

INSPECTION REPORT

ISAMBARD BRUNEL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Portsmouth

LEA area: Portsmouth

Unique reference number: 116219

Headteacher: Mrs Llyn Codling

Lead inspector: Mrs Carole Skinner

Dates of inspection: 4th-6th July 2005

Inspection number: 267105

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	288
School address:	Wymering Road North End Portsmouth Hampshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Isambard Brunel Junior School
Name of chair of governors:	Michelle Treacher
Date of previous inspection:	February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Isambard Brunel Junior School is larger than an average sized primary school. There are 288 pupils on roll, with similar numbers of boys and girls overall. However, in Year 6, boys outnumber girls by just over two to one. The school's roll has fallen significantly since the previous inspection when there were 364 pupils on roll. It is currently undersubscribed, in keeping with the trend in the local area. The school draws most of its pupils from an area of significant deprivation. Twenty-eight pupils (ten per cent) come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Twenty-six pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English, which is much higher than most schools. Attainment on entry to the school is low. There are 79 pupils (27 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs, which is well above the national average. A significant proportion of these pupils have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, which have an adverse effect on their learning. Five pupils have statements of special educational need. The turnover of pupils is high: for example, approximately a fifth of the pupils currently in Year 6 have joined since Year 3. Since the last inspection, there has been a high turnover of staff. In 2000, the headteacher and a number of staff, including most of the senior management team, left and the chair of governors resigned. The school was placed in a category of concern by the Local Education Authority. The present headteacher took up her post in January 2001.

The school is involved in a number of initiatives, including Sure Start and Pathfinder Schools. It provides a nursery and offers full day care for 42 children. As an extended school it offers a family learning programme, adult education and family support services. It achieved recognition by Investors in People for the third time in 2002 and the Healthy Schools Award in 2003 and 2004. The school won the national David Bellamy award in 2003 and 2004. It offers a number of services to the local community, including breakfast and after-school clubs and community use of its extensive facilities.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23160	Carole Skinner	Lead inspector	Mathematics, religious education (RE), design and technology (DT), geography, English as an additional language.
9977	Fran Luke	Lay inspector	
15917	Bob Cross	Team inspector	Science, history, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE).
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	English, art, music, personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), special educational needs (SEN).

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Isambard Brunel Junior School provides an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, as is the quality of teaching and learning. Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory overall. Standards are rising steadily, and the impact of new strategies can be seen most clearly in Year 3 where teaching, learning and achievement are consistently good. This suggests that the school has the capacity for continued improvement as it builds on these achievements. However, although improving, the school still has weaknesses in aspects of its provision which are slowing down the rate of progress. The school provides sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides good leadership for the school and has a clear vision for its development.
- Pupils achieve well in English and science due to good teaching in those subjects, but standards are still below average in Year 6 and well below average in mathematics.
- Provision is unsatisfactory and standards are below expectations in religious education (RE), design and technology (DT) and geography.
- Although teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory overall, the quality is not consistently high enough to promote good progress for all pupils.
- The school sets high expectations for pupils' behaviour and works hard to achieve this.
- Pupils' good personal development is reflected in their positive attitudes to school, their willingness to take responsibility and their good relationships with others.
- Writing, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not developed well enough across the curriculum.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of clubs, visits, visitors and other activities.
- There are very good arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety and for involving them in the life of the school.
- The school has developed very effective links with parents and offers a very good range of services for parents and members of the community.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was inspected in 1999. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 (average) in national tests has improved significantly but standards remain below average. There has been insufficient improvement in the provision for RE, DT and geography. Evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning has improved but the role of teachers in checking the quality of education in their subjects is not yet fully effective. Teachers' expectations have improved. The weaknesses in managing pupils' behaviour that were identified by the previous inspection have been addressed well. Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum have been hampered by the high turnover of staff.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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.

Although standards in Year 6 are below average in English and science, **achievement is good**, given the pupils' low starting point. Standards in both subjects are improving, and those in reading are close to the national average. Standards in mathematics are well below average, particularly in using and applying mathematical skills and knowledge. Standards are average in ICT, art, history and physical education (PE). They are below average in RE, DT and geography and achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils with SEN make good progress towards their individual targets and those who are learning English as an additional language make sound progress. Pupils achieve well in Year 3 due to consistently good teaching.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Their attitudes and relationships are good. Behaviour is satisfactory due to teachers' good management skills. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and are encouraged to develop confidence and self-esteem. Attendance is better than the national average but unauthorised absence is too high.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour but the quality of teaching is not consistently good enough in all subjects and in all classes. The quality of marking and teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work are not consistent. The school has effective systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress, but teachers do not always make good use of the information gained to ensure that work is planned at the right level for all pupils. A particular strength of curricular planning is the links made between all subjects of the curriculum. Curricular provision is unsatisfactory in RE, DT and geography but the curriculum is enriched by a very good range of visits, visitors, clubs and sporting activities. Provision for pupils with SEN is good. The school provides very good quality care for all pupils. It works very well in partnership with parents and the community to support the pupils' learning and welfare.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory. Good leadership by the headteacher ensures a clear focus on raising standards and improving teaching and learning. There is good teamwork at senior management and year group levels. Changes of staff have hindered the development of some aspects of the curriculum. Statutory requirements are not fully met in RE, DT and geography. Financial management and administration are good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and the quality of education it offers their children. The school provides parents with a good range of information and a very good range of additional services, such as childcare and family learning. Pupils also have positive views of the school and contribute ideas through the school council and their representatives on the governing body.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards further in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good and ensure that assessment information is used more effectively to guide teachers' planning.
- Provide more opportunities to develop pupils' writing, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Improve the quality of provision and raise standards in RE, DT and geography.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in Year 6 are below the national average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. Given the pupils' low attainment on entry, the high turnover of pupils and the higher than average proportion of pupils with SEN, achievement overall is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in English and science.
- Pupils make very good progress in reading.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in RE, DT and geography and standards are below average in Year 6.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and develop writing, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.3 (24.9)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.3 (25.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.0 (27.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 83 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. In the Year 6 national tests in 2004, the school's results in English were well below the national average, while those in mathematics and science were below average. This was also the case when compared with schools whose pupils performed similarly in Year 2. Over the past five years the school's performance in the national tests has improved at a faster rate than that seen nationally. Girls have not performed as well as boys over the past three years, especially in English and science. The school has taken steps to address this and there are currently no significant differences in attainment between girls and boys.

