

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GORSE RIDE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Wokingham

LEA area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 109877

Headteacher: Mrs K Neve

Lead inspector: Bob Cross  
15917

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 266891

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

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | Junior  |
| School category:             | Community   |
| Age range of pupils:         | 7 to 11 years   |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed   |
| Number on roll;              | 259   |
| School address:              | Gorse Ride South<br>Finchampstead<br>Wokingham<br>Berkshire |
| Postcode:                    | RG40 4JJ  |
| Telephone number:            | 0118 9732666  |
| Fax number:                  | 0118 9731553  |
| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body, Gorse Ride Junior School                |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr A Mulleady   |
| Date of previous inspection: | February 1999   |

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Gorse Ride Junior School is about the same size as most other schools of the same type. There are 24 fewer pupils compared with when the school was last inspected. The school has 42 pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is broadly the national average. Eleven of the pupils have statements of special educational need which is well above the national average. Pupils with specific learning difficulties are the largest group of those with special educational needs. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school has similar numbers of boys and girls on roll although some years have a significant imbalance in the numbers of boys and girls. About six per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds which is higher than in most schools. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. This is lower than in most schools. None of these pupils is in the early stages of learning to speak English and all are able to take a full part in the life of the school. A very few pupils are from traveller backgrounds. The overall socio economics of the area are above average. During the last school year, 21 pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and 18 left it at a time which was not the normal leaving or transfer time for most pupils. This rate of mobility is not unusual. In the last two years, five teachers left the school and three were appointed. This is a high rate of turnover. Overall, pupils generally enter the school at broadly average levels of attainment. However, the most recent year to join the school did so at above average standards. Pupils in the current Year 6 also entered the school at above average standards in some aspects of their work. The school has received a number of awards including Investor in People in 2004, Healthy Schools in 2003 and a School's Achievement award in 2002. The school had Beacon status for four years until the designation ceased to be awarded nationally in August 2004.

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team |                |                | Subject responsibilities  |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---|
| 15917                          | Bob Cross      | Lead inspector | Science, information and communication technology, history, physical education.                             |
| 9691                           | Jon Vincent    | Lay inspector  |   |
| 22745                          | Rosalind Johns | Team inspector | English, art, music, personal, social, health and citizenship education, English as an additional language. |
| 15271                          | Brian Farley   | Team inspector | Mathematics, design and technology, geography, religious education, special educational needs.              |

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants  
37 Broadlands Avenue  
North Petherton  
Taunton  
Somerset  
TA6 6QS

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

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

|   | Page      |
|---|-----------|
| <b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>                          | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>     |           |
| <b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>                           | <b>6</b>  |
| Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses |           |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities        |           |
| <b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>            | <b>9</b>  |
| Teaching and learning   |           |
| The curriculum  |           |
| Care, guidance and support                                    |           |
| Partnership with parents, other schools and the community     |           |
| <b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>                              | <b>14</b> |
| <b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS</b>           | <b>16</b> |
| <b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2</b>                                |           |
| <b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>      | <b>28</b> |

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a very good school.** Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds do well and reach high standards in a range of subjects. This is because the overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. It is also due to the very good leadership of the headteacher and staff, who are well supported by the governors, and to the school's excellent management. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good teaching and learning ensure that the pupils make good progress.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average.
- Strong leadership by the headteacher and staff with management responsibilities gives the school a clear direction.
- Excellent management makes sure that the school continues to improve.
- Provision for the pupils' social development is excellent and underpins their very good behaviour and attitudes.
- Curricular provision is very good and strong links are made between many subjects.
- Parents and pupils hold the school in very high regard.
- Provision in physical education (PE) is satisfactory which makes it an area of relative weakness.
- Procedures for finding out and acting on parents' perceptions about the school are not as well developed as they are in some other schools.

The school has made a very good improvement since it was last inspected. The three key issues from its last inspection have been very well addressed. For example, standards in religious education (RE) which were below average are now average and the school has clear plans for the further development of the subject. In addition, there have been improvements such as those in teaching, learning and management and the improved standards in English and science from above average to well above average. Strengths have been maintained in other aspects of the school including leadership.

### 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           | A    | A    | C               |
| mathematics   | B           | A    | A    | C               |
| science   | A           | A    | A    | A               |

*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.*

**Achievement is good for pupils of all needs and abilities.** In Year 6, standards are generally well above average in English, mathematics and science in the national end of year tests compared with all schools. Standards in these tests are particularly strong in science. The findings of the inspection support these judgements and also find that standards in information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology (DT), music and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) are above average. Standards in RE and physical education (PE) are average. Standards in RE are clearly improving but provision in PE is a relative weakness. Standards were not judged in history, geography or art and design.

**Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good.** Most pupils show great interest in their lessons and work hard. This is because of the high quality relationships developed in the school and, particularly, because of the excellent provision for the pupils' social development. Pupils respond very well to the very many chances they are given to exercise responsibility. The attendance rate is above the national average.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is also very good.** Teachers provide the pupils with challenging but attainable work which interests them. The pupils respond by applying themselves very productively to the work they are given. As a result, they make good progress. Resources, particularly ICT, are very well used to provide variety in lessons and to promote the pupils' learning across a range of subjects. Assessment information is well used to make sure that all pupils receive appropriate work and fulfil their potential. There is some variation in the effectiveness with which teachers deploy support staff. The school's ethos and its provision for pupils of all abilities and needs are excellent. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported very well. They are closely involved in the life of the school. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. The school provides a good range of extracurricular provision. Links with the community and other schools are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership of the school is very good and its management is excellent.** Very good leadership by the headteacher and other staff with management responsibilities results in a successful focus on high standards. Excellent self evaluation concentrates the school on continued and effective improvement. The governors fully support the school and fulfil their duties well. They have ensured that all statutory requirements are met.

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

**Parents** overwhelmingly said that they considered the school to be a good one. They particularly mentioned the quality of the management and the teaching and the progress made by their children. Some concerns were expressed about bullying and relationships with parents. Most **pupils** like being at the school and feel that teachers help them to make progress. Significant numbers felt that other children did not always behave well, that lessons were not interesting and that they were not trusted to do things on their own. The findings of the inspection are that behaviour and teaching are very good. The inspection also finds that some aspects of the school's relationships with parents are not as well developed as they are in some other schools.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve provision in physical education (PE) which, although satisfactory, is not as good as it is in other subjects.
- Review fully parents' perceptions about the school, for example, the provision of homework, and take action on the findings.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

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

Achievement is good for pupils of all abilities and needs in all year groups. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 and they are above average in most other subjects inspected.

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

- Standards in the national tests in Year 6 are consistently well above average in the subjects tested.
- Standards in RE have improved significantly since the school was last inspected.
- Literacy skills are well used across the curriculum to support the pupils' progress.
- ICT makes a good contribution to pupils' achievement in other subjects.
- All pupils do well in this school.
- Standards in PE, although average, are not as good as those in most other subjects.

#### **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 (29.1)    | 26.9 (26.8)      |
| Mathematics   | 28.7 (28.8)    | 27 (26.8)        |
| science       | 31.1 (31.3)    | 28.6 (28.6)      |

*There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. In the national tests in Year 6 in 2004, standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools based on those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2 standards were average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Standards in these tests have been consistently high over time compared with all schools. The data show that pupils make good progress during their time in the school. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys or girls.

2. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. In English, standards are well above average in all aspects of the subject except writing where they are above average. Standards are also above average in DT, ICT, music and PSHCE. They are average in RE and PE. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make judgements about standards in art and design, geography or history. Compared with the findings of the school's 1998 inspection, standards have improved in English, science and RE and have remained the same in all other subjects where comparisons are possible. This represents a very good improvement since the school was last inspected. It also means that the key issue from that inspection concerning standards in RE has been very well addressed.

