely well.** The school expects very high standards of behaviour and pupils respond to this very well. Pupils' attitudes to work are outstanding and their relationships with each other and adults are excellent. A community has been established in the school where pupils respect each other and strive to succeed. The school nurtures pupils' personal qualities with great care and they reach a high level of maturity by Year 6. Attendance is very good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching is very good,** with major strengths in every year group. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and they are very well-structured. In all lessons there is a good range of activities, with excellent provision for oral work. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and a very good grasp of how children learn best. A notable feature of lessons is the excellent use made of interactive whiteboards connected to computers to focus work and make lessons more interesting. Teachers have identified underachieving pupils but work is not yet being targeted at them sufficiently in lessons.

The curriculum is very well-planned and provides a good range of work, which is enriched by the very good range and quality of activities outside lessons. The provision for music, particularly the learning of musical instruments, is excellent. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and checking on their progress are excellent and marking is very good. The school provides very good care and support for its pupils and provides exceptional opportunities for them to express and record their views. There is an excellent partnership with parents; links with other schools are very good and links with the community are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership of the school is very good.** The acting head teacher has a clarity of vision and high expectations, and the senior management team provides very good direction. There is a sharp focus on raising standards and improving teaching and learning at subject level and very good improvement strategies in place. The school improvement plan is satisfactory but the key priorities are narrow in scope and not referenced enough to raising standards. Curriculum leaders are leading their subjects very well and they have very good subject expertise. Governors fulfil their role effectively. They have considerable expertise, a good knowledge of the school, and provide the right balance of support and challenge. Governors do not monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan with enough rigour.

**Management of the school is very good.** The evaluations produced by curriculum leaders are excellent, with a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment. The school is very efficiently managed. There is rigorous monitoring of teachers' work and support to help them improve. Finances are very well managed.

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

Parents have very positive views of the school and nearly all think that their children are happy and doing well. They are very happy with the level of consultation and think that the school is very well led. Pupils take pride in the school. They find lessons interesting and think they are expected to work hard. Many particularly appreciate the way the school listens to their views and trusts them.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Raise the standards in mathematics so that they are in line with those in English and science



- Target work more systematically in lessons on those pupils identified as underachieving

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

Pupils' achievements are very good. They join the school with average attainment in Year 3 and leave with well-above average attainment. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above the national average in English and science and in line with the national average in mathematics. There is very good achievement because of very skilful teaching, the rigorous following up of any underachievement, and very good leadership of subject areas. The pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support provided in lessons and the skilful teacher assistants.

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

- Pupils achieve very well in reading and speaking and listening and they are developing some very sophisticated responses to literature
- Mental arithmetic and spelling are comparative areas of weakness
- Pupils achieve very well in science and ICT mainly because of the teachers' subject expertise, very good use of resources and rigorous curriculum planning
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in English and satisfactorily in mathematics

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.7 (27.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.6 (27.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.1 (30.9)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

#### **National tests and other performance data**

1. In 2003, results in Year 6 national tests were, overall, well above the national average and in 2004 they were above. The best results have been in science where they have been well above the national average for the past four years. English results were well above the national average in 2004 and above the national average for the previous three years. Results in mathematics tests have been lower than in other subjects. They were in line with the national average for 2001, 2002 and 2004 and above in 2003. Attainment at the higher Level 5 and above was well above the national average in English and science and above the national average in mathematics.
2. Compared with similar schools, results in 2004 were above average. They were above average in English and science and below in mathematics. The main reason that results were above average compared with similar schools but well above average compared with schools nationally in 2004 was that 23 per cent of pupils in that year group had special educational needs – a higher proportion than in other year groups. In 2002 and 2003 results were well above average for similar schools.
3. From 2002 - 2004 girls have performed better than boys in national tests but the gap is similar to the national gap. A small group of boys with special educational needs who have made comparatively slower progress have contributed to this overall gap in attainment. Value-added data produced by the school indicates that the relatively small number of pupils from ethnic minorities are making the same progress as other pupils, with no pattern of underachievement from any ethnic group.

## **Standards and achievement**

4. There has been good improvement in the standards being attained since the last inspection. At the last inspection standards were found to be very good overall and this has been sustained. The trend in national test results from 2002 to 2004 has been above the national trend, despite a slight decline this year in mathematics and science results. The Level 5 and above writing results improved dramatically this year as a result of targeted support for pupils on the borderline and a sharper focus on test criteria.
5. There is a range of attainment in different year groups and overall the highest standards are being attained in Years 3 to 5. Attainment is lower in the current Year 6 because there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
6. Pupils' achievements in English and science are very good and they are good in mathematics. A major strength of pupils is their speaking and listening skills. They work very well in pairs and in groups, with high levels of self-discipline. They listen well and take turns when they speak. Oral contributions are clear and fluent and pupils are able to speak well in formal situations such as debates and whole class discussions. Standards in reading are very good. Pupils have good comprehension skills and they have a good grasp of meaning beyond the literal – inference and deduction. Some of the responses to literature by pupils are very sophisticated. Pupils' writing is weaker than their reading in all year groups. They can write in a range of styles but a minority have difficulty with punctuation, and spelling is a weakness of even some of the higher attaining pupils. Achievement in mathematics is good. Pupils achieve well at calculations and they can analyse and use data well. They are less skilful at using and applying their mathematical skills, mental mathematics and mathematical reasoning. In science, pupils achieve very well. They have a good knowledge of key areas, use technical vocabulary well and they are skilled at using data and ICT.
7. Pupils achieve very well in information and communication technology. They are very strong at using databases and spreadsheets, monitoring and control. In physical education (PE), pupils achieve well. They make good progress with their games, gymnastic and dance skills. Other subjects were only sampled during the inspection but achievement in lessons and work was very good overall. Pupils displayed a very good grasp of historical and geographical skills and concepts and a high standard of music performance and knowledge.
8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. In lessons they work hard and cope with some challenging work, for example the Year 6 shared novel *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Those who are withdrawn for extra support are making very good progress with their basic literacy. There is less provision for numeracy in Individual Education Plans but pupils are set in mathematics in each year group and the needs of the lower sets are met reasonably well.
9. The more able pupils achieve very well overall. They achieve very well in English, science and information technology and well in mathematics and physical education. The work of the more able pupils shows very good progress and the end of year tests and teacher assessments show them to be making very good gains in National Curriculum levels.