2. The findings of this inspection are that standards in Year 6 are below average in English, and science and well below average in mathematics. However, achievement is satisfactory overall, given many pupils' low attainment on entry and the higher than average turnover of pupils. Achievement is good in English and science, due to the consistently good quality of teaching. Although standards are below average in writing, they are average in reading, which represents very good achievement. Standards in Year 6 are in line with national expectations in ICT, art, history and PE. Standards are below average in DT and geography and do not meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for RE. Achievement is unsatisfactory in these three subjects because pupils do not cover all aspects of each subject in sufficient breadth and depth.

3. Standards in mathematics and science are judged to be lower than they were at the time of the previous inspection, while those in other subjects where comparisons can be made are similar. However, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 (the national average) in mathematics has risen from 40% in 1998 to 67% in 2004, while in science it has risen from 44% to 78%. The school has acknowledged the need to improve pupils' use and application of mathematical concepts and skills in order to improve their performance in national tests. The impact of the school's strategies for raising standards can be seen in Year 3, where pupils are making good progress because the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good.

4. Reading skills are used well in other subjects, but there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills through subjects such as science, history, geography and DT. Similarly, opportunities to use numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects are too few.

5. Discussions with pupils show that most enjoy learning. Parents feel that the school has high expectations of their children and that they make good progress. The large number of pupils with SEN achieve well in the light of their difficulties. Good teaching and careful support ensure that they make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans and their standards improve as they get older. The care and support offered by the adults who work with them further this good progress and helps to raise their self-esteem. Pupils whose first language is not English make sound progress in learning English and are supported well both by class teachers and visiting specialists. This enables them to have full access to the curriculum and to make appropriate progress alongside their peers.

6. Higher attaining pupils reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science but are not always given work that is suitably challenging in other subjects. The school also identifies gifted and talented pupils and makes every effort to meet their specific needs. In addition to promoting good achievement in lessons, the school also provides opportunities for pupils to excel in sporting activities and music. There are termly activity days when pupils can specialise in aspects of the curriculum in which they excel and in which they are given work which challenges and extends them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school and their personal development are good. Their behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils are punctual to school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the overall level of attendance is above the national median, the rate of unauthorised absence is higher than average.
- Pupils are interested in all the activities provided for them.
- Pupils form good relationships with one another.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- The number of exclusions is very high.

Commentary

7. During the inspection, behaviour seen in lessons was good. On the playground pupils play well together and relationships are good. However there are a number of children whose challenging behaviour is generally managed well and with whom staff have to work hard to retain their attention and concentration. The school sets high expectations for pupils' behaviour and works hard to achieve this. All staff use the behaviour policy consistently and good behaviour is rewarded, something which parents were pleased about. The school uses exclusions as part of its behaviour strategy for particularly bad behaviour and when all other options have been exhausted. The number of exclusions is very high compared to similar schools.

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	251	24	0

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

8. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. In lessons they are interested and motivated; they are attentive and show interest in what they are doing. They handle artefacts with care and share equipment. Pupils participate with enthusiasm and co-operate and collaborate with each other. Pupils are interested in school life and many attend the out of school activities organised for them. A relatively large number of pupils have individual education plans for emotional and behavioural difficulties to help them develop effective self-control skills and raise their self-esteem. The focused behaviour targets look at all needs of the individual pupil and this is done in partnership with the parents and child. The effective support from all adults working with pupils who have special educational needs enables them all to participate fully in events.

9. The school works hard to promote good relationships and as a result pupils generally get on well together. Pupils from many different ethnic backgrounds work and play happily together. Relationships between pupils and staff are good and pupils are happy that they have someone they can talk to and that any problems are dealt with very quickly. Parents confirmed that they are happy that incidents are dealt with. As a consequence pupils are free from harassment.

10. Pupils can apply to become prefects and members of the school council and sit on the pupils' court. Peer mediators have an important job monitoring some disaffected children and during the inspection were seen looking after children at lunch and break times. The school works hard to improve pupils' self esteem. These very good opportunities for taking additional responsibility, plus the self esteem groups and the support given in teaching and learning all help in this.

11. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It is supported through assemblies, in which pupils show respect and are given the opportunity to reflect. Moral and social development is good and pupils are taught to be aware of the impact of their actions on others and the responsibilities of living in a community. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about major religions in RE and learn about other cultures in geography. As a result, pupils begin to have an understanding of what it is like to grow up in a multicultural society.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.7
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.

12. The overall level of attendance is higher than the national median. The majority of parents support the school by getting their children to school on time. However, the rate of unauthorised absence is higher than average because some parents take their children out of school for holidays in term time, which are not authorised by the headteacher. Registration periods in the morning are efficient and ensure that there is an effective start to the school day. There were 24 fixed period exclusions during the last academic year. However, the school only resorts to excluding pupils when violent behaviour endangers the safety of others.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is satisfactory. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of additional activities but provision in RE, DT and geography is unsatisfactory. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is very good. Pupils with SEN receive good support. The school's accommodation is good and supports the curriculum well. There are very good arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare. The school works very well in partnership with parents and has very good links with the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are good but the use of assessment information to guide teachers' planning is not yet fully effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour in lessons which helps to create a productive working atmosphere.
- Good lesson introductions ensure that pupils know what they are intended to learn and engage their interest.
- In good lessons work is planned effectively to match all pupils' capabilities but this is not done consistently well.
- Teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work are not high enough.
- The quality of teachers' marking is variable.
- Good assessment procedures enable teachers to track pupils' progress from term to term.
- Assessment information is not always used effectively to help teachers plan the next stage in learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0(0%)	2 (6%)	14 (39%)	19 (53%)	1(3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. The previous inspection judged teaching to be satisfactory. Approximately half of the lessons seen were good and one in ten was very good. Five lessons were judged unsatisfactory, mainly due to teachers' low expectations of pupils' behaviour or their inability to control behaviour and noise levels. In this inspection, all but one of the lessons observed was satisfactory, but the proportion of teaching that was good or better was slightly lower. The most consistently good teaching was seen in Year 3 where all but one of the nine lessons observed was at least good. A detailed analysis of the work completed by a sample of pupils from all year groups further confirms that teaching is good in English and science, and satisfactory in all other subjects where judgements could be made. Parents express positive views about the quality of teaching in the school and most pupils say they enjoy lessons and are expected to work hard.