3. Pupils' skills in English make effective contributions to their work and progress in a range of other subjects. The pupils show great confidence when applying these skills in this way. For example, the way in which they use language to evaluate and describe how to improve their work in subjects such as DT is of a higher standard than that found in most schools. The pupils apply their thinking skills well in subjects such as music and PSHCE. The technical vocabulary of subjects such as science and RE forms a natural part of the pupils' vocabulary. In ICT, pupils' skills are used very well to support their learning across the curriculum, for example, in music, art and design, history, DT and geography. Pupils use ICT to research the topics they are learning and to present their

findings in a meaningful way. English skills are frequently applied during these presentations, for example, by ensuring that a reader's attention is captured and held. The use of pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects is similar to that found in most other schools. For example, they measure and plan in DT and show an understanding of chronology in history.

4. All pupils do well in this school as achievement is, overall, good because of the quality of teaching and learning. This is a judgement which mirrors the views of most parents and pupils. The school knows its pupils very well and uses its assessment procedures very effectively to plan their work and to check their progress. As a result, pupils are given work which is challenging but attainable and they make good progress. For example, pupils with SEN make good progress overall, because they behave very well and have positive attitudes to learning. Support is well planned and effectively provided by all adults. Relationships between all class members are very good and contribute positively to pupils' progress. The small number of pupils from travelling families are well catered for in terms of their educational needs and do well relative to their previous standards. Gifted and talented pupils are carefully identified across academic and broader needs. Provision made for these pupils includes work in mathematics, literacy, DT and music. The school works closely with a number of the local secondary schools to enhance this provision.

5. Standards in those aspects of PE that were inspected are average and achievement is satisfactory. This makes the subject an area of relative weakness in this school. Pupils' movements lack, poise, control and refinement. In the lessons seen, too little was done to improve standards although the basic weaknesses were clearly recognised by the teachers.

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

Pupils' attitudes are very good. Their behaviour is very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is good and punctuality is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' confidence and self esteem are very good and the school takes every opportunity to foster responsibility and self reliance.
- Pupils' freedom from bullying and other forms of harassment is very good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The school has very good, rigorous procedures for promoting good attendance.
- The school sets high expectations and pupils strive hard to achieve them.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good.
- Pupils have a good awareness of right and wrong and show respect for others' feelings.
- Pupils' appreciation of their responsibilities of living in a community is excellent.

### **Commentary**

6. The majority of pupils show great interest in their lessons and strive hard to achieve the expectations of their teachers. The very good methods of behaviour management adopted by the staff have a positive effect on pupils' learning. Overall, behaviour is very good in lessons, around the school and in the playground. These standards have improved since the last inspection. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEN whose attitudes were judged to have some shortcomings when the school was last inspected. These pupils are now judged to have the same very good attitudes to their work as all other pupils. Pupils are all aware of the school and class rules and fully understand the difference between right and wrong. Positive attitudes are constantly promoted and fostered by the school. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and understanding are very good. The environment provided by the school is one of a large and happy family where everyone is valued and respected. Both parents and pupils confirm how much they enjoy and benefit from this caring environment.

7. Pupils have many opportunities for taking on additional responsibility and they respond very well to them. The school council ensures that pupils' views are heard and listened to. Every class has representatives on the council. The council system, coupled with the activities of the playground



friends and peer mediators, ensures that all pupils understand the responsibilities of living in a community. This emphasis on respect, tolerance and understanding the other person's point of view is a strength of the school. All pupils interviewed during the inspection displayed very responsible attitudes, were confident, courteous, articulate and mature for their age. The school ensures that every pupil, regardless of age, gender or ability has some opportunity to enjoy responsibility. Parents acknowledge this and, in particular, the 'mediator' system where pupils can seek help and advice from their peers.

## Attendance

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

| Authorised absence |     | Unauthorised absence |     |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data:       | 4   | School data :        | 0   |
| National data:     | 5.1 | National data:       | 0.4 |

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

8. Attendance is good and above the national median in the 2002/2003. The rigorous procedures instigated by the school ensure that the majority of parents and pupils understand the need for prompt and regular attendance at school. These monitoring systems ensure that good attendance rates are maintained and also result in a low incidence of unauthorised absence. During interviews and discussions with pupils, it was very evident that they that they wanted to come to school and enjoyed their learning and the many activities that the school provides. There has been one fixed period exclusion during the past school year. There are no excluded pupils at present.

## Exclusions

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British                             | 239                  | 1                                 | 0                              |
| White – any other White background          | 8                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Black African             | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – White and Asian                     | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Mixed – any other mixed background          | 4                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian             | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| Any other ethnic group                      | 1                    | 0                                 | 0                              |
| No ethnic group recorded                    | 2                    | 0                                 | 0                              |

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

9. Pupils have a very good level of respect for the feelings and values of others. This results in first rate racial harmony. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect on their feelings. The culture of the school, coupled with school assemblies and lessons ensures that a very good level of spiritual, moral social and cultural development is achieved. During the inspection a school assembly on the theme of Saint Francis was observed and gave pupils a very good opportunity to compare their own situation with that of Saint Francis. In addition to stimulating spiritual awareness through art and

music lessons, the school makes good use of PSHCE lessons to encourage pupils to reflect on the various differing ways everyday experiences influence their lives. The novel use of 'Thinking Hats' in PSHCE lessons strengthens pupils' ability to differentiate between right and wrong.

10. The culture of the school ensures that pupils are constantly encouraged to think of others. The school council, playground friends, peer mediators and other volunteer duties reinforce this. These activities, together with the family atmosphere that permeates the school, ensure that pupils' social development is excellent. The very good relationships between pupils and all adult staff are based on mutual respect and enhance the learning environment.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is also very good.** Teachers ensure that the pupils work hard and make good progress. Curricular provision is very good. Strong links are made between a range of subjects which helps the pupils to make broadly based progress. There are particular strengths in provision, for example, in science, ICT and music. Provision in PE is an area of relative weakness. The school's ethos and its provision for pupils of all abilities and needs are excellent. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported very well. They are closely involved in the life of the school. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. The school provides a good range of extracurricular provision. Links with the community and other schools are good. Links with parents are satisfactory.

### **Teaching and learning**

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is very good throughout the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have high expectations of the pupils who respond by working very hard.
- Teaching and learning in RE have significantly improved since the school was inspected in 1999.
- Teaching and learning in PE are areas of relative weakness.
- Assessment information is very well used to provide challenging work for pupils of all abilities and needs.
- Teaching for pupils with SEN is effective.
- The 'nurture group' effectively meets the SEN of certain pupils.
- The way teachers use support staff to assist the pupils' learning is variable.
- The provision of homework is variable.

### **Commentary**

#### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons***

| Excellent | Very good | Good     | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor   | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 1 (3%)    | 5 (16%)   | 22 (72%) | 2 (6%)       | 1 (3%)         | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%)    |

11. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the school was inspected in 1999 and is now very good rather than good. This judgement reflects the views of the parents but does not support weaknesses, such as lack of interesting work, identified by pupils. Some of the strengths of the teaching were similar in both inspections, for example, high expectations of the pupils, good pace, encouragement of the pupils and the use of resources. However, the weaknesses cited by the last inspection such as lack of knowledge of the subject taught, over direction by teachers, lack of challenge and slow pace were not evident to any significant degree. During this inspection, teachers showed particular strengths in their knowledge of science and music and a strong understanding of mathematics and ICT. Additional important strengths noted by

the current inspection included the quality of lesson planning, the control and management of the pupils and the links made between different subjects of the curriculum. For example, ICT, history and English were very effectively combined. A particularly productive use of resources to promote learning was the way in which teachers used their ICT boards to interest the pupils and to extend their understanding.