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

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Pupils' personal qualities are developed extremely well. Pupils arrive at school on time and their attendance rate is well above the national average.

## **Main strengths**

- The quality of relationships is an outstanding feature of the school

- The school expects very high standards of behaviour and the pupils' response to this is excellent
- Pupils' personal development is promoted exceptionally well and as a result their attitudes are outstanding
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent

## Commentary

10. The special relationships that exist between members of staff and pupils and pupils with each other create a strong sense of community in which all can succeed. In many lessons pupils work together harmoniously and co-operatively and this is leading to their very good learning. This was clearly seen in a very good mathematics lesson in Year 5 when the pupils were interpreting line graphs by telling its story. It was also seen in a very good Year 6 PE lesson as the pupils practised and improved their dance movements using increasing control and accuracy. At break and lunchtimes the pupils play together very well - boys and girls, and older with younger pupils.
11. Parents and pupils are right in their belief that behaviour in the school is a strength. Pupils enjoy being in the school and because all members of staff have the same very high standards they have a thorough understanding of how they should behave. Behaviour is very good in lessons as a result of the very good teaching, which keeps all pupils highly motivated and interested. This was evident during an excellent Year 4 religious education (RE) lesson. The pupils were challenged to devise questions for a visitor from Bitterne parish church to find out 'why Easter is so important to Christians?' Pupils' excellent behaviour is contributing positively to their very high standards of achievement. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that there was no harassment or racism in the school. No pupils were excluded last year.
12. All adults treat the pupils with respect and consideration and as a consequence the pupils are courteous and kind to everyone and they are developing an understanding of the needs of different people. An example is the peer mentoring and "buddy" schemes when pupils try to resolve problems and help the youngest ones settle into school. A very high number of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that their children are encouraged to become mature. Pupils spontaneously praise each other for their efforts and are good at giving and receiving constructive criticism during lessons. This was seen during a dance lesson in Year 3 as the pupils demonstrated their rolls, rocks and balances to the class. Pupils' very high levels of enthusiasm and confidence are also major contributors to their high achievement.
13. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved considerably since the inspection of January 1999. The prayer box and Good News Club have contributed to the improvement and the quality of assemblies is very high. In one, pupils were asked to remember how they felt when they were excited about something and think how happy the people of Jerusalem felt when they saw Jesus on Palm Sunday. On another a local vicar delivered powerful messages about the use of symbols in a very visual way. In personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons, pupils discuss the Special Person for the week; they say positive things about each other that build confidence and self-esteem. The school very successfully promotes pupils' social and moral development through the school and class councils, the Civic Award, the celebrations of achievement in the Gold Award and Red Letter assemblies and the choosing of Class Friend and Star Pupil. Overall, opportunities for pupils to take on extra responsibility have improved since the last inspection. The previous inspection team judged cultural development to be satisfactory but this has also improved. Teachers make good use of the local area to develop a strong understanding of pupils' own heritage but the school has few pupils from other ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Visitors, including storytellers, dancers and musicians during multicultural week, are welcomed into school to support pupils' learning about people with other beliefs and cultures.

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

Authorised absence	
School data	3.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1

National data	5.1
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National data	0.4
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*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

14. Attendance rates are very high in comparison with other schools, which reflects the parents' and pupils' high regard for the school.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are very good and the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils very well. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported very effectively. There is an excellent partnership with parents. Links with other schools are very good and links with the wider community are good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. There is very strong teaching taking place in each year group.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planning of lessons is very rigorous and is leading to well-structured lessons with clear objectives
- Classroom management is excellent, with all teachers consistently following the school's behaviour policy and establishing a positive climate in lessons
- Teachers have a very good level of subject expertise, which is enabling them to challenge and extend pupils
- Lessons contain a wide range of activities and there is excellent provision for oral work
- Excellent use is made of visual aids and ICT in lessons, especially the whiteboards linked to computers
- Work is matched to pupils of different levels of attainment in lesson but there could be more targeting of those pupils identified as underachieving

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (13%)	15 (47%)	11 (34%)	2 (6%)	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.*

15. There is strength in depth in the school with very good teaching taking place in each year group, although one teacher was absent during the inspection. Some of the teaching is excellent. Teaching is characterised by very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and by a very high degree of energy and rigour.
16. One example of the rigour of teaching is the excellent planning of lessons. Plans are very detailed, catering for pupils at different levels and with a range of tasks. Learning objectives are clear and simplified so that they can be shared with pupils. Occasionally there are too few objectives in lessons. For example there could be objectives to improve spelling in some English lessons, as well as the broader objectives.
17. Lessons are divided into beginnings, middles and ends, in line with national guidance and all sections in lessons are very effective. There is a fast pace in the lesson openings where the whole class learn together; the middles of lessons where pupils work in groups or independently, often at their own level, are very well organised. Teachers are very effectively using the ends of lessons to evaluate how much progress the class has made in meeting learning objectives. Within this three part structure, there is an excellent range of activities. The provision for oral work is a particular strength. In nearly lessons pupils have the opportunity to engage in group and paired discussion and this is helping to consolidate learning and make lessons more interesting. In one Year 6 English lesson comprising lower attaining pupils excellent use was made of drama to explore characters in the novel the class was studying. There were very high expectations of a Year 3 geography class where

pupils were debating issues around global warming in role, with the more able group taking the part of the government.