14. The weaknesses in managing pupils' behaviour that were identified by the previous inspection have been addressed well. This aspect is now a strong feature of the teaching throughout the school. Teachers use a range of strategies consistently to ensure that pupils behave well in lessons and that any potentially disruptive behaviour is nipped in the bud. Positive reinforcement of good behaviour is paramount and is usually effective, but where it is not, a clearly understood system of sanctions is brought to bear, supported by the headteacher and behaviour team. As a result, most lessons run smoothly and pupils know exactly what is expected of them.

15. There has been a strong focus on ensuring that pupils understand what they are intended to learn in each lesson, and this was observed to be effective. Teachers introduce lessons by explaining to pupils the 'learning intention', or purpose of the lesson, and return to these at the end of the lesson, when pupils are encouraged to assess their own understanding according to a 'traffic light' system. Lesson introductions are also lively and interesting in most cases, and this engages pupils' attention and interest from the outset. Good questioning is a feature of many lessons, and this involves pupils productively in learning as well as checking their understanding. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when introductory sessions were found to be too long and lacking in animation and enthusiasm.

16. Where teaching is good, the individual and group activities that are planned in order to enable pupils to achieve the 'learning intentions' are matched well to their level of attainment. However, this is not consistent. In some mathematics lessons, for example, teachers' expectations were rather high for some pupils and the tasks were too difficult. In some subjects, the work planned for higher attaining pupils is not challenging enough. The teaching of pupils with SEN is good. They are given work that is appropriate for their needs and the support they receive from teachers and assistants is effective. In lessons where they are available, particularly in English, good use is made of skilled teaching assistants to help pupils learn and in the case of pupils with behavioural difficulties to listen attentively and focus on what they are doing.

17. The previous inspection found that teachers did not demand suitably high standards in the presentation of pupils' work, and this situation has not improved. Many pupils' work books do not give the impression that they take a pride in their work, and teachers rarely stress the importance of this aspect, either in lessons or in their marking, which is variable in its effectiveness. Some marking is of good quality. It shows pupils what they have done well and shows them how to improve their work. However, this is not consistent, and some marking is not constructive or helpful in moving pupils on in their learning.

18. Much time and effort has been devoted to training teachers in assessing pupils' work thoroughly. Good systems are in place for assessing pupils' attainment termly in English and mathematics and at the end of units of work in other subjects. There are good arrangements for setting individual targets for pupils in English, while those in mathematics and science are being developed and refined. However, not all teachers are using assessment information consistently well in order to plan work for all pupils that takes account of what they know, understand and can do, and what they need to spend more time on. As a result, the activities that are planned for pupils to do in lessons are sometimes too difficult or not sufficiently challenging. Assessment of the work of pupils with special educational needs is thorough and is used effectively to produce detailed individual education plans. These are carefully designed with clear specific targets and suggestions as to how they can be achieved.

19. Improvements in teaching since the previous inspection have been hampered by the high turnover of staff which has adversely affected attempts to establish consistency and continuity. At the time of this inspection, three teachers from Years 5 and 6 were absent, two on maternity leave and one on extended sick leave. One Year 6 class had been taught by several different teachers in the course of the year. A review by the Local Education Authority in September 2004 judged teaching and learning to be unsatisfactory. The weaknesses that were identified at that time are steadily being addressed and there has been a satisfactory improvement.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is unsatisfactory. The enrichment of the curriculum is very good. Overall, the school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curricular planning is comprehensive.
- Good links are made between a range of subjects.
- The school plans to review creativity in the curriculum.
- There are strengths in English, particularly reading, history and PSHCE.
- Provision in RE, geography and DT is unsatisfactory.
- There are shortcomings in the school's provision for swimming.
- Pupils' ICT, writing and numeracy skills are not developed enough in other subjects.
- The school provides a very wide range of clubs.
- The pupils benefit from a very good number of visits and visitors.
- The school's accommodation and resources have strengths and weaknesses.

Main strengths and weaknesses

20. Curricular planning is based on appropriate guidelines which have been carefully adapted to the particular needs of the school. Planning is detailed, covers all subjects, and provides a solid basis for the structured progress of the pupils. A particular strength of the planning is the links made between all subjects of the curriculum. Work is planned around a central theme or topic, such as The Tudors, and work in other subjects is related to this theme, for example, Tudor music. When producing its curricular planning, the school paid great attention to ensuring that the pupils' creativity was well developed. It plans to review the curriculum to ensure that this has happened later in the year. In most cases, the organisation of the curriculum into topics works successfully and the pupils' learning in one subject complements and extends their understanding in other areas. However, their work in geography, DT and RE lacks sufficient depth and the specific knowledge and skills required in these subjects are not taught clearly enough. Some of the schemes of work are too new to be fully embedded in the school's practice.

21. When the school was inspected in 1999, the curriculum was judged to be broad and balanced and to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The current inspection finds that provision for PSHCE is very good and that provision for English, especially reading, and history is good. As a result, the pupils show a particular interest in these subjects and benefit from a broad range of experiences in them. In 1999, there were judged to be weaknesses in aspects of music, DT, geography, PE, history, RE and art. The weaknesses relating to music, history and art have been fully addressed. DT, RE and geography show similar weaknesses to those identified in 1999 and do not meet the full requirements of the National Curriculum or, in the case of RE, the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The key issue for action relating to these subjects following the school's 1999 inspection has not been satisfactorily addressed and the school's planned syllabus is not implemented effectively. The pupils swim for a few weeks in Year 3. This enables most pupils to swim but some are not able to cover 25 metres successfully and not many pupils do much more than this.

22. The pupils' use of ICT to promote their learning in other subjects is very variable. They use ICT well in history and communication but its use in mathematics and science is very limited. The pupils' use of ICT in other subjects is not planned systematically or regularly enough. Similarly, there is evidence of the pupils' writing and numeracy skills in a range of subjects. Sometimes, this is good, such as the application of writing to history. On the other hand there was far too little written work in RE and geography and little accurate application of numeracy in DT. The use and application of mathematics were weaknesses when the school was inspected in 1999 and this continues to be the case.

23. Pupils have access to a very wide range of extracurricular clubs. These include sports, the arts and academic work. There are, for example, football and netball clubs, a choir and a homework club. These clubs broaden the pupils' horizons, skills and interests very significantly. Similarly, a very wide range of educational visits and visitors does the same thing. Visits include Southsea Castle, the Kings Theatre, Pizza Express and the birthplace of Charles Dickens. A ballet dancer, the community policeman and African drummers have been amongst the visitors to the school.