12. The pupils respond to the very good quality of teaching by applying themselves very well to their studies. Their answers to the teachers' penetrating questions when pupils were asked to justify and explain their ideas showed evidence of very mature thinking. They also showed strong indications of the very effective ways in which the teachers had developed the pupils' evaluative skills and of the success of the "Thinking Hats" approach.

13. In 1999, teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory in RE and standards to be below expectations. Teaching and learning in this subject are now good and standards are average and improving because of the effective way in which the school has addressed this issue. Teaching and learning in science has also improved from good to very good. In all other subjects where comparisons are possible except PE, the quality of teaching and learning has been maintained since 1999 or is good. PE is the only subject to be judged to have teaching and learning which was satisfactory rather than at least good by both inspections. This makes it an area of relative weakness. There are basic strengths in the teaching and learning of this subject such as the control and management of the pupils, relationships and the planning of lessons. However, there are also significant weaknesses in the subject specific aspects of the teaching of PE. For example, although the teachers correctly identify weaknesses in the pupils' performance, these are not addressed effectively. In addition, the pace of teaching and learning is slow, the pupils' evaluative skills are underdeveloped and elementary factors like ensuring that pupils make the best use of the space available are not sufficiently stressed.

14. The school's assessment procedures have also improved from good to very good. The way that the school uses assessment information ensures that pupils of all abilities and needs receive work which is challenging but attainable. In addition, conversations with Year 6 pupils showed that they were fully aware of how to improve their work through targets that they had been set – particularly in English – and, more generally, as a result of the thorough way in which the teachers marked their work. The school's knowledge of the pupils' individual needs and its concentration on developing and implementing a wide range of teaching and learning styles to meet every need explain why the pupils have excellent equality of opportunity in this school.

15. Resources for learning for pupils with SEN, particularly ICT, are used with noticeable effectiveness. The 'nurture group' works very well and provides a first rate means by which some pupils develop self-confidence and self esteem as a prerequisite to learning. Teachers have a wide range of information about all pupils recorded in a format that allows them immediate access. Therefore, they are always aware of the needs of pupils when they plan lessons and other activities. Learning targets set in individual education plans are clear, achievable and structured so that aspects of these are checked each week. Pupils and their support assistants know these targets and this helps them to identify the progress that they make, but pupils are not sufficiently involved in target setting. Teachers and teaching assistants generally work in close and effective cooperation especially when working with pupils with SEN. However, in some other lessons, the teachers did not always employ teaching assistants in a way which promoted the pupils' learning fully.

16. The homework provided in Year 6 is extensive, of good quality and is closely related to the work the pupils undertake in class. It covers a wide range of subjects and makes a very effective contribution to the progress made by the pupils. Some parents and some pupils expressed the view that pupils in Year 6 received too much homework and some parents said that its provision was closely related to the timing of the Year 6 national tests. However, other parents and pupils said clearly that, if there was a problem in being able to complete homework, this could easily be solved by discussion with the teachers. Parents and pupils regarded homework in other year groups as being much less than in Year 6 and, in some cases, too little or, essentially, non-existent. The findings of the inspection are that homework in this school is more demanding in Year 6 than commonly found in other schools. However, by the same token, it is more effective. The inspection

also finds that there is a significant variation in the amount of homework provided in other year groups.

## **The curriculum**

Curricular provision is very good. Provision for pupils' learning outside of the school day and the development of their interests are good. The accommodation and resources of the school provide good support to meet the needs of the curriculum.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are many strengths in curricular provision.
- The weakness identified by the school's 1999 inspection have been addressed well.
- Provision in PE, although satisfactory, is an area of relative weakness.
- The pupils receive excellent equality of opportunity.
- Curricular provision for pupils with SEN is good.
- A good range of activities and clubs provide curricular enrichment.
- The extent of competitive sporting activities is limited.
- Accommodation and resources have been improved since the previous inspection and more improvement is planned.

### **Commentary**

17. The school's very good curricular provision promotes high achievement in the pupils' academic and social development. For example, provision in mathematics, science and ICT is very good and, as a result, pupils do well in these subjects. In mathematics and science, the investigative aspects of the subject are particularly well developed and used to help pupils' progress in other aspects of the subject. The pupils' skills in ICT are applied very effectively in a range of other subjects, for example, history and English which develops both their understanding of these subjects and the application of their ICT skills. Pupils' evaluative skills are particularly well developed. For example, they were observed to have evaluated and improved work in DT and ICT in ways which illustrated how well their English skills are used across the curriculum. The pupils' thinking skills are developed through the 'Thinking Hats' programme which encourages them to work through challenging concepts. The pupils' personal development is well promoted through a wide range of opportunities including membership of the school council and becoming peer mediators.

18. The school's 1999 inspection identified weaknesses in medium term curricular planning in some subjects and in the implementation of the RE curriculum. These weaknesses have been fully addressed. Medium term planning is now good and supports the pupils' progress well. Standards in RE have improved because of improvements to the curriculum and standards in that subject are still on an upward trend. The school's current provision in PE is satisfactory which makes it an area of relative weakness. For example, the subject has little impact on other areas of learning and the use of ICT to promote learning in PE is limited.

19. The school provides its pupils with excellent equality of opportunity. Central to this is the wide range of teaching strategies and learning styles that is employed. This enables the needs of all individual pupils to be addressed successfully so that they fulfil their potential. For example, pupils with SEN are usually taught all subjects in class. They are well supported by teachers and assistants. Sometimes, they are withdrawn from lessons for more individual teaching, particularly where they need to focus on specific tasks without the distraction of other activities. This does not prevent access to the full curriculum. Individual education plans have clear and manageable targets, criteria of achievement and suggested teaching strategies. There has been a good improvement in the school's provision for pupils with SEN since it was last inspected.

20. The school provides pupils with a good range of activities that enhance their learning. For example, visitors have contributed to their understanding of India, science (the human body)

architecture, the local churches and the Sikh religion. Visits have been made to places such as a rainforest exhibition, the Mary Rose, the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, a Victorian school setting and Arborfield Army Museum. Pupils in Year 6 have a five-day residential visit to Beaulieu. There are very good opportunities for pupils to learn to play musical instruments. The choir has taken part in the Schools Prom and annually, each class takes part in a musical production. A good range of clubs provides activities such as tennis, chess, art, netball dance and judo. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sports on a regular basis.

21. Since the previous inspection, there have been some significant improvements to the accommodation. More are planned to provide better facilities for pupils, particularly where teaching accommodation is cramped and storage limited. The new library area is easily accessible and well stocked with a good range of books. The computer suite provides an attractive learning area and the food technology room is well situated.

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

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring of pupils' achievement is very good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are very good procedures for health and safety and child protection.
- Relationships with adults in school are very good.
- The school has very good systems to monitor pupils' academic standards and progress and these are well used to provide pupils with advice and guidance.
- The school provides a good level of care for pupils with SEN.
- All staff know pupils and their backgrounds very well.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is very good.

### **Commentary**

22. The school has very good health and safety procedures in place and these have been improved since the last inspection. Safety and care for pupils are paramount throughout the school. There are full child protection procedures and all staff know the pupils and their backgrounds very well. The school has close relationships with all the appropriate welfare and support agencies.

23. Pastoral care is a strength of the school. A priority of the school is that all pupils should feel safe and secure and cared for. This is exemplified by the formation of the nurture group. This initiative is designed to help and guide vulnerable pupils with specific emotional needs who benefit greatly from this specialised support. All adults who work in the school form close and trusting relationships with the pupils. They know them well and provide good role models for behaviour. Discussions with pupils show that they feel very safe and secure. The success of the peer mediation scheme is such that those pupils spoken to said they would approach a mediator before an adult as they were confident that this move would probably resolve any problems they might have. The views of pupils about different aspects of school life are welcomed and encouraged through the class and school councils.