18. The classroom management of pupils is outstanding. All teachers are consistent in their approaches and in each class the routines are well-understood. Even the most challenging pupils are managed extremely well. One of the most notable features of teaching is the positive atmosphere established in lessons by the use of praise and the use of rewards. In all lessons teachers are giving house stickers for good achievement and these are highly valued by pupils. The high quality of classroom management is enabling teachers to move the class swiftly between tasks and to maintain the pace of learning. A good example of this was a Year 5 PSHE lesson where the class began by re-ordering the furniture of the room around the perimeter with the minimum of noise and fuss.
19. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and they manage lessons with calm authority. Their knowledge enables them to challenge pupils and to probe and extend their knowledge. The knowledge teachers have of grammar for example, following some recent training, is enabling them to teach some very sophisticated concepts such as clause analysis, complex sentences and the conditional tense to pupils in Year 6. Teachers also have a good knowledge about how to help children learn. In some lessons they used “brain gyms” to prepare the pupils for work and in many excellent use was made of multi-sensory approaches to engage pupils.
20. The use made of resources by teachers is excellent. Photographs, videos and other visual aids are used extremely effectively and excellent use is being made and the use being made on the interactive whiteboard to enhance the pupils’ interest and providing a focus for texts, ideas and teaching points.
21. There are two areas for development in teaching. The work of “focus” pupils identified as underachieving is monitored and followed up but there is more scope to target them in lessons. Secondly, although there is a fast pace of learning, in some lessons there is not enough space for pupils to work independently and provide more extended responses.
22. Teaching is at least good in the five subjects inspected in detail. It is very good in English, science, and ICT and good in mathematics and PE. It is strongest in English, science and ICT because teachers have a very high level of expertise in these subjects, pupils are challenged and lessons are extremely well planned. In mathematics lessons, there is not enough attention to using and applying mathematics. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. In lessons, work is carefully matched to their attainment level and pupils often receive sensitive and skilful support from teaching assistants. In the withdrawal lessons observed the teacher assistant had good expertise in the programmes she was using and was keeping careful records of pupils’ progress which she passed on to the class teacher. There is little or no targeting of numeracy skills in individual education plans but mathematics are set in each year group and pupils’ needs are met reasonably well.
23. Assessment is very good overall. All teachers are keeping regular assessments of pupils’ progress in the National Curriculum. The progress pupils with special educational needs make in meeting targets in their individual education plans is kept under constant review. Marking is very thorough and the ongoing assessments teachers make in lessons are very rigorous but sensitive.
24. Pupils have very good learning skills, partly because of the high expectations of them as soon as they join the school. They work hard, apply themselves to tasks set and work exceptionally well without teacher supervision.

### **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is very good.



## **Main strengths**

- The personal, social and health education programme is excellent
- Participation in music and the other arts is excellent
- Opportunities for extra curricular activities are very good
- Resources, including ICT, are very good

## **Commentary**

25. The school meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies very well. All pupils are offered a very good range of curricular opportunities and an appropriate amount of time is devoted to the study of each area of the curriculum. A very wide range of extra curricular activities is offered to pupils.
26. For each subject the curriculum is planned very carefully to ensure that there is progression and full coverage of the National Curriculum for each year group. The only exception is in mathematics where there could be better provision for using and applying mathematics.
27. The curriculum for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory. The setting arrangements in mathematics in each year group and in English in Year 6 before the national tests are effective in meeting the needs of the most able. Otherwise, there is scope for more systematic provision for the more able. There is excellent provision for pupils' personal, social and health education with separate lessons offered, as well as circle time and a wide range of extra-curricular activities which support personal development. Sex and drugs education is appropriately included for each year group.
28. The provision for pupils with special educational needs meets their needs well. There is rigorous targeted support for these pupils in lessons, with nearly all containing sections where specific work is targeted at them, often with additional support provided by a teacher assistant. In addition there are some withdrawal lessons for pupils with the most need. In these lessons pupils follow programmes matched to their needs, such as the very useful "Five Minute Box" for pupils with dyslexia and reading difficulties, and ICT programmes to improve basic writing skills. In Year 6 in the spring term the lowest attaining groups in English receive valuable intensive support in preparation for the national tests in the summer term. There is setting in each year group in mathematics and this is helping to meet their needs reasonably well.
29. This is an exceptionally inclusive school. Pupils who are underachieving are given rigorous and sensitive support. The excellent school tracking systems show that there are no issues regarding gender or ethnic minority achievement. More able and special needs pupils are identified and given extra support. Multiculturalism is very well supported through a variety of initiatives including visits by African and Indian drummers and in the RE syllabus.
30. Transition between the infants and Year 3 and Year 6 and Year 7 are highly effective. Information is shared between schools and a buddy system is set up for pupils new to Year 3. Year 6 pupils do a 'taster' day at two local secondary schools. They also work on joint projects for example in art and design and technology.
31. The curriculum is very well led and includes such recent innovations as two theme weeks, one on poetry and one on the environment. The school is in the second year of an excellent borough initiative, "In2music", which involves all Year 3 pupils learning a string, brass or woodwind instrument. There has been a school competition to design an outdoor classroom. The winning team worked with architects in drawing up the final plans which have now been approved.
32. Extra curricular activities are a very strong feature of this school. Extra curricular activities include, a homework club, local history society club, Top Trumps club at lunch times,

gardening club, youth university, Year 4 ICT club (linked to a local college), cycling proficiency and Civic Award. Arts initiatives have included visiting artists and looking behind the scenes at the local art gallery. Relevant year groups use the local leisure centre swimming pool and sports ground. There has been a Brazilian football focus for Year 5 and 6 boys and girls.

33. There is very good provision of teachers and support staff. There is a very generous teacher: pupil ratio and the school is able to draw on the expertise of specialist music and PE teachers. The deputy head teacher is not class-based and is providing very valuable support to staff, particularly by teaching lower attaining groups in mathematics and English. Teacher assistants have been well trained and there are sufficient to support the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
34. The accommodation of the school is very good. Currently there is a small non-fiction library which pupils use in groups of eight. Plans are well advanced for the building of a new library and an outdoor classroom. Good use is made of supplementary work areas and the playground is large with suitable dry weather apparatus. There is a creative use of the grounds in the summer term when the junior and infant school engage in a joint project using the combined grounds to focus on a curriculum area. The ICT suites in areas outside the classrooms are a little cramped but very good use is made of the space available.
35. The school is very well resourced. ICT provision is excellent. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards linked to computers; the computer suite is suitable and used effectively; and all teachers have lap tops. Resource cupboards are very well-organised and labelled which enables teachers and pupils to access easily relevant materials to support teaching and learning.

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

The school has very effective procedures to ensure the care, guidance and welfare of the pupils. Achievement and personal development are monitored exceptionally well. The pupils have excellent opportunities to express their opinions and have them acted on.