24. The number of teaching and support staff is similar to that found in most schools of the same size. The staff have a sufficiently broad range of expertise and experience between them to meet the school's curricular needs. This is not such a good picture as that found when the school was last inspected, as, at that time, four subject co-ordinators were not classroom based. Overall, the school's learning resources are satisfactory in quality and quantity. Resources range from very good in ICT to unsatisfactory in DT. The weaknesses in resources in history noted in 1999 have been addressed.

25. Overall, the school's accommodation supports the teaching of the curriculum well. Classrooms are spacious, the school has two halls, a computer suite and generous outside hard surface area. However, the pupils do not have access to a large grassed area and the school's environmental area is not fully developed. As when the school was inspected in 1999, there is some noise in some classrooms when PE takes place in the hall.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Pupils' personal development is tracked well. 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, child protection and first aid.
- Very good levels of care for all pupils ensure that they feel well supported as they progress through the school.
- The school actively seeks and acts upon pupils' views.
- Good induction arrangements help children settle quickly when they enter the school

Commentary

26. The school has very good health and safety procedures. Buildings and grounds are regularly checked and problems quickly addressed so that they are kept safe for the pupils. Regular risk assessments are carried out. Child protection procedures are secure; all staff are aware of the procedures and know what they need to do if they have any concerns. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for the care of children who are unwell are effective.

27. Very thorough procedures to monitor pupils' personal progress as they proceed through the school enable all adults to form close and trusting relationships with the pupils. They know the pupils well and quickly know if something is wrong. Pupils spoken to are very happy that there is always someone they can turn to for help and advice. Parents are happy with the level of support given to their children and feel that each child is valued. Pupils with SEN receive very good levels of care, support and guidance. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully as they progress through the school. Teachers and assistants know the needs of the pupils well and support accordingly. Pupils with statements of SEN have their needs and support reviewed regularly as part of the annual reviews.

28. Good induction arrangements for pupils when they start in the school help them to feel welcome and settle quickly. If pupils start at the school in older year groups, they are assigned a 'buddy' for a short period to help them understand school procedures so they can fit in quickly and take an active part in school life. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language also receive good support, both from school staff and external specialists.

29. Pupils' views are fully taken into account through the school council, which is an impressive body of pupils. Pupils are very positive about their role as councillors and are confident that their opinions are valued and can cite many examples of their impact on the life of the school, including their contribution to the school improvement plan.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the community are very good. Links with other schools are good. The school provides a very good range of extended services for parents and the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very positive links with parents, they are consulted on different issues and many support the school.

- Very good links with the local community give pupils a broad range of experiences.
- Good links with other schools ensures that there is a smooth transfer for pupils when they move up to the middle school.
- Very good provision of extended services further enhances links with parents and the community.

Commentary

30. Information provided for parents is good overall. Regular newsletters give parents a regular update about what is happening in school. Curriculum information is given to parents at the beginning of each year, but at the pre-inspection parents' meeting some parents did not feel this information was consistent across the school. Many parents support their children by helping with homework, but again some parents feel there is inconsistency across the school.

31. Written annual reports for parents are satisfactory. They show what pupils have been doing and parents are able to see what progress their children are making; some give areas for development. However the school is changing the reports from the end of this term, which will give parents more information about what their children know, understand and can do. There are opportunities for parents to discuss progress informally as well as at formal consultation evenings.

32. The responses to the parent questionnaire and the pre-inspection meeting with parents confirm that the school has very positive relationships with parents and that parents are very satisfied with what the school provides. Parents appreciate the school's open door policy and say that staff are always approachable and available for informal discussion on the playground every day. They also feel welcome in the school. Parents are kept well informed and are regularly consulted on a range of issues; as a result they feel their views are valued. The school has a 'Family of Isambard Brunel Association' which involves parents, grandparents and staff. Fund raising events which are well supported.

33. Very good links with the local community support the school well. The school arranges a number of visits to places of interest in the local area as well as visitors to the school to support the curriculum. Visitors include the local vicar who comes in to take assembly and pupils visit the church for festivals throughout the year. Links with the local elderly residents help to support pupils' personal development. The school is very much a part of the local community and carries out lots of community work by allowing a variety of community groups to use the school as well as running a range of courses for community members as well as parents.

34. The school works closely with the infant school to ensure that the transfer of pupils at the end of Year 2 takes place smoothly. A range of visits and activities take place in the three terms prior to transfer to secondary school giving pupils ample opportunities to visit the schools to meet both staff and pupils prior to their transfer. These activities, plus discussions between staff ensure that the secondary schools know the children well before they start. Curriculum links with other schools in the local area support the school well. Staff regularly attend joint training sessions and are able to meet on a regular basis to share ideas.

35. All parents of pupils with SEN receive details of individual education plans and there are opportunities for them to talk to teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator at consultation evenings and at other times. However, the response of parents is variable. The level of liaison with parents of pupils with statements of SEN and where outside agencies are involved is good.

36. The provision of extended services and support programmes is very effective and central to the work of the school. The school is used constantly to provide an extensive programme to community groups, families and individuals. The extended school facilities include provision for parent education, family support and a family learning programme. The work is linked closely to involving parents in the daily life of the school by providing parent training courses and bringing adults and pupils together to work and learn collaboratively. This has brought about an increased involvement of families and the community in the school.

37. Of particular value to parents and pupils are the extensive 'Family Learning' programme and the appointment of a part-time 'Family Link' teacher. This has had a significant impact on relationships with parents and links with the wider community. The teacher responsible is enthusiastic and as a highly skilled teacher has been instrumental in organising and delivering a wide range of successful parenting courses, including one for 'Active Dads'. In addition, the pupils' learning and personal development are enhanced by community links through the termly family learning weeks, for example, in learning new knowledge and skills through such activities as hair braiding, yoga, cooking and Spanish. The school is now recognised as a lead school in the city for its work with families.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good. The management and governance of the school are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has high aspirations for the school and is committed to raising standards.
- The rate of improvement in the school has been affected adversely by high rates of staff turnover and absence.
- Effective teamwork helps to ensure consistency and to compensate for staff changes.
- The role of some subject managers is underdeveloped.
- The strategic improvement plan is based on a comprehensive review of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- There is a very good commitment to inclusion.
- Rigorous financial management has enabled the school to clear its deficit budget while sustaining appropriate staffing levels.