24. The school has very good systems to monitor pupils' standards and progress which are carefully tracked throughout their school life. This makes a major contribution to the pupils' personal and academic development. Pupils with SEN are involved, to some extent, in setting their learning or other targets and in the review of progress toward meeting them.

25. The school council ensures that all pupils are totally involved in the work and future plans of the school. A current objective is the provision of an outside clock which can be seen from the playground. Council members are fundraising for this and 'discussions are ongoing'. Council members of all ages and both genders are very aware of their duty to their peers. Pupils take full

advantage of the many opportunities for personal and social development the school offers. They respond very positively, showing maturity beyond their years and thoroughly enjoy the discussions and debates in which they become involved. Pupils' personal and social development is enhanced by this very good involvement in the work of the school.

26. The neighbouring infant school works closely with the school and, as a result, induction arrangements for new pupils are very good. The playground friends support pupils in both the infant and junior school playgrounds which helps to ensure a smooth transfer to the junior school.

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

The school's links with parents are satisfactory and with the community are good. There are good links with other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides parents with very good information.
- Parents who have children with SEN are appropriately involved in their children's education.
- Good links with the community.
- Genuine 'open door' policy.
- Some parents feel that their views are not sufficiently considered.

### **Commentary**

27. Parents and carers have very positive views of the school and consider it very well organised, effective and approachable. Some transferred their children from other schools because of Gorse Ride Junior School's excellent reputation. They feel that their children are also in a safe and happy learning environment. The school prospectus provides clear and very detailed information for parents and fulfils statutory requirements. Similarly, the governing body's Annual Report to parents also meets statutory requirements. Parents appreciate the detailed annual reports and the regular letters and bulletins which ensure that parents and carers are kept up to date with school news.

28. The administrative staff ensure visitors feel at ease. Parents and carers appreciate this and, in most cases, generally feel comfortable about approaching the school. Teachers also make themselves available for informal contact at the end of the school day. Apart from the scheduled termly meetings parents are welcome to arrange any additional meetings with teachers should the need arise. The school is always quick to respond to any parental requests for information and any additional contact and actively arranges parental contact when pupils cause concern with academic or behavioural problems.

29. There is a parent teacher association which is shared with the neighbouring Infant school. The association raises considerable funds which provide the school with valuable extra resources. These resources range from imaginative playground equipment to computers.

30. The school involves parents of pupils with SEN in the reviews of individual education plans when and where this is appropriate. There are strong links between the school and appropriate agencies and these add an additional and valuable level of support.

31. There are good links with other schools. More able pupils spend time in secondary schools that have the facilities to develop their talents further. Members of staff share training with the Infant school and meet formally and informally to ensure continuity. Similarly, staff from the many secondary schools the school transfers pupils to visit it in the summer term. In addition, Year 6 pupils also spend time in their prospective secondary school at that time. Transfers to secondary education are smoother as a result of these good links.

32. The school has good links with the local community. Apart from regular contact with the normal agencies the school works closely with the local church and the Vicar attends school assemblies and RE lessons. There is strong involvement with the Wokingham Arts Council and the school choir sung at the Royal Albert Hall in addition to being very active in the community. The school has formalised plans to strengthen links further with the community throughout 2005.

33. Although a questionnaire was sent to parents last year, the questions involved seemed to have had little impact on those parents interviewed during the inspection. In addition, some parents felt that any expertise or help that they might give in school was not sufficiently encouraged, although many help with supervision on visits outside school. The findings of the inspection are that fewer parents provide help in school time than is common in many schools of the same type. Furthermore, parents had widely differing views on the provision of homework which are supported by the findings of the inspection. The findings of the inspection also show that the school's procedures for finding out, and acting upon, the views of parents are not sufficiently well developed.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The school's leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher and other staff with management responsibilities is very good. Management is excellent. The governance of the school is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of the headteacher and staff with management roles gives the school a clear educational direction.
- Leaders provide excellent role models.
- Teamwork in the school is very effective in raising standards.
- The school's success in the promotion of equality of opportunity is excellent.
- The school's review of its performance and its use of this process to bring about improvement are excellent.
- Governors support the school well.

### **Commentary**

34. Standards and provision in this school are very good, nevertheless, the very good leadership of the headteacher ensures that there is a very successful focus on continued improvement and on raising pupils' achievement still further. This commitment is fully transmitted to other staff with management responsibilities through, for example, strategic planning. The school improvement plan is a very strong and effective management tool which indicates the school's high expectations very well. For example, its first priority includes maintaining and improving the already high standards and quality in English, mathematics and assessment and further development of the good provision for pupils with SEN.

35. Staff with management responsibilities also provide very good leadership and support the headteacher very well. For example, leadership and management are very good in mathematics, science, music, ICT and RE and, because of this, pupils of all abilities and needs do well and play a full part in all aspects of the life of the school. This reflects the excellence of the school's successful commitment to equality of opportunity and meeting the needs of individuals. Additionally, another result of leadership of this quality is a strong team spirit with staff and pupils motivated to work together very well for the good of the school. In addition, the provision for pupils with SEN is now good when it was a key issue for action when the school was inspected in 1999. This is because the co-ordinator and the headteacher have a clear vision for its success and are very aware of what needs development. ICT is used very well to manage and administer this aspect of provision. The co-ordinator works closely with staff to ensure that provision matches the needs of pupils. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils with SEN and do so effectively. There are no weak links in the teaching in this school which makes it an ideal place to support the training of new teachers.

36. The management of this school is excellent. This is exemplified by the rigorous and effective self evaluation it undertakes. In all of the most significant aspects of its life, the school's judgement of its performance matched that of the inspection team and showed similar strengths and weaknesses. Only two areas were different. The inspection judged management to be better than the school considered it to be but also judged relationships with parents to be weaker than the school thinks that they are. However, even in this aspect, the inspection judged parents to hold the school in very high regard. Assessment data including those from national tests and assessments are carefully and rigorously analysed. This plays a significant and effective part in maintaining and continuing to improve the pupils' achievement and standards. The performance management process is very well established and the target for improving the pupils' performance is very effective and runs right through the school. It is well supported by appropriate in service training. Induction of staff is excellent and shows great sensitivity to the needs of the individual. Staff feel that their views are listened to, valued and acted on. Financial management is prudent and is very effective in supporting the school's educational objectives and in getting value for money.

37. The school's governance is good, is fully committed to the school's best interests and has ensured that all statutory requirements are met. The governors have clear views on the strengths and weaknesses of the school and use a range of suitable strategies to keep themselves suitably informed. They are clearly aware of how the school has moved on since it was last inspected. Governors have access to training and attend sessions which they feel are helpful. The school has a significant number of relatively new governors whose training and development opportunities include an induction pack produced by the school. The governors fulfil their role as critical friends well, for example, in debating and questioning the school's building and ICT development programmes. However, minutes of governors' meetings show that, compared with most schools, few governors visit the school on a regular planned basis to gain first hand information about the areas for which they have oversight. The exception to this is in the area of SEN where the records show that the governor responsible for this area makes regular and productive visits to the school. The minutes of governors' meetings also show that the school improvement plan only featured twice in the last year when governors initially received the plan and then accepted it. There is, however, some effective consideration of the progress of the plan in the minutes of some committee meetings, particularly the curriculum committee. The governors' committees have action plans outlining their priorities for the year. However, there is no specific mention of development of the governing body on the school improvement plan although this is a common feature in many schools.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

| Income and expenditure (£) |         | Balances (£)                        |        |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Total income               | 710,194 | Balance from previous year          | 20,208 |
| Total expenditure          | 694,190 | Balance carried forward to the next | 36,212 |
| Expenditure per pupil      | 2711    |                                     |        |



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

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

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**

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

- Pupils achieve well and standards are well above average overall.
- Standards are consistently high in the national tests.
- Pupils are confident communicators and careful listeners.
- Enjoyment of books is a significant feature of school life.
- Older pupils read accurately and fluently but they do not always appreciate deeper meanings and issues in the text.
- Pupils are not encouraged sufficiently to be more innovative in their writing.
- Teaching is confident, direct and well-structured.
- Good, stable leadership and management ensure a constant focus on maintaining high standards.
- Targets give a good incentive for higher achievement.
- Strong links across the curriculum give pupils a good idea of the purposes of writing.