### **Main strengths**

- The excellent relationships between pupils and adults help the pupils feel happy and secure
- Pupils feel really extremely valued because their opinions are taken into account
- The high quality monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development is contributing to their very high standards of achievement

### **Commentary**

36. Pupils spoken to during the inspection, and pupil responses to the OFSTED questionnaire, show that they have an adult to go to if they are worried at school. The thoughtfulness that goes into planning everything that pupils are involved in and the care that is taken of the pupils are exceptional. Health and safety and child protection procedures, first aid and medical support are thorough. Lunch and break times are supervised very well and the pupils can also take some credit for the smooth running of these. The oldest pupils act as play monitors, teaching others how to play with the vast amount of equipment that is provided for them.
37. The pupils feel that their teachers listen to them and this was clearly seen in many lessons. They are given the opportunity to contribute to their own annual report, including commenting on how well they organise themselves and whether they complete their homework on time. The school council is extremely effective in promoting responsibility. Pupils were involved in the appointment of the deputy head teacher and he is held in high regard by the school council for his willingness to listen to their ideas and the help that he

gives them in putting these into practice. For example, the plans for the outdoor classroom have been developed in conjunction with sculptor, Andy Frost. The school council canvasses the views of the pupils over many issues including a review of healthy snacks in the tuck shop and organises competitions that have a beneficial outcome for example suggestions for the re-decoration of the servery. The school council lead assemblies where they give feedback to the rest of the school on the developments in which they are involved.

38. There is excellent monitoring of pupils' academic progress. All pupils making insufficient progress in reading, writing or mathematics are identified through a rigorous tracking system and each teacher has a list of pupils judged to be underachieving. Meetings are held with these pupils, parents are informed and subsequently their work is monitored and formally reviewed.
39. The school monitors pupils' personal development closely and because of the excellent relationships throughout the school members of staff are able to pick up any concerns about pupils very quickly. The school works closely with outside agencies to provide extra support for pupils when necessary, for example a behaviour therapist.

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

The school has an excellent partnership with the parents. Links with other schools are very good and links with the community are effective.

### **Main strengths**

- The school encourages parents to be involved in their children's education exceptionally well
- Information for parents about well their children are achieving and what is happening in school is excellent
- Very good links with other schools are beneficial for the pupils
- Links with the community have improved since the last inspection

## Commentary

40. The excellent partnership that the school has established with parents contributes effectively to the pupils' high achievement. Parents are very happy with the leadership and management of the school. They feel welcome and think that teachers are very approachable and will take time to talk to them. Parents are invited to help in school and many do particularly with the parent/reader scheme that is making a real difference to pupils' achievements in reading. They also help with the booster sessions where pupils in Year 6 are helped prepare for their national tests, extra curricular activities and in the homework club run by the deputy head teacher. The school regularly canvasses their views and takes on board the suggestions they make. For example, parents' opinions about homework have had a real impact on the tasks that are set and on the support that pupils get at home. Parents raise additional funds for the school through the parent/teacher association (PTA) and are currently buying books for the new library and donating money to the outdoor classroom.
41. The annual reports to parents give a very clear picture of pupils' progress, their attitudes and the skills they are acquiring. They also include targets for improvement. There are termly parent/teacher consultations at which progress towards targets is discussed. The newsletters are full of school successes, events, staff and pupil news. The termly curriculum bulletins provide parents with extremely good information about what their children will be studying, the homework they can expect and of any trips their children will be making. Parents of pupils in Year 6 are kept very well informed of the work that takes place in the booster classes. The school provides web site addresses that parents can access to help their children. Parents are also invited to presentations including those on Year 6 national tests, mathematics and drugs education, and those in the Gold Award assemblies. The school council hosts a tea party to thank parent helpers.
42. Although some parents expressed reservations about the transfer procedures between the infant and junior schools, Year 3 pupils spoken to during the inspection did not feel that this had been a problem for them. The two schools work closely together to help the youngest children make a smooth transition. Examples of this include: Year 2 and Year 3 teachers swapping classes; the Year 2 pupils making a number of visits to the junior school; the Year 2/Year 5 buddy scheme which helps the youngest pupils settle into the junior school; and pupils from Years 1 to 6 taking part in joint activities during Grounds Week where the grounds are used for joint projects by both schools. The school has very strong links with the two main receiving secondary schools that helps to prepare the oldest pupils for the next stage of their education. Exciting pieces of artwork have been produced in conjunction with students from a local secondary school and a lot of very interesting work takes place in ICT, including video conferencing with a local college.
43. Since the inspection of January 1999 the school has made good progress in building strong links with the local community to enrich and enhance the curriculum. Pupils' artwork was displayed at an exhibition in Bitterne Parish Church and members of the church are regular and welcome visitors into school to lead assemblies and take part in lessons. A vicar from a local church runs the weekly Good News Club and regularly takes assemblies. Bitterne Local History Society supports the school very well; particularly with the World War 2 topic. A number of Southampton businesses were involved in the school's Enterprise Week.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are very good. The clarity of vision and high aspirations of the acting head teacher are very good. The leadership of senior staff is very good. Governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The acting head teacher is very clear about the direction the school needs to take and the further development of its core values
- The senior management team are of very high quality and take a pivotal role in leading and managing the school
- Monitoring and evaluation by senior managers and subject leaders is rigorous and effective
- The school improvement plan does not focus clearly enough on the raising of standards
- Induction procedures for staff are very good
- Very good financial management ensures that the school gets very good value for money