Commentary

38. Although in 1999 the leadership and management of the school were judged to be good, a year later the school had declined in a number of key aspects and, following the resignation of the headteacher and most of the senior management team, the Local Education Authority placed the school in a category of concern. At this time, records show that relationships with parents were strained, the Local Education Authority received many complaints about the school, teachers' morale was low and pupils' behaviour was not managed well. After the current headteacher took up her post in January 2001, she and the experienced deputy head carried out a thorough and searching review of the school which revealed a number of significant weaknesses, including low achievement, unsatisfactory teaching and assessment procedures, inadequate curricular planning and unsatisfactory links with parents and the community.

39. Since that time, there has been very good progress in developing a meaningful and productive partnership with parents and the local community, notably in the provision of an extensive range of extended services. This is a key element in the headteacher's vision for the school which underpins its ethos. A strong focus on using assessment to promote learning is beginning to have a noticeable impact in certain subjects, although this is still a developing area. Improvements in teaching, learning and, consequently, standards have been satisfactory but hindered to some extent by high staff turnover and absence which have adversely affected the consistency and continuity of improvement. Standards are rising steadily, and the impact of new strategies can be seen most clearly in Year 3 where teaching, learning and achievement are consistently good. This suggests that the school has the capacity for continued improvement as it builds on these achievements.

40. A good feature of the leadership and management of the school is the effective teamwork and shared commitment amongst all staff to moving the school forward. The deputy head works closely with the headteacher to oversee and check on the school's performance. The senior management team contributes effectively to determining the school's strategic direction. The governing body supports the headteacher and staff well and plays an appropriate role in checking on the quality of

provision for the pupils. Upper and lower school leaders provide good support for colleagues, especially new and temporary teachers who cover for absences. Year teams plan their week's lessons together to ensure consistency for all the pupils within a year group. This strong teamwork has done much to lift teachers' morale.

41. Due in large part to the turnover of teachers, the management of some subjects is not as effective as it could be. Good systems are in place for developing this role and many subject managers are already having a positive impact on raising standards and improving curricular provision. However, this is not consistent or fully effective and, at the time of this inspection, the headteacher was 'caretaking' some key subjects during the absence of the post-holders. This places a significant additional burden on her time. The school's management systems are constantly under review and evolving in response to national initiatives and its own self-evaluation. Consequently, plans are already in place to implement a new system of curriculum teams in the next school year so that responsibilities can be shared more equably and effectively.

42. The school improvement plan is formulated after extensive and ongoing review of all aspects of the school's provision. It covers a three year period and includes both costings and criteria for judging how successful the school has been. Governors are fully involved in the process and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Staff are consulted and involved in the process of identifying areas for development. Thorough analysis of test results in English and mathematics also contributes effectively to decisions about future initiatives to raise standards. There is a strong focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. A relative weakness in the process of planning for school improvement is the extent of the priorities to be addressed which is substantial. The headteacher is aware of this and has narrowed the scope of the next year's programme of work to avoid attempting to cover too many areas at once.

43. The ethos of the school is one of including all children in all aspects of school life and it is rooted firmly in the recommendations of the government's 'Every Child Matters' white paper. This is reflected in the school's commitment to promoting a healthy lifestyle, its concerns for pupils' safety and its emphasis on enjoyment, achievement and enabling all pupils to make a positive contribution. Although the number of exclusions is high compared to most schools, these are all short-term and in response to violent behaviour which might endanger others' safety. The school has a deservedly high reputation for managing pupils with very challenging behaviour and has developed many positive strategies for dealing with this. Its very good extended services include parents and members of the local community to a far greater extent than is commonly seen.

44. The headteacher and governors had to take stringent measures to increase a significant deficit in the school's budget in the last financial year. This had come about largely because of the school's falling roll, higher than average staffing costs and a claw back of capital funds. Overall, seven redundancies were made and the headteacher, finance officer and governors worked hard to produce a budget plan that would eliminate the deficit. This has been achieved in the current year's financial plan, and the headteacher and finance officer have attended a number of training courses to ensure that the budget is set and monitored effectively. Projections for the next five years show that the current position is sustainable. Despite the cutbacks and budget constraints, the school has maintained good staffing levels and is committed to improving resources in those subjects where deficiencies have been identified.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	816014	Balance from previous year	(133376)
Total expenditure	722119	Balance carried forward to the next	(39481)
Expenditure per pupil	2465		

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and this helps pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils make very good progress in reading to reach average standards in Year 6.
- Strategies for raising standards are beginning to have a positive effect.
- Teaching assistants work well with those who may need additional support.
- The learning tasks in writing do not always sufficiently match pupils' attainment levels.
- There is insufficient focus on developing pupils' writing skills in other subjects.

Commentary

45. Results in national tests for 2004 for pupils in Year 6 were well below the national average and well below average when compared with similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that although standards remain below average as at the time of the last inspection, the achievement of pupils currently in Year 6 is good, based on their prior attainment, which was well below average on entry to the school. This is because teaching has improved and is now good and a more rigorous approach to assessment is beginning to lead to an improvement in standards over the year. Pupils with SEN receive good support and achieve well against the language and literacy targets in their individual educational plans. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language also make good progress in developing language and literacy skills. The 2004 national test results indicate the boys performing better than the girls in the tests. However, inspection findings point to no difference between the boys and girls.

46. Pupils have below average speaking skills. This has a negative impact on the range of vocabulary which pupils use in their writing and their ability to express their ideas clearly, both in discussion and in writing. Listening skills are better than speaking and are overall average by Year 6. Throughout the school, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to speak purposefully during lessons but for many, the choice of vocabulary is not rich enough to reach the higher standards. Most pupils listen attentively for sustained periods of time and show interest in lessons. However, the minority of pupils who have behavioural difficulties do not always find this easy and need additional adult support to ensure they listen carefully.

47. Average standards in reading show that pupils in Year 6 achieve very well from the well below average standards on entry to the school. This is a good improvement since the school's last inspection when standards were judged to be below average. The school has made a considerable effort to develop pupils' interest in books and reading by improving the guided reading times and providing opportunities for pupils to receive targeted support. As a result, most pupils in Year 6 read with a suitable level of fluency and reasonable accuracy. They show understanding of the main ideas and talk readily about what they read. Many pupils have well-developed library skills and can find specific books in the school library.

48. Standards in writing are below average by Year 6. Although standards in writing are improving, a lower than average number of pupils reaches the higher levels. Pupils write for different purposes, from persuasive letter writing to creative fictional writing and, in the best writing, there is a good range of vocabulary and a lively use of language to create deliberate effects. However, whilst the choice of vocabulary is improving, for many pupils, their ability to use exciting vocabulary and colourful turns of phrase in their writing is not rich enough to reach the higher levels. Pupils' presentation of their work and the use of punctuation are often careless and spelling is unsatisfactory.