#### **Commentary**

38. In Year 6, standards in English are well above average overall and reflect the standards usually found in the national tests for this age group. The achievement of all groups of pupils is good. At the last inspection, standards were reported to be above average so improvement has been good.

39. By the top of the school, pupils are generally confident and capable users of language. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average. Many pupils explore ideas in a considered and balanced way, express their views thoughtfully and concisely and have an extensive vocabulary which they use with understanding and maturity. Sometimes, teachers allow very articulate pupils to dominate discussions and do not encourage more reluctant ones to contribute so that they become passive and detached. Pupils are also intelligent and reflective listeners who build on the ideas of others and respect their views. In a whole school assembly based on the life of Saint John the Baptist, pupils listened closely and were mature and sensitive in their responses about the significance of baptism to Christians.

40. Reading skills are also well above average. Throughout the school, pupils' enthusiasm for books is a strength of their learning and many read with a high degree of confidence, fluency and enjoyment according to their age. In Year 6, many pupils are avid readers who enjoy reading a wide and challenging range of texts. They are well aware of how to use their voices expressively to build up a sense of drama and to bring the text alive. They talk easily about their responses to characters and predict possible outcomes. However, they find it more difficult to discuss wider themes in their reading and to detect hidden meanings in the text to enable them to tackle books with greater insight and maturity. Pupils are good at finding information from books and other sources and at raising their own questions for research.

41. Standards in writing are above average in Year 6. Pupils write in an interesting and challenging range of styles and show a lot of confidence in exploring ideas and the techniques of writing so that many of them have a good command of expression. However, teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to experiment with language and content and to be bold and inventive in order to develop an original style in their writing. Pupils plan and draft work carefully and ICT is well integrated into the subject. Work on grammar is good and most pupils

have a good grasp of spelling and punctuation rules. Handwriting is generally fluent although some pupils do not take enough care in the presentation of their work.

42. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This was also the case at the previous inspection. Teachers' confidence in teaching the subject is shown in their lively presentations, fluent explanations and constructive links between subjects. This was evident in a Year 4 lesson about predicting newspaper stories from headlines when the teacher illustrated how journalists used different techniques to create punchy headlines which grabbed the reader's attention. Teachers are also good at asking questions which extend ideas and language and help pupils to think precisely about what they are going to write. In a Year 6 lesson about newspapers, the teacher's carefully framed questions enabled pupils to build on their previous learning about journalistic styles to create their own arresting headlines based on *Theseus and the Minotaur*. Teachers also make sure that there is a sense of urgency in lessons which keeps pupils motivated and means that the momentum of learning is kept up. In a Year 5 lesson about devising shape poems, the teacher used timed targets effectively so that pupils moved swiftly to the main activity and remained focused on their work. Other common strengths include imaginative use of ICT, especially in teaching key skills in a clear and systematic manner, and simple yet constructive marking.

43. In a Year 3 lesson about rhyming words in poetry, there was a real buzz of excitement in the room as pupils were given the independence to choose their favourite poem. The teacher also insisted that pupils should justify their choices very precisely so that they could appreciate how words can be used very cleverly to create a picture in the reader's mind. However, in some cases, teachers do not give pupils this kind of freedom to give greater depth and originality to their work. Extension tasks are also not always sharply defined or imaginative enough to enable pupils to be more adventurous in their learning.

44. The subject is well led and resourced. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject through classroom observations and looking at planning and pupils' books. Homework is linked well to the work done in class for the oldest pupils. Assessment procedures are good and targets have helped to raise pupils' awareness of their own performance and to maintain high standards in the subject.

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

45. The development of language and literacy across the curriculum is good. For example, pupils make PowerPoint presentations in history and can explain how to attract the interest of the reader. As part of their Healthy Eating project in PSHCE in Year 6, pupils have evaluated a healthy meal in DT and devised menus. In music, Year 3 pupils put on 'Thinking Hats' to discuss how to improve their performance in singing. In RE, older pupils talk about the morality of slavery. Scientific work is written up carefully and teachers ensure that subject language is clearly introduced and reinforced so that pupils learn to use it naturally and confidently.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Well above average level of attainment maintained.
- The achievement of pupils is good.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Very effective use of ICT.
- High quality presentation by pupils of their work.
- Leadership and management are very good with priorities for development identified.
- There has been a good improvement in provision since the school's previous inspection.

## **Commentary**

46. Standards reached by pupils in Year 6 are well above average. The results of the national tests for 2004 indicate a similar picture and this maintains the overall pattern of previous years. However, more pupils than the national average reached the higher level 5. Of particular note is that pupils generally have a well developed understanding of using and applying mathematics. Achievement is good overall. Those pupils with SEN generally achieve well for their capabilities.

47. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In all year groups, pupils are taught in sets of broadly similar ability. They made good progress in lessons where teaching was challenging, but realistically so. For example, in a good Year 6 lesson, progress was good because teaching was sharply focused upon the learning outcomes. There was an appropriate balance of direct teaching and practical activities. Pupils were required to plot points in all four quadrants on graph paper to produce a series of shapes. This was the first time that they had encountered this process and they made particularly good progress. Very good use was made of interactive 'whiteboard technology' in teaching and this made a significant contribution to their good rate of progress. The teacher made effective use of questioning, but there were not enough opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking.

48. A very good lesson in Year 5 on measurement was characterised by stimulating and challenging teaching that created sustained interest. The 'whiteboard' was again used to good effect and pupils gained much in their understanding by its use. Very good use of questioning that probed pupils' thinking ensured that they were able to refine and clarify their ideas continuously. They were often engrossed in the practical activities that were designed to help them expand and consolidate their skills, knowledge and understanding.

49. In Year 4, a good lesson on fractional notation focused very clearly on the learning outcomes and resulted in observable progress. Teaching was stimulating with a clear expectation that pupils would work hard, but carefully. The challenge was appropriate to the level of their capabilities, but at times, the pace was a little too fast because it did not give some of them sufficient time to think. In Year 3, pupils worked hard to apply their understanding of simple number operations. This was consolidated as they carried out activities in addition and subtraction that helped them to deepen their skills and understanding. In all classes, almost all of the pupils' work was neatly set out and carefully marked. A particular strength of the teaching is that there is a high level of insistence upon good presentation and precision in layout. This helps pupils think logically, clearly and accurately in mathematical activities.

50. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator has identified areas for development and these are set out in an action plan. A major focus is to ensure that high standards are maintained and that all pupils, particularly those who are lower attaining, achieve as well as is possible. Areas for development include problem solving, pupils' recording systematically and the wider application of mental strategies. Very good use has been made of test data to plan for developments in the subject and the monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work has provided valuable information to aid this. There is a good emphasis upon ensuring that staff are kept up-to-date professionally. Homework is very well integrated into the mathematical curriculum and provides very valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and understanding. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively to help pupils with SEN.

51. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen, and 'whiteboard technology' has been implemented with very clear success.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

52. This is satisfactory. Pupils use mathematics in aspects of science such as making graphs. In design and technology, they use measurement in the design and making of cam-operated toys.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the Year 6 national tests are consistently well above those found in most schools.
- Pupils do very well in science.
- Teaching combines investigative work and knowledge of science very well.
- Teachers provide the pupils with challenging and imaginative work and make good use of ICT to enhance the teaching of science.
- Pupils enjoy this subject and work hard.
- The subject is very well managed.
- Strong assessment procedures promote very good achievement.
- Pupils make good use of most aspects of ICT in the subject.