### **Commentary**

44. The acting head teacher had been in place for three months at the time of the inspection. There has been a seamless change as far as the pupils, parents and staff are concerned, from the leadership of the previous head to the current one. Momentum regarding school development and improvement has not only been maintained but a new vision has been created after consultations with all who work within the school. This very effectively builds upon the very high quality of education the school provides. After a day spent with staff and governors discussing core values all pupils will be encouraged to be more creative learners and use their imagination and take risks within a caring and stimulating learning environment.
45. The leadership is maintaining and developing further an excellent team spirit in the school. Pupils and staff work exceptionally well together as they know that each individual is highly valued and challenged. There is excellent teamwork in the school; staff support each other very well and collaborate on planning and, where needed, subject coordination.
46. The senior management team and subject coordinators fully support the acting head teacher, as they have been fully involved in the recent changes that are being made. As a result, staff feel valued and are fully committed to the school's aims for self-evaluation and improvement. This is very influential in maintaining and developing the excellent ethos of the school and in raising standards. The positive and supportive climate established in the school helps explain the low staff turnover and the high quality of teaching.
47. The acting head teacher, senior team and all subject coordinators rigorously monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and the progress pupils are making. They have an excellent overview of standards attained and rates of progress in each year group. The information gained from lesson observations and sampling of work, together with the very good assessment arrangements, provide staff with a very good evidence base. Therefore they can plan how the curriculum should be adapted and developed so as to meet the needs of all pupils. This development is tracked well in the subject action plans.
48. The school values all pupils and makes sure that everyone has an equal chance to benefit from school life. For example, following recent discussion with pupils on ICT provision clubs are being run for pupils who do not have access to computers at home. This will help them with their homework, and it is a good example of why this is such a very inclusive school. Assessment systems and interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to make learning more accessible to pupils of differing backgrounds.

49. The well-established culture of self-evaluation ensures that all aspects of the school's work are improved. Rigorous monitoring of pupils' performance in the national tests identifies weaknesses and these are quickly rectified, for example, extra short lessons have been given in science to improve the pupils' retention of knowledge. A greater focus has recently been placed on improving pupils' mental calculations in mathematics. The one weakness is the school improvement plan. While the plan does identify areas for improvement it does not focus effectively enough on the raising of standards and improving teaching.
50. There is a close match of teachers' performance management objectives to the targets set for individual pupil's performance and this is effective in raising standards. All teaching staff including teaching assistants receive appropriate professional development. Newly qualified staff are integrated very well into the school by being supported in the planning of work with more experienced staff. This includes high quality mentoring and observations of lessons where targets are set to improve areas that need development.
51. Financial management is very good because the budget is closely monitored. Clear priorities are set and governors are active in seeking additional funding and development grants. This, together with a strong working relationship with the parents, provides the school with extra financial support, for example in creating some excellent ICT resources. Key priorities are carefully costed and the school has a very good grasp of key budget demands and their implications.

***Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	647,414	Balance from previous year	42,449
Total expenditure	651,995	Balance carried forward to the next	37,868
Expenditure per pupil	2,739		

52. Governance is good overall. Governors know the key aims and key priorities for the school and play an active part in steering its direction. They are alert to the financial implications of key priorities such as the workforce remodelling initiative and keep a careful check on spending. There is a half yearly evaluation of how well the school improvement plan is being implemented but this is too infrequent for governors to have a clear enough grasp of ongoing issues. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses in different subjects and the impact of work to raise the proportion of higher levels in writing. The governors acquire good first hand knowledge of the school through regular visits.

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

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2**

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is very good.

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

- There is very good achievement as a result of very good teaching and excellent leadership
- Teachers have very good expertise in English and they plan their lessons extremely well
- The monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work and their attitudes to work, and the arising improvement strategies are of an exceptionally high quality
- There is excellent use of ICT in lessons
- Teachers could target underachieving pupils more systematically in lessons

#### **Commentary**

53. The standards attained by the end of Year 6 are well above the national average. Results in the 2004 end of Year 6 national tests were well above average and the standards of work seen in the current Year 6 suggest that results will be similar. The standards being attained in reading are higher than those being attained in writing in all years. Attainment in the current Year 6, particularly in writing, is weaker than in other year groups, mainly because there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
54. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is also very good. Pupils produce a considerable amount of work and it is presented very well. National test results have been above those of similar schools in recent years and achievement in tests has been very good taking the significant minority of pupils with special needs into account. The school's tracking system shows significant gains being made by the majority of pupils, although progress in reading is better than progress in writing. The more able pupils achieve very well. In 2004 the proportion gaining the above average Level 5 or above in national tests was well above the average for similar schools.
55. There are a number of strengths in pupils' work. Reading is very good. Pupils read a range of texts and they are enjoying their reading. In work, they show a good grasp of meaning beyond the literal and they have a wide range of vocabulary. Pupils' responses to literature are sophisticated and many are using technical vocabulary very well. There are also strengths in writing. Pupils write well in a range of styles and some of their creative work, including poetry and stories, is very imaginative. Grammar is good overall as a result of some very skilful grammar teaching, and punctuation is average. The weakest area is in spelling. Even in the highest Years 6 set about a fifth of the pupils are making basic spelling mistakes. The school's own, excellent analysis of the 2004 national tests also showed spelling to be an area of weakness. In lessons, there is not much focus on letter sounds. The lowest attaining pupils, in particular, are not receiving enough ongoing systematic support in spelling rules and the use of letter sounds. Speaking and listening skills are excellent. Pupils listen very well and work productively in pairs and groups. They speak clearly and fluently in discussions.
56. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school, with significant strengths in each year group. The planning of lessons is very thorough, except for the underachieving pupils, and all lessons observed were extremely well-structured. The management of classes is excellent. In all lessons classroom routines are well-understood and teachers are consistent in their approaches. This is leading to a fast pace of learning with no time being wasted when activities change in lessons. All teachers have very good expertise in English.

Lessons are led with authority and the grasp teachers have of grammar, partly the result of recent training, is leading to some excellent learning of such sophisticated concepts as conditional tenses and clauses. There is a very good variety of activities in all lessons, with an excellent balance between reading, writing, speaking and listening activities. Excellent use is being made of the inter-active whiteboard in lessons to focus attention and to introduce and record key points and ideas. The use of drama in one lower attaining Year 6 lesson observed was bringing vitality to the study of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and making what was a challenging text for the class enjoyable and accessible. The pace of many lessons is a strength but, on occasions, pupils are not given enough opportunities for working independently. Work is very well-matched to pupils' ability in lessons, though in some lessons the identified underachieving pupils could be targeted more.