49. Teaching and learning are good overall. In the most effective lessons, the teachers have clear views about what pupils are to learn, balanced with their learning needs. In these lessons, teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to use questions skilfully to reinforce pupils' learning and to check their understanding. There were many examples of teachers starting lessons by sharing the learning intentions with the pupils, which ensured they were clear about what they were expected to learn. Teachers are supported well by the teaching assistants, who provide good support to pupils with SEN, ensuring they stay on task and encouraging them to do their best. However, where teaching is less effective, too often all pupils are provided with the same activity, which is at times inappropriate, particularly for pupils who find it too difficult to cope with the language. As a result, problems arise when they attempt to record their work. Pupils in all classes are being given more responsibility for their learning when they assess their own progress on a three point 'traffic lights' scale at the end of lessons. Although there is a good emphasis on pupils editing their work, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT to draft and amend their work with a view to improving its overall quality.

50. Teachers give individual pupils targets that set out the next stage in their learning, which are linked to the National Curriculum levels in a progressive way. This is a positive strategy that helps pupils have a better idea of what they need to do to improve in order to focus on the next steps in their learning. The marking of pupils' work is good and in many cases shows pupils clearly how to improve their work.

51. The leadership and management of English are good overall. The subject manager observes teaching throughout the school and the results of these observations are helping to improve provision. Assessment procedures in English are good and the school has successfully developed tracking systems that enable the senior management team and subject manager to monitor individual pupils' attainment and progress. However, information from assessment is not used sharply enough to provide the right level of challenge for all pupils. The school has however, identified pupils who have significant barriers to learning created by their emotional, personal and behavioural difficulties and has directed additional support to these pupils in class to ensure their behaviour does not have a detrimental effect on the learning of others.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Writing has been a strong focus for improvement and the co-ordinator and head teacher have identified several aspects in the teaching that need to be improved if standards are to rise. However, many teachers do not use these ideas sufficiently in other subjects. Apart from history, opportunities for writing at length in subjects such as RE and geography are unsatisfactory. Good use is made of pupils' reading skills to carry out research in history, using books and the Internet. However, insufficient use is made of ICT for pupils to write and explore their ideas independently.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 6 achieve low standards because they have not had enough opportunities to use and apply mathematical knowledge in a variety of situations.
- Pupils in Year 3 are making good progress and achieve standards in line with expectations for their age.
- There is a good emphasis on teaching pupils a range of mental strategies.
- Activities are not always planned carefully enough to take account of pupils' previous attainment.
- Teachers' expectations of the way pupils present their work are not high enough and marking is inconsistent.

- The use and development of numeracy skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

53. Standards in Year 6 are well below average. Over the past five years they have been consistently below or well below average in national tests. Achievement overall is satisfactory given the pupils' low attainment on entry to the school. A detailed analysis of pupils' work completed during the school year shows that they have covered a wide range of work in numeracy, shape, space and measurement, making satisfactory progress in improving their knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts. Where the main weakness lies is in pupils' ability to use and apply this mathematical knowledge in a range of problem solving situations. This was also identified as a weakness by the previous inspection. This aspect of the subject is being improved, but Year 6 pupils have not developed these skills sufficiently during their time in school. The good progress being made by Year 3 pupils reflects the improvements that have been made in teaching mathematics and is a positive sign that standards are rising.

54. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Recently, there has been a whole school focus on teaching mental strategies and on the introduction and teaching of new concepts and modelling of different methods. This has been successful and was a strong feature in all of the lessons that were observed. There is a consistent approach to encouraging pupils to use a range of mental strategies and to explain how they work out the answers to questions. Although this part of the lessons observed was good, teaching overall is satisfactory. This is because the activities that teachers provide for pupils to follow up on the introduction to the lesson are not always planned well enough to meet their individual needs. On several occasions, the tasks provided assumed that pupils had higher levels of understanding than they did and did not take enough account of previous assessments. As a result pupils struggled with some aspects of the activities. For example, Year 4 pupils had to extract and work out information from a variety of timetables which were in a different format from the example the teacher had demonstrated and many found this difficult. Pupils' work shows that there is not always enough differentiation between the work given to different groups within the class.

55. A noticeable feature of pupils' work is that much of it is set out poorly and books look untidy. Teachers' expectations of how pupils present their work are too low. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Marking is also variable in quality and effectiveness. Some is helpful and constructive, showing pupils how to improve their work or giving examples of how to set out and tackle problems, while in other books it does not contribute to pupils' learning.

56. Leadership and management are satisfactory in terms of their impact on raising standards. However, the subject manager has good levels of knowledge and expertise and a clear vision for the development of the subject. He analyses pupils' progress and achievements, models lessons for other teachers and observes teaching across the school. Good assessment procedures have been introduced but the use of assessment information to inform teachers' planning is not yet fully effective. Teachers are trying out systems for setting individual targets for pupils, but these, too, are not consistent throughout the school. High staff turnover has been a key factor in the lack of improvement in some areas of mathematics. It has been a barrier to establishing consistency and continuity in teaching which has had an adverse effect on standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. There are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to use numeracy skills in other subjects. Limited evidence was seen of pupils using ICT to support learning in mathematics. There are few examples of pupils using measuring skills, for example in science and DT. However, some links are made with geography when pupils use simple co-ordinates and directions to plan a route.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising steadily.
- Curricular provision is broad and balanced.
- Pupils do best in the knowledge aspects of the subject.
- The pupils' investigative skills are under developed but their scientific vocabulary is carefully extended.
- Assessment procedures are not fully developed.
- The pupils' ICT and writing skills are not used as well as they might be in this subject.
- A very experienced manager leads the subject.
- The school's grounds provide some support for the subject.
- There are some shortages in amounts of equipment.

Commentary

57. Standards in science in Year 6 are below average. However, in the national tests, they have risen sharply since the school's 1999 inspection. At that time, 44 per cent of pupils gained average standards or above in the end of year national tests. The provisional results for 2005 show that 84 per cent of the pupils reached this level. This is an increase of 40 per cent compared with 1999 a rate which is faster than the national average. It is also an improvement of seven per cent over 2004 which indicates that standards are still rising. The provisional results represent the national average at Level 4 and above but are still some seven per cent below the average for the higher Level 5.