### Commentary

53. Pupils achieve very well in this subject. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, standards in science are well above average. This represents an improvement since the school was last inspected as standards at that time were judged to be above average. However, this inspection's judgment of standards is the same as the pupils have reached in the national Year 6 end of year tests for at least the last three years. Pupils reach well above average standards in all aspects of the subject. Nevertheless, there is no complacency in the school which has recognised relative weaknesses in the pupils' use of sensors and data logging. It has plans to raise standards in these aspects of the subject to even higher levels than they are at present.

54. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. This is also an improvement on the judgement of the school's 1999 inspection when standards were judged to be good. A particular strength of the teaching is the very effective way in which teachers make investigative science an integral part of the way in which they teach other aspects of the curriculum.

55. A very good Year 5 lesson about sound exemplified both this aspect of the teaching and the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The lesson was very well planned and resourced so that the pupils were actively involved in the work. They showed great interest in all aspects of the lesson especially the investigative work. The teacher used questions very well to encourage the pupils to think deeply and to explain their ideas. For example, "What is pitch?" "How could you have a one stringed instrument?" Pupils used scientific language very well in discussion as they observed and noted how the length, for example, of a vibrating ruler, altered the pitch of the sound made. The teacher then challenged them to find a rule to link this relationship. The pace of the lesson was rapid and the approaches varied so that pupils remained absorbed in the work. The teacher showed very secure knowledge of the subject such as when explaining the wavelengths of sound to the pupils. ICT was well used as a teaching aid and the teaching assistant gave strong support to the pupils of lower ability. The pupils' work was well matched to their needs and was set at three clearly defined levels. In a very good discussion at the end of the lesson, the pupils had clearly grasped the fact that a longer length resulted in a lower pitch which was the objective they had been set to learn. They also volunteered the fact that this was because it vibrated more slowly than a short length. The pupils' clear understanding of this challenging work represented very good progress in this lesson.

56. The quality of provision in the subject is due to its very good leadership and management. This has also resulted in a very good improvement in the school's provision for science since its 1999 inspection. The current co-ordinator has a caretaking role as the previous holder of the post left at the end of last term and the new permanent co-ordinator takes on the role in January. All three co-ordinators are science specialists. The current temporary co-ordinator is fully maintaining the momentum of development in the subject. She has, for example, monitored samples of pupils' work and assessments and met with the link governor for science. Very good assessment

procedures and similar use of assessment information are significant factors in ensuring that the pupils progress very well. The evidence indicates that ICT is normally very well used to promote the pupils' learning in the subject, for example, in recording their work and finding information about it. The evidence for this in Year 6 is relatively limited at present because building and technical problems meant that the school's computer suite was out of use between July and early November. However, in discussion Year 6 pupils articulately and convincingly explained what they had done in earlier years. They were also adamant that they would have had similar amounts of work in this year under normal circumstances and detailed some of the work that it was planned that they would undertake now that things were back to normal.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils do well and reach higher standards than those found in most schools.
- Pupils are very confident in their use of ICT.
- Most areas of the subject are very well developed.
- The leadership of the subject is very good.
- The subject is very well resourced.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- ICT is used very well in most subjects of the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

57. Standards in ICT in Year 6 are above average and pupils' achievement is good. These are the same judgements as those made by the school's 1999 inspection. Pupils show great confidence in their basic computer skills and in their operation of varied software programs. They understand and apply most of the basic functions of the keyboard. The pupils have the confidence to learn from trial and error and they apply their skills intuitively when faced with new situations. They are able to locate and retrieve work which they have saved and to explain and discuss it articulately and with the natural use of technical ICT vocabulary. Pupils' skills are particularly strong in their textual and graphics work, in finding things out, for example, when using the Internet and presenting their work and sharing information. The pupils are particularly good at evaluating and improving their work and in their understanding of the range, purposes and appropriate application of ICT. Areas of relative weakness, which the school recognises and is addressing, are its use of E mail and sensors and aspects of control technology.

58. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good although observations made during the inspection ranged from good to excellent. This is a similar judgement to that made by the school's last inspection. However, that inspection reported some weaknesses in teachers' knowledge of the subject. These were not evident during this inspection where teachers' knowledge of ICT was judged to be one of the strengths in the teaching.

59. Teaching and learning of the highest quality were observed in a Year 6 lesson in which pupils constructed presentations of their work about Ancient Greece. This lesson illustrated the best of the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. This work had been carefully planned as a homework task which made a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. The teacher's very lively manner captured the pupils' interest so that they were engrossed in their work. The teacher's explanations showed very secure knowledge of the subject and links were made frequently and naturally with other aspects of the pupils' work, for example, literacy. This stimulated the pupils to make very constructive comments such as "it brings the work to life" and developed their use of technical vocabulary very well. The pupils showed particularly well developed skills of evaluation. They readily identified strengths and weaknesses in their presentations and made sensible suggestions about how to improve the weaknesses. The pupils showed speaking and listening skills of a very high order in this lesson. There was a moment of spiritual development in this lesson

as the pupils responded to a projection of Braldt Brand's "Still life with three eggs and four pairs" because of the cats in the picture. The pupils were set a very demanding task to work on when told to improve their presentations. They set to work in a purposeful and highly motivated manner, were very well assisted by the teacher and the teaching assistant and made excellent progress.

60. The subject co-ordinator is very well established and provides ICT with very good leadership and management. She is very enthusiastic and has a first rate understanding of the strengths and the few areas of relative weaknesses in the subject. The co-ordinator has clear plans not only to address the relative weaknesses but to continue to improve and develop all aspects of the subject. She monitors standards in the subject carefully and uses her skills productively to provide training for other members of staff. Since the school's 1999 inspection, its ICT resources have improved significantly. The school now has a computer suite which allows each pupil to have individual access to a computer and this is linked to resources in the classroom. There is also a wide range of other types of hardware and a wide provision of varied software programs. An ICT technician plays a very valuable role in keeping the resources in working order and supporting pupils in their learning. Assessment procedures are very good. They record what the pupils know and ensure that they know what they need to do to improve. The school's assessment procedures allow older pupils to link to samples of work which illustrate particular skills. The assessment system also enables teachers to gain an overview of the pupils' attainment easily and, thus, to plan the work they give them accurately. Improvement in ICT has been very good since the school was last inspected.

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

61. ICT is very well used in other subject areas. The evidence shows that its use is carefully planned and implemented effectively in most subjects including English, mathematics and science. It is also, for example, used very well in music where pupils manipulate sounds and in history, geography and art and design where pupils use it both to find and to present information about their work. Pupils' work in art and design includes varied use of ICT and, in DT, it is used to help them to design their products. The school's cross curricular use of ICT ensures that pupils develop their ICT skills in a way which really enhances their learning in other subjects. Very often, lessons are planned in such a way that the pupils' understanding of a range of subjects, for example, ICT, history and English, is developed at the same time.

### **HUMANITIES**

62. No lessons were seen in **geography** although the subject was taught in Year 3. However, because of the way in which the timetable is organised pupils in Year 6 have not yet started work in the subject. Planning indicates that there is appropriate breadth of curricular opportunities and from the quality of the documentation, the subject appears well led and managed. For example, strengths and weaknesses have been identified, the latter include the need to improve the mapping skills of pupils and make greater use of ICT. Good use has been made of visits to support learning in the subject. There is too little evidence upon which to base a judgement about improvement since the previous inspection.