57. The leadership and management of English are excellent. The analyses of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment and attitudes are of an exceptionally high quality. The coordinator has a very clear view of where weaknesses lie and what needs to be done to address them. The subject is being led innovatively and initiatives such as the drawing in of more drama into lessons and the introduction of a set book for the whole of Year 6 has added vitality into lessons and improved learning. The focus on writing at Level 5 last year led to a 20 per cent increase in the proportion of pupils gaining Level 5. Since the last inspection improvement has been good. Achievement, teaching and leadership have all improved.

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

58. The pupils have very good skills in reading and these are enhancing their learning across the range of subjects. Teachers are introducing key concepts in lessons carefully, consolidating them in discussions and explaining their meaning clearly. This was particularly apparent in history, geography, art, mathematics and science lessons. Very useful support is given to weaker writers by providing structures in a number of lessons. Speaking and listening are used very well in all subjects to motivate pupils and consolidate learning. A good example of this was a Year 3 geography lesson where the culmination of a four week unit of work on the use of fossil fuels was a challenging whole class debate of the key issues.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is good.

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

- Teaching and Learning are good enabling pupils to make well structured steps in their learning of number and calculations
- Assessment and tracking are very good, with pupils' progress carefully monitored and fed back to teachers
- Pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematics skills and miss out on being challenged to solve open ended problems
- Subject leadership is very good, characterised by a clear vision, monitoring of standards and an awareness of the potential of ICT to develop learning and teaching
- Pupils mental mathematics skills are under developed, although this is being addressed by a programme of training for staff

#### **Commentary**

59. In the 2004 Year 6 national tests standards were in line with the national average but were below the average for similar schools. This group had a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs which affected results. The proportion of pupils gaining Level 5 was above the national average. The trend of improvement over the last four years is broadly



in line the national trend. For the current Year 6, standards in mathematics are in line with the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that about a quarter of this group will get a Level 5. Again, there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group.

60. Taking the standards of pupils on entry to the school, pupils make good progress and achieve well by the end of Year 6. Observations of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and school tracking systems show that progress of the pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 is good. Throughout their time in the juniors, less able pupils in the current Year 6 have made satisfactory progress and more able pupils have made good progress. Pupils are taught mathematics in ability sets following the same medium term plans. This arrangement meets the needs of the higher attainers well but plans are not always suitably adapted for the needs of the lower attainers.
61. Pupils generally have a good understanding of the number system, perform written calculations well (for example the grid method of multiplication) and are good at handling data. There is less evidence that pupils' mental skills are as good. They are not challenged enough in this area to use larger numbers and to explain their methods, for example in applying their knowledge of doubles and halves. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their numerical skills in practical situations. Pupils' understanding and knowledge of measures, shape and space is good. Mental mathematics and mathematical reasoning have been identified as areas for improvement.
62. Teaching and learning are good overall and often very good. Teachers frequently explain learning objectives so pupils can understand the links from day to day lessons. Clear planning by teachers ensures pupils progress in logical steps. As a result of good use of ICT mathematics programs, teachers enable Year 3 pupils to understand and explain equivalent fractions and can interpret information from graphs. Lower attaining Year 4 pupils can successfully perform grid multiplication using their understanding and knowledge of the number system. A well-delivered lesson enabled Year 5 pupils to understand the technical aspects of graph distribution. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils can apply a formula to find the area of compound shapes by using information about the perimeters. Pupils are enthusiastic about maths and clearly enjoy the subject. Teaching assistants work closely with class teachers and have a clear understanding of the learning objectives for each lesson which enables targeted pupils to make progress. Their books are well-presented and frequently marked, although teachers' comments do not always suggest how pupils can progress further. Class targets are usually displayed clearly and are frequently referred to during lessons.
63. Leadership and management of the subject are both very good. The mathematics subject leader has a very clear vision for developing the subject. She has a clear view of standards in the school and of the priorities to improve these. Training for teachers has already begun on mental mathematics and reasoning skills, and there is a clear monitoring programme established to evaluate the effectiveness of this. She is very ably supported by the deputy head who was the previous post holder. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. Although standards have gone down the school adds value to pupils who over the last three years have been entering the school with lower attainment. Leadership of the subject continues to be very good.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

64. There is a wide variety of mathematics activities in other areas of the curriculum. In music pupils apply their mathematics knowledge to note values, structure of scales and drumming rhythms. There is wide range of programmes available on all interactive whiteboards to reinforce difficult mathematical concepts and to support pupils learning their times tables. Pupils use mathematics in science to measure growth of sunflowers and to present results

of an investigation into habitats using tables and charts. Pupils' measuring skills have been applied in design and technology in designing the new outdoor classroom. The school has the Basic Skills Award quality mark in numeracy and literacy.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils across the school achieve very well as a result of thorough planning, and very good teaching
- Assessment is used very well to raise standards
- There is a very strong focus upon planning of investigational work
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to design their own experiments
- Very good leadership and management has maintained the high standards seen at the last inspection

### **Commentary**

65. Standards are above average by Year 6 and well above average for the rest of the school. Trends over time show that pupils consistently attain standards well above average. The 2004 results were well above average and were above average when compared to similar schools. The standards of work seen during the inspection were above average in Year 6, which is not as high as the 2003 results. This is because there are a significant number of pupils in this year group who have additional needs. Many of these pupils are expected to reach the average standards at the end of the year. Overall pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. The very high standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection.
66. Pupils have a very good grasp of scientific knowledge and concepts and use technical vocabulary well. In Year 3, pupils use terms like molars and pre-molars in a lesson on teeth. In Year 4 pupils have a very good knowledge of solid liquids and gasses, and in Year 5 they have a very secure grasp of pollination and germination. The investigational work of pupils is also of a very high standard.
67. Assessment is a very important feature in the raising of standards. Pupils' work is regularly monitored and before each unit of work is taught teachers methodically check how much pupils know about the topic to be studied. Work is then planned to cater for each pupil's needs. Fast- paced activities are used to revise what has been learnt in previous lessons before new knowledge is introduced. At the end of each unit of work the pupil and the teacher identify good learning and what needs to be improved.
68. Teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to very good, but taking into account discussions with pupils, teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work, teaching is very good overall. Teachers plan interesting lessons with a very good range of practical activities so that pupils can learn and develop scientific skills through first hand experiences. As a result, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils are very good. There is a strong focus on checking experiments to ensure that the tests are fair and accurate results are measured. For example, in a Year 3 class the teacher showed pupils some poorly written experiments on testing soil samples. The pupils were able to identify and correct weak explanations. One pupil said that the sentence ' You put a big handful of soil on the paper.' was an inaccurate way to describe how much soil was to be used. This made the test unfair.
69. ICT is used very well to support learning, particularly the use of interactive white boards. These are used very effectively to engage pupils' interests, enabling the teacher to demonstrate a range of data, which make results clear. For example, during a lesson on