58. The standards reached in Year 6 represent good achievement which is brought about by the good quality of teaching and learning and by well planned revision before the tests. The evidence shows that all aspects of the subject are well covered by planning and teaching so that the pupils receive a wide range of experiences in science. The pupils do best in their work on living things and materials. For example, they know the functions of the most important human organs and how to separate a mixture of salt and water. Their knowledge of physical processes was not as strong and they found difficulty in explaining abstract ideas such as the balance of forces. They were also hazy about why the seasons of the year occurred. The pupils' investigative work is acknowledged by the school as needing more development. The pupils can carry out experiments when guided by the teacher and have a secure scientific vocabulary. However, they have limited experience of devising their own investigations and quantifying, recording and drawing conclusions from their work. In a Year 6 lesson, many pupils simply wrote up the teacher's approach to a scientific problem when asked to present their own solutions and ideas.

59. The school has satisfactory procedures for the ongoing assessment of pupils' work but is considering adopting something more formal. Pupils have targets for improvement in the subject but these are often very general and not sufficiently tailored to the individual. Much of the work in the pupils' books was similar for pupils of all abilities as assessment information was not used sufficiently sharply to plan their work. The work in the pupils' books was, overall, set at a good level of challenge. However, in a significant number of cases pupils of lower ability had not finished the work set because it was too hard and they underachieved. On the other hand, pupils in Year 6 were asked to draw and colour four pictures to represent spring, summer, autumn and winter and underachieved as the work set was not hard enough. The presentation of the pupils' work varies from good to unsatisfactory but, overall, it is not good enough. On too many occasions, the marking of pupils' work does not guide them on how to improve.

60. There is some use of ICT by the pupils to support their learning in science. For example, Year 3 pupils have constructed and interrogated a database about minibeasts they found in the school grounds. However, in conversation, Year 6 pupils said that they had only used ICT in their work in science "a few times" during their time in the school. They could not, for example, remember using a digital microscope or using sensors to monitor the environment. Their views were confirmed by

the full range of evidence seen during the inspection. Similarly, the pupils' writing skills are not fully developed in this subject. Their spelling has weaknesses and some do not yet join up their writing.

61. The subject is well led by a very experienced manager who has good levels of expertise in science. His action plan for the development of the subject includes improvements in investigative work, making the pupils' targets sharper and making sure that work is always marked in line with the requirements of the school's policy. He has already ensured that science is taught on a weekly basis throughout the school. However, the co-ordinator has not analysed the school's national test results in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' performance to help raise standards. The school makes good use of its small grassed area to support the pupils' learning in science. However, this area is not fully developed although the school has plans to develop a pond in this area. The school is, generally, adequately resourced. However, the co-ordinator reports some shortages in quantity of resources when whole classes undertake investigative work. There has been a good improvement in the school's provision for science since it was inspected in 1999.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Almost all aspects of the ICT curriculum are well developed.
- There are particular strengths in the pupils' ability to use ICT to present information and to use the Internet.
- The pupils are confident and enjoy this subject.
- The co-ordinator has a clear action plan for the continued improvement of the subject.
- Assessment procedures have improved since the school was last inspected.
- ICT is very well resourced and timetabled.
- The pupils' use of ICT to support their learning in other subjects is not as well developed as it is in many other schools.

Commentary

62. In Year 6, standards in ICT are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is due to satisfactory teaching and learning in the subject. These judgements are the same as those made by the school's last inspection. For these reasons, the improvement in the school's provision for ICT has been satisfactory since it was inspected in 1999. The pupils have a sound grasp of most aspects of the subject such as data handling and control technology. They have especially good skills in the use of multi media presentations, such as one about their work on World War II, and in their abilities to use the Internet. During the inspection, pupils were seen to use the Internet to research for information which allowed them to compare Portsmouth and Athens and, in their earlier work, they have, for example, found out about the life of Nelson. Areas of relative weakness are the pupils' use of E mail and their use of sensors to monitor the environment.

63. The pupils enjoy their work in ICT and apply themselves to it confidently. They understand a range of basic keyboard commands and use a mouse controller with assurance. The pupils' keyboard skills are an area of relative weakness as most only use two fingers. They work together well co-operatively and are not afraid to make and learn from mistakes. The school makes good use of this confidence and knowledge by using some pupils as ICT monitors. These pupils, amongst other things, help others with their learning and prepare equipment. The school's last inspection report indicated that there were sometimes weaknesses in teaching and learning when a whole class used the computer suite. This is no longer evident. However, in some lessons, introductions to lessons are too long and the pupils do not begin to use the equipment soon enough which slows down the pace of their learning.

64. The headteacher is managing the subject on a caretaker basis along with a number of other subjects in addition to her duties as headteacher. She is providing satisfactory interim leadership

and management. The action plan for the improvement of the subject includes developing E mail, purchasing more interactive whiteboards and improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards. When the school was last inspected, improving assessment procedures in ICT was a minor issue for action. This issue has now been addressed appropriately and the school has recently introduced a simple but effective scheme which encourages the pupils to assess their own work. Since the school's last inspection, staff have received significant training in order to increase their confidence. Each class has timetabled use of the ICT suite twice a week. Pupils also have access to banks of computers located in the school hall. This means that they have very good opportunities to use computers. The school is very well resourced with ICT equipment including more than ample computers, digital cameras, digital microscopes, tape recorders and ample software.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The evidence shows clearly that the use of ICT in other subjects is unsatisfactory. There are areas of considerable strength such as history and communication. However, there are also aspects of the curriculum, for example, mathematics and science, where there are too few examples of ICT being used by the pupils to support their learning. In DT, there was no evidence of the effective use of ICT. Overall, the use of ICT by pupils to assist their broader learning is not a natural and normal part of school life as it is in many schools.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not make sufficient progress and standards are below average.
- Although a new scheme of work is in place, it is not being consistently implemented in all classes.
- There is not enough recorded work in pupils' books.
- Some teachers lack expertise in the subject.

Commentary

66. The previous inspection found that achievement in geography was unsatisfactory, and this is still the case. Standards in Year 6 are below average as pupils have not acquired skills and knowledge in adequate progression throughout the school. Pupils in Year 6 compared urban Portsmouth with a town in rural Dorset and some more able pupils were able to explain the similarities and differences between them in terms of physical and human features and types and uses of buildings. There is limited evidence that pupils understand how human and physical processes can change the features of places or how such changes affect the activities and lives of the inhabitants. There is also little evidence to show that mapwork skills are taught in progression throughout the school.