63. No lessons were observed in **history** as the subject was not a focus of the inspection. However, other evidence including discussions with staff and pupils and the analysis of documentation and pupils' work was gathered. This indicated that curricular provision is good and covers a wide range of topics and skills and that standards are above average. For example, pupils in Year 6 showed a good knowledge of aspects of life in both the Victorian period and in Ancient Greece. They were also well aware of how to find out about the past and had a good understanding of chronology. Curricular provision is broadened by a good range of visits such as those made to the Mary Rose, a "Victorian School" and a number of museums. Visitors to the school, including some who helped pupils to design a Viking longboat, also help to bring the subject to life. History has good links with other subjects of the curriculum including English and ICT. The pupils use ICT well to find out information and to record their work. There are sound assessment procedures and the subject is well led. Its provision is thoughtfully reviewed and strengths and areas for development are identified and acted upon.

## Religious education

Provision in Religious Education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' attainment in Year 6 is in line with requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.
- Achievement of pupils is good.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils are interested, and show particularly good progress in 'Learning from Religion'.
- Very good improvement since the previous inspection.

### Commentary

64. Only a few lessons were seen during the inspection and only one in Year 6. In that lesson, pupils began to understand the purposes and form of religious ritual. They showed some awareness of the similarities between Judaism and Christianity in religious ritual and of how this affected participants. Discussion with pupils and analysis of their work revealed that they had a growing awareness of the importance of learning from religion and not simply about it. This was exemplified when they wrote about their personal responses to what they had learned.

65. Overall, teaching and learning are good in the subject. In Year 6, a good range of work has been covered and teachers' expectations ensure that pupils produce good quality work. They acquire knowledge and the skills of research and recording and, therefore, develop their understanding. In the lesson seen, teaching and learning were good overall. Pupils made good progress in their understanding of the importance of Shabbat in Jewish family life. Teaching was carefully focused to challenge them to make connections between Shabbat, a Christian Sunday fifty years ago and the Sunday 'rituals' that pupils experience today. The level of discussion was good and they concentrated very well. In a good Year 5 lesson, pupils made good progress in developing their understanding of some of the core teachings of Christianity. These were taken from the Sermon on the Mount and were difficult concepts. However, the teacher used some imaginative methods to engage pupils' interest and this was generally successful. A very good lesson in Year 4 in which pupils had to explore ideas such as justice, tolerance and fairness led to a high level of interest and participation. Teaching was carefully balanced between challenge and support, time was used very well and the teacher's expectations of what pupils should understand were high. These features resulted in mature and thoughtful responses in which they related what they were learning to their own lives.

66. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to implement change and improve provision. Standards have improved and there is now appropriate and clear emphasis upon 'Learning from Religion'. There has been appropriate training for teachers to help them raise standards. Priorities for future development have been identified and include the development of suitable links to other subjects and visits to different places of worship to ensure that pupils are more aware of religious diversity.

67. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good. That inspection identified the need to raise standards and to improve planning, assessment and pupils' knowledge of different faiths. Progress made by pupils was unsatisfactory and there was a lack of opportunities for discussion in Year 6. All of these issues have been successfully addressed.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

68. Only one lesson in **art and design** was observed during the inspection. Evidence was also gathered through looking at displays, reviewing sketchbooks belonging to older pupils and the co-ordinator's portfolio and talking to teachers and pupils. Indications are that standards are above average across the school. Vibrant and eye-catching displays of artwork show that the subject is

valued and has a good profile in the school. These displays show that, as they move through the school, pupils are given plenty of opportunities to experiment with colour, size, shape and pattern so that they show increasing confidence in developing the detail of their work and in using various media and techniques. Pupils in Year 3 have created masks of the Demon King and their own Roman mosaics. Year 4 pupils' Tudor portraits are bold and expansive and show a good awareness of line and shape. Still life work by Year 5 shows close and careful observation and Year 6's hangings in the style of Kandinsky successfully capture the mood of his paintings. In a Year 6 lesson seen during the inspection, the teacher's searching questions challenged pupils to think creatively about the design of a new Olympic logo which symbolised the spirit of the games. Although pupils were well aware of the significance of the design, few showed flair and imagination in spite of the teacher's encouragement. Older pupils use sketch books well to collect visual information and develop ideas. Pupils' creative skills are particularly evident in multicultural work and the recent Wokingham Cultural Festival acted as a good stimulus, for example, for work on African Batik and Tie Dye. The school's Butterfly Garden was used as an inspiration for a local Arena for the Arts which involved many local schools and the community. Pupils used multi media to create a three-dimensional effect, linked with a multicultural theme, and produced stylish and striking displays.

## **Design and technology**

Provision in design and technology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards exceed national expectations.
- Achievement is good and pupils work well to their capabilities.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- There have been good improvements since the previous inspection.

69. No lessons were seen in Year 6. However, analysis of pupils' work and discussion with them show that standards are above average and that pupils achieve well. They generate appropriate ideas with understanding of the needs of users. They work accurately in design and making and evaluate their work with a very good degree of precision.

70. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Analysis of pupils' work in Year 6 indicates that they use learned skills well and plan their work with care. They show gains in their understanding and develop their ideas with imagination, e.g. what should be the ingredients and design for a healthy meal? Work produced is of good quality. Particularly impressive is the standard of pupils' written evaluations of their work that indicate a very good level of understanding of what they do. In Year 5, pupils made good progress in building 'mock-ups' for their work on designing cranked toys. Teaching was imaginative and pupils sustained interest very well. In Year 3, pupils responded very well and with good results to the challenge of making appliqué designs for a pencil case.

71. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator is very aware of what needs to be developed in the subject; for example, computer aided design in the upper school, and of the need to maintain the high standards reached by pupils. Careful assessment and the sampling of pupils' work are used to improve provision and develop teaching and learning. Overall, there has been good improvement since the previous inspection because better resources and careful assessment now make a significant contribution to the standards reached.

## **Music**



Provision in music is **very good**

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' talents as musicians are being developed well.
- There is a good emphasis on pupils evaluating and improving their work.
- Very good leadership and management are the driving force behind the school's success in music.
- Pupils' skills in notation are less well developed.
- A very wide range of musical activities is raising the profile of music in the school and community.
- Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to discover music from other cultures.
- Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### **Commentary**

72. Standards in Year 6 are above average and the achievement of pupils is good. Music enjoys a very high profile in the school and pupils obviously enjoy their music making. The music co-ordinator has very good expertise and high expectations of pupils' performance. This has resulted in a strong musical tradition involving pupils, adults in the school and parents. Judgements are based on classroom observations, assemblies including a musical assembly, choir practice, reviewing the co-ordinator's folder and recordings and talking with teachers and pupils.

73. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils also reach good standards because their own enthusiasm and interest help them to make the best use of the opportunities presented to them. Teachers work hard to motivate pupils and give positive responses to their efforts to promote confidence. Pupils are treated as young musicians and, as a result, they rise to the challenge of these high expectations of commitment, response and behaviour.

74. Right from the beginning, pupils are taught to consider their performance critically in order to improve it so that it becomes a natural part of learning. In a Year 3 lesson about improving their song ready for performance, pupils put on their 'Thinking Hats' to reflect on what would be important when performing a song to an audience. By the end of the lesson, they were singing *I want to be a Superstar* with clear diction and control of pitch whilst individual pupils had the confidence to try the 'rap' style of singing. Linked with their work in history, pupils in Year 4 have explored some aspects of Tudor music and dance including *Mistress Winter's Jump*. Pupils in Year 5 have looked at cyclic patterns in Mainly Rhythm and are now working towards their Christmas production. In a Year 6 lesson based on musical journeys, pupils were able to identify how instruments like the violin gave the sense of movement in *Mars the Bringer of War* from *The Planet Suite*. They thought about timbre and effects when choosing instruments to create the sound scenes in their minds as they devised their journeys into space.