insulating objects in a Year 4 class, the pupils had a clear understanding of what was expected of them and achieved good results. Pupils use ICT to research information and to record data. Pupils in Year 5 have improved their knowledge of the water cycle by logging rates of precipitation for different geological areas. Although pupils are given regular opportunities to question predict and explain, there are limited opportunities for pupils to design and construct their own experiments in answer to the question 'Why?'. In the less successful lessons observed the teacher spent too much time in directing the pupils to carry out activities and opportunities were lost for pupils to work independently and follow their own lines of enquiry.

70. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Tests results are regularly analysed and used very effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses in science. For example, as some Year 6 pupils were not retaining sufficient factual knowledge, additional lessons were arranged so as to prepare them for the practical activities. Consequently, the high standards have been maintained. Areas for development have been built into action plans that form part of the school improvement plan. Pupils are involved in their own self-assessment in addition to giving opinions of each other's work. This has generated a desire to learn from each other.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection
- Teaching is very good, so pupils achieve very well and standards are well above average
- The subject is very well led
- ICT is used very effectively across the curriculum
- There are cramped working conditions for a few pupils in the computer suite

### **Commentary**

71. Standards in ICT are well above average and pupils achieve very well across the whole school. By Year 6, pupils are working well above the expected level in most aspects of ICT capability. Particular strengths are the use of databases and spreadsheets, monitoring and control.
72. There has been very significant improvement in the provision of ICT since the last inspection and standards have risen from average to well above average. This is because the school has invested heavily in ICT so that very efficient systems are in place. This has meant that the school has moved beyond the day-to-day concerns about systems and hardware to focus upon how ICT supports learning. Resources are excellent. There are two banks of sixteen computers, each classroom has a data projector and interactive white board as do the computer areas in Years 3 and 6. During the inspection, teachers were regularly using the hardware very effectively.
73. The quality of teaching is very good. Individual lessons varied between good and very good. In the very best lessons the teachers' very good subject knowledge was a key reason for success. This led to very well-planned work that was interesting and challenging for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. In a lesson where older pupils were copying and pasting text from the Internet to a 'publisher document', they were questioned carefully to ensure that they understood tasks before moving on. Pupils with additional needs were clearly directed by the teacher on which steps to take so as to start their work. As a result of this, they became confident and started working on their own. The higher attaining pupils were challenged more thoroughly. One pupil was told to check the size of his picture again in order for it not to 'blur' when expanded into his document. The pupil therefore checked his

work and achieved a much better image. Pupils work very well together and concentrate hard on their allocated tasks.

74. The subject is very effectively led and managed. The curriculum is very well planned and is rapidly developing to cater for the needs of all teachers and pupils. Very good support for staff is enabling the pupils to make very good progress. The school is committed to the principles of good practice and has recently received a national award for the quality of its ICT planning. Recent initiatives have focussed upon responding to pupils' views. As a result, there are plans to run clubs to cater for those pupils who do not have access to computers at home. Links with the secondary schools are being further developed in the creating of a web site in order to share work between Years 6 and 7. The narrow layout of the computer suites makes teaching whole classes difficult to manage. Some areas are too cramped for pupils to work comfortably during the lessons. The school is aware of this and plans to improve these areas.

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

75. ICT is used very well across the curriculum. A school strategy team ensures that work is being continually developed to cater for the development of skills through other subjects. For example, during the inspection Year 5 pupils were using a computer programme to develop their mental agility in multiplying numbers larger than 20. Year 3 pupils were sending attachments by e-mail to Cinderella with their designs for invitations to her ball in connection with their literacy lessons. Year 6 pupils have successfully linked control technology with their planning of fairground rides in design and technology.

#### **HUMANITIES**

76. There were no detailed subject inspections of humanities subjects during the inspection but lessons were sampled in history, geography and religious education (RE).
77. Two **history** lessons were observed; one was very good and one was excellent. The teachers had excellent plans for these lessons and they were very well structured. Both teachers made excellent use of resources. The interactive whiteboard was used very well to focus attention and provide visual images, and photographs were very well used as source material in both lessons. An outstanding feature of both lessons was the use of outside visitors to enhance learning. In one lesson, a member of the non-teaching staff who had attended the school in the 1960s spoke about the changes since then; in the other another lesson a member of staff took on the role of a Tudor nobleman and asked and answered questions about problems facing Henry VIII. In pupils' books there is very good coverage of the National Curriculum. Pupils show a very good grasp of changes over time and the key features of the periods they have studied. The subject is very well-managed with good evaluation of learning and a carefully considered curriculum.
78. One lesson was observed in **geography**. This was very good and led to very good achievement. The expectations were very high in this lesson with Year 3 pupils wrestling with some very difficult ideas in a debate on fossil fuels. The debate worked successfully, however, and was very effective in consolidating pupils' understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of using fossil fuels and implications for global warming. The lesson was very well-planned and excellent use was made of the interactive whiteboard. In books, pupils displayed a very good grasp of the local area and of the differences between different places in the world. The subject is being well-led and managed, with a well-planned curriculum and very good arrangements for assessment.
79. **RE** follows the Local Authority syllabus and covers Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism. In the two lessons sampled during the inspection teaching and learning were very good, and standards at least in line with the national expectation. Pupils understood and explained the importance of Easter, interpreting biblical evidence accurately. They were clear about their

own beliefs and respected the opinions of others. Links are in place with two local churches and these include supporting school assemblies on a regular basis and the Christmas concert. Also there is a Christian Good News club for Year 5 and 6 pupils. Resources are adequate and consist of a series of artefacts to ensure effective multi faith work, and background information for each teaching unit. The subject leader has a clear development plan and has kept herself up to date by attending relevant courses.