75. The subject is very well led. Resources are very good and there are plenty of ethnic instruments and listening music to enable pupils to broaden their skills in musical appreciation. Assessment in the subject is still being developed and there is insufficient development of pupils' skills of notation. Standards in the subject are the same as at the previous inspection so improvement has been good. The school continues to offer pupils a wealth of musical experiences including a large choir, chamber choir, orchestra, recorders and opportunities to play other instruments. Great impetus is given to pupils' enjoyment of music by school productions and concerts throughout the year and participating in large concerts locally at the Hexagon in Reading and nationally at the Royal Albert Hall. Visitors include drumming and percussion workshops, a woodwind quintet and barber shop quartet. Pupils' knowledge of music from other cultures is very well developed. Within lessons, they learn about East African, Caribbean, Indian and Indonesian music and have enjoyed Djembe drumming workshop and Indian dancers. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they sing *This little light of mine* in assembly, support each other in performances like *The Peace Child*, and take part in Senegalese drumming at the recent Wokingham Cultural Festival.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education (PE) is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning have strengths and weaknesses.
- The recently designated co-ordinator has clear plans for the development of the subject.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities supports the teaching of PE.
- The subject is well resourced.
- The range of competitive games fixtures available is an area of development.
- Cross-curricular links, including those with ICT, are not well developed.

### Commentary

76. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Only two lessons of PE were seen during the inspection. These indicated that standards in gymnastics are average in Year 6 and that standards in dance are average in Year 5. Discussion with staff and pupils and the school's records showed that standards in swimming are also average. These judgements are similar to the judgment made by the school's 1999 inspection in gymnastics but lower than the judgement made by that inspection in dance as standards were above average in 1999. No comparison with the judgement of swimming is possible as none was made in 1999.

77. In gymnastics, pupils' balances are relatively simple and lack ambition. Their movements are not sufficiently controlled and lack poise. In dance, pupils' sequences lack imagination, incorporate few basic dance movements such as variations of height, speed and direction effectively and have little pride in performance. Too many pupils grin self consciously as they perform. In swimming, the evidence indicates that the school's provision is sufficient to meet national requirements. The evidence also indicates that most pupils swim at least 25 metres safely and unaided using a recognised stroke by the time that they leave the school. However, indications are that the provision does not allow many pupils to reach high standards in swimming.

78. Teaching and learning in the lessons observed were satisfactory as they were when the school was inspected in 1999. The main strengths in the teaching were the fundamental teaching skills such as control and management of the pupils, relationships, planning, the structure and sequence of the lessons and the variety of activities. Weaknesses were largely related to inadequate application of specific knowledge of the teaching of PE. For example, in both of the lessons seen, the teachers clearly and accurately identified shortcomings in the standards reached by the pupils and in the quality of their performance. However, insufficient effective attention was given to ensuring that the pupils improved. Too often, general exhortation about improvement was given without specific advice or demonstration. When demonstrations were given, there was rarely any follow up to check that the pupils had incorporated or adapted them into their own work. In addition, the lessons lacked pace so that the pupils did not work hard enough. Setting out apparatus took too long and when evaluation of the pupils' work did occur it was weak and slowed the lesson down too much without any significant improvement in performance. Pupils were not sufficiently challenged to improve in these lessons and their lack of basic skills such as using space effectively was not corrected adequately.

79. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory as is its improvement since the school was last inspected. In the last academic year, the subject was managed on a caretaker basis. The recently designated current co-ordinator has made a good start in the role. She has successfully identified the subject's major strengths and weaknesses and has suitable plans to address the weaknesses. Strengths identified include the good range of physical extracurricular activities which support the subject, for example, football, netball, judo and tennis. Strengths also include the learning resources in the subject including playground equipment, the school hall, its field and its outside hard surfaced areas. The co-ordinator has also improved the way in which

curricular time allocated to the subject is organised and managed. Areas for development include increasing the range and number of competitive sports fixtures available to the pupils and improving the expertise available to the school by bringing in outside specialists and providing more in-service training for staff. Another area of weakness clearly recognised by the co-ordinator is broadening the use of the subject to help pupils' learning in other aspects of the curriculum. The co-ordinator plans to provide resources such as those related to major sporting events like the Olympics to address this issue. The intention is to harness pupils' enthusiasm for this subject to help their broader learning. At present, the use of ICT in PE is largely limited to the use of compact discs and videotapes to support teaching in dance.

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

### **Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE)**

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**

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

- The school's ethos provides considerable opportunities for personal growth.
- The good rapport between teachers and pupils means that pupils feel safe to express their views.
- Pupils have the confidence and maturity to articulate their views.
- Pupils are given a genuine say in the running of the school.
- Peer mediators help pupils to sort out problems for themselves.
- Strong leadership means that the subject is continuing to develop well.
- There is a good sense of identity as a caring community.

#### **Commentary**

80. Standards in the subject are above average in Year 6 and the achievement of all groups of pupils is good. The excellent ethos of the school, where all pupils are equally valued and individual needs recognised, means that pupils can develop a sense of self worth, personal responsibility and respect for truth, people and property. Apart from classroom observations, judgements were made through looking at displays, the co-ordinator's portfolio and teachers' planning and talking to teachers and pupils.

81. Across the school, teaching and learning are good. A strong bond of trust and support exists between adults and pupils and issues are handled sensitively so that pupils feel safe to explore ideas and responses in depth. As a result, they grow in confidence and experience a sense of achievement within an open yet confidential setting. In both Year 4 lessons, the calm and thoughtful approach adopted by the teachers enabled pupils to understand how life presents them with different choices which can be simple or life changing. Pupils were encouraged to analyse the problem presented by the imaginary situation of finding a lost watch and to think creatively by using 'Thinking Hats' in order to arrive at the correct moral solution. As part of their work on growing independence, a Year 6 teacher challenged pupils to apply their 'Thinking Hats' skills in order to become aware of the importance of saving money to buy. As pupils analysed different aspects of the situation presented to them in Money Matters, they were mature and articulate and arrived at thoughtful final decisions. Pupils in Year 3 have considered the qualities of friendship and Year 5 pupils have also talked about the way they treat one another.

82. The school also endorses its core values effectively through the behaviour contract, playground and class rules, rewards, sanctions, Gold Book assemblies and drugs, alcohol and sex education programmes. 'Circle time' helps pupils to talk about difficult thoughts and ideas and consider matters that are important to them. The school and class councils give pupils a real voice in bringing about changes in the school. Democratic elections for the school council are an important part of pupils' education in citizenship. As part of the school's creative conflict systems, some pupils are trained as playground friends and have extended this role to the infant school.

Some older pupils also receive training as 'playground friends'. The school also takes part in the Healthy Schools initiative which has raised pupils' awareness of the importance of healthy eating. The residential trip to Beaulieu for pupils in Year 6 enables them to live and work together in close quarters and unfamiliar surroundings. Respect for the environment is shown in the creation of the Butterfly Garden which won the High Sheriff's Award.

83. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject and brings a wealth of ideas to her role. PSHCE was not taught as a separate subject at the last inspection so it is not possible to judge improvement. A range of visitors including the school nurse, a baby in Year 4, Aware Drugs Education and the police help to extend provision. The school's good provision for PSHCE creates a real sense of identity as a community for which every one is responsible but where every one is cared for and supported.

## 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   | 1            |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection  | 2            |
| Value for money provided by the school                                | 2            |
| <b>Overall standards achieved</b>                                     | <b>2</b>     |
| Pupils' achievement   | 3            |
| <b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (Ethos)</b> | <b>1</b>     |
| Attendance  | 3            |
| Attitudes   | 2            |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions                         | 2            |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development             | 2            |
| <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      | 3            |
| Accommodation and resources   | 3            |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety                              | 2            |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils                               | 2            |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views                   | 2            |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents                  | 4            |
| The quality of the school's links with the community                  | 3            |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges                    | 3            |
| <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                                       | 1            |

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