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

80. It was not possible to observe art, and design and technology lessons during the inspection and these subjects are therefore not inspected in detail. Pupils' work was scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils and teachers. Music was also only sampled. Two music lessons were observed during the inspection and discussions were held with the coordinator and pupils.
81. In their work and books, pupils are achieving very well in art. Year 6 pupils have produced some work of very high quality in the style of aboriginal art. A greater focus has been given to the teaching of '3D' work, which has been supported by visits of a local sculptor who has worked with classes on a regular basis. There are many examples of pupils' clay models displayed in school. Pupils in Year 3 have accurately made miniature models of the human form, which have been finished very well. Pupils enjoy the lessons and think it is fun to work together to produce large pieces of work. There are very good links with other subjects as teachers use paintings of famous artists and works of art as a stimulus in literacy, history and RE. There is also some very good work planned on animation and design in ICT. There are some very good examples of computer-designed pictures and Greek pots on display throughout the school. Links made with the local secondary schools have resulted in some striking murals using acrylic paint depicting the four seasons. The profile of the subject has been raised by visits to local art galleries and theme weeks which are held each year. These introduce new techniques to pupils, encouraging them to use a wider range of materials. Since the last inspection all issues have been addressed very well. The curriculum has improved and now includes art from other cultures. Assessment of pupils' skills has improved and progress is now monitored throughout each year group.
82. Some good work is being produced by pupils in **design and technology**. Recent work by pupils in Year 6 is being used by the Local Authority as good examples of developing skills in textiles. There are good links made with other subjects, which further develop skills. Pupils in Year 6 have designed model fairground rides using a 'Robo- lab' ICT programme and then have written detailed explanations using correct vocabulary in the style of a technical journal. This develops their literacy skills very well. Pupils in Year 4 have designed and made photo frames and pupils in Year 3, soft toys. Pupils' plans and designs for these products show accurate measurements. This is developing their numeracy skills. Since the last inspection there has been considerable staff training and weaknesses have been addressed. The teaching of sawing and drilling wood has improved. As a result staff are now more confident to teach the subject. Assessment is good and pupils' skills are monitored thoroughly to ensure they build on what they already know, can do and understand. Due to this, pupils enjoy their work and look forward to the lessons.
83. In **music**, pupils are offered a wide range of musical activities which are well-resourced and managed. In the lessons sampled teaching and learning were very good. Pupils were taught, and expected to use, precise technical language. They regularly use orchestral instruments in class lessons. Standards of performance, sampled from a series of recordings, are good. Pupils have opportunities to take part in choir, recorder and orchestral ensembles. All Year 3 pupils learn a string, brass or woodwind instrument for one year as part of the "In2music" initiative, supported by the Local Authority. The subject leader's management and development of this has been videoed and used as a model of

good practice in training teachers in other schools. There is a clear scheme of work showing progression in skills and linking music to other subjects, for example to ICT and history. Leadership of the subject is highly effective.

### **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is good.

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

- There is a good scheme of work in place, ensuring a clear progression of skills across each year group
- The subject is well led and managed and there is a very clear programme of staff development
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of the skills they are learning and can evaluate progress during each lesson
- Pupils work well together in groups and are supportive of each other's activities
- There is not a wide enough variety of activities in games lessons

#### **Commentary**

84. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above the average and pupils achieve well. Pupils experience a very clear progression in skills across the whole age range in gymnastics, dance and games, partly because there is a very good scheme of work in place which details the knowledge and skills to be covered by each year group.
85. Teaching and learning are good. Year 6 pupils refine dance sequences using increasing control and accuracy and are constantly challenged to improve. Building on previous skills of observation, Year 3 pupils analyse each other's roll, rock and balance sequences in gymnastics and comment to each other on how to improve. Pupils in a games lesson were encouraged to choose the most efficient throwing techniques given different bean bag challenges. Pupils clearly understand the purposes of each lesson and can apply their skills and knowledge to the activities.
86. Leadership of the subject is very good. There has been a clear programme of staff training in basket ball, playground games and gymnastics. Teaching assistants are being trained to support pupils' games at lunch times. The subject is regularly monitored by teachers feeding back to the subject leader, and discussions with pupils. Recent innovations have included a visit by a Football Association representative, Brazilian football training for boys and girls, and African and Indian drummers for dance activities.
87. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The lack of provision for developing pupils' skills has been addressed effectively and the leadership of the subject is now very good.

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

88. Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and citizenship which is taught mainly through PSHE, was sampled during the inspection. Two lessons were observed, work was scrutinised and discussions were held with teachers and pupils. The planning and opportunities for PSHE and citizenship are excellent and in the two lessons observed teaching was very good.
89. The teaching and learning in the lessons observed was very good. Sensitive issues were well-managed and the lessons were extremely well-planned. Consequently, pupils achieved very well in these lessons. In the Year 4 lesson, pupils successfully engaged in role play about why parents have rules and appreciated each other's points of view. Year 6 pupils discussed maturely in pairs aspects of their achievement that they felt they could feel proud of and thus developed their self esteem.

90. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award for two years and is currently working towards a third year's validation. Pupils' opinions and ideas are well represented at the school council and they are supported by teaching staff in putting ideas into practice. Pupils develop responsibility for each other through range of initiatives such as, "peer mediators" where pupils support other pupils with problems, and play monitors who support at playtimes. There is a wide variety of awards in place which promote positive behaviour and values. The leadership and management of PSHE are very good. The subject leader has a clear vision and understanding of future developments and of how other subjects contribute to this area of pupils' development.
91. Pupils have access to a very wide range of activities to promote citizenship. Year 6 pupils undertake the Civic Award over a six month period, which includes service to the school and community, followed by a 24 hour camping trip. They help at local senior citizens tea afternoons. All pupils benefit from class lessons from the local police officer on civic duties. Pupils' responsibilities to each other are reinforced through a system of library monitors, play monitors and music monitors. Year 6 pupils show prospective parents round at parents' evening. Regular examples of good citizenship during the inspection were evident as pupils moved sensibly around the school; they are mature and polite to adults, for example, by opening doors or asking if help is required.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>1</b>
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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