67. It was not possible to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching and learning as no lessons were observed. However, a number of weaknesses became apparent in the curricular provision. A new scheme of work has been produced, which makes effective links with other subjects. However, this is not reflected adequately in pupils' work books, and discussions with pupils show that it is not yet being implemented consistently or in sufficient depth. In some instances, geography work appears incidental to the work in history rather than on an equal footing in terms of the breadth and depth of coverage. There is not enough emphasis on using suitable geographical terminology or on teaching appropriate fieldwork techniques. There is insufficient use of maps and plans on different scales, photographic evidence and ICT resources. Although some recorded work was seen, this was insufficient for a whole year and often of poor quality in terms of

presentation. The subject does not contribute sufficiently to developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

68. The subject manager is relatively new to the post and has carried out some preliminary monitoring of pupils' work. She provides satisfactory management of the subject. She has identified the need to ensure full implementation of the scheme of work and to improve teaching and learning in the subject in order to raise standards. The school is aware of shortcomings in the levels of some teachers' knowledge and expertise in the subject, and has arranged for training to take place in the autumn term, 2005.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum covers a broad range of historical knowledge.
- Local history is well represented in the pupils' learning.
- Visits and visitors enhance curricular provision.
- The pupils' understanding of chronology is well developed.
- The pupils use ICT, for example, to find out historical information.
- The pupils' knowledge of sources and their abilities to understand different interpretations of history are under developed.
- There are good links with some other subjects, for example, DT.
- The subject is well managed.

Commentary

69. Standards in history in Year 6 are average. No judgement about standards in history was made when the school was last inspected in 1999. However, the school's 1999 inspection did judge progress to be average. This judgement is the same as the findings of the current inspection which indicate that satisfactory teaching and learning promote satisfactory achievement.

70. The evidence indicates that pupils show a sound knowledge of a range of historical events and periods. For example, Year 3 pupils have studied the Ancient Egyptians and Year 4 pupils have looked at the Romans and the Victorians. Year 5 pupils know about the Tudor period. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of how World War II affected Portsmouth. This was greatly extended by a residential visit during which the pupils dressed and acted as children who had been evacuated to the country during that war. Currently, the pupils are carrying out work about the battle of Trafalgar. This type of work develops the pupils' understanding of the history of their own area well. Visiting Portsmouth dockyard to experience the marking of the battle's 200th anniversary has enhanced the Trafalgar project. In addition, "Admiral Nelson" and his lady visited the school as part of these celebrations. Furthermore, "King Henry VIII" visited the school and the pupils have dressed up as Victorians as part of their work.

71. Timelines, for example, about World War II and the life of Nelson are a regular part of the pupils' work. This enables them to place people and events into their correct time periods. Pupils are also able to compare and contrast old and new artefacts, for example, Victorian and modern toys.

72. Pupils make good use of ICT to support their learning in this subject. For example, they have used the Internet to find information about topics such as Ancient Greece and World War II. In addition, they have produced and given multi media presentations about topics including their work on Trafalgar.

73. In discussion with pupils and in the analysis of their work there was limited evidence that they had a clear understanding of a wide enough range of historical sources or of how knowledge of

the past is obtained. The pupils have some understanding of the work of archaeologists and have examined and discussed some artefacts. Most of their work is carried out using a relatively narrow range of secondary sources. The school's monitoring identified the fact that pupils did not know the difference between primary and secondary sources and this issue is being addressed. The pupils find it difficult to understand and explain why history is interpreted in various ways and to explain why this should be the case.

74. Good links between history and a range of other subjects are made. In DT and art and design, they have, for example, made models of HMS Victory, built Roman houses and made good quality models of Roman soldiers. There are examples of good use of the pupils' writing skills in this subject as shown by their accounts of their work on the Battle of Trafalgar and evacuees in World War II. Links with ICT and mathematics – as detailed above – are also clearly evident.

75. Leadership and management of history are good. The co-ordinator has, for example, reviewed and organised resources for the subject, introduced a scheme of work and linked it to cross-curricular provision. She has a good action plan for the further improvement of provision in history including ensuring that assessments of the pupils' standards are accurate and that all key elements of the subject are covered in short term planning. The co-ordinator has also recognised through her monitoring of the subject that more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and the general quality of the presentation of the pupils' work is not always good enough. Presentation of the pupils' work was an issue when the school was last inspected. Since the school was inspected in 1999, assessment procedures have been improved, resources are better, the scheme of work has been reviewed and curricular provision is broader and more interesting. There has been a good improvement in the school's provision for history since 1999.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average in Year 6 and pupils make insufficient progress.
- Although a new scheme of work is in place, provision does not yet fully meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus because it is not being implemented consistently.
- There is some good teaching but some teachers lack confidence and expertise in the subject.
- Pupils do not record enough work in their books to consolidate learning.

Commentary

76. The previous inspection found that attainment was below the expectations of the agreed syllabus. Pupils had insufficient knowledge of different religions and were unable to explain the significance of many aspects of these religions. This is still the case. Pupils' achievement over time is unsatisfactory because they have not been taught a sufficiently broad curriculum to enable them to acquire appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding. The percentage of pupils who are working at expected levels in Year 6 is too low and there is no evidence of above average attainment among more able pupils. Discussions with Year 6 pupils showed that most were unable to recall much of what they had learned, for example about the five pillars of Islam. Their knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Sikhism and Islam is sketchy and they find it difficult to explain or discuss the relevance of what they have learned to their own lives. Although the quality of teaching and learning is now satisfactory, it has not been in the past, and this explains the unsatisfactory achievement in Year 6.

77. The new scheme of work shows good coverage of the required curriculum and adequate time is allocated, in theory, to ensure that pupils are able to make good progress in the subject. However, in practice, this is not yet happening consistently across the school. Some good teaching was observed in Year 3, where pupils were learning about the five Ks in the Sikh religion. Pupils were examining and discussing the five artefacts, which had been loaned by a parent, and

suggesting ideas about what they might mean to people of the Sikh faith. There are some examples of pupils considering different aspects of faith and reflecting on how they might be relevant to their own lives. For example, Year 6 pupils were challenged to think about the symbols of the garden and the desert in the Christian story and to suggest what they might represent. However, this is generally a weaker aspect of RE and pupils do not have enough opportunities to explain or evaluate concepts and issues in terms of their own experience.

78. An examination of pupils' work books shows that teachers' expectations of written work are too low, both in terms of the quantity and quality of work completed. Pupils record insufficient information and explanations of key concepts and, as a result, RE does not make a good enough contribution to developing literacy skills. There is not enough evidence of pupils using ICT effectively to support their learning, although Year 4 pupils have produced a Power Point presentation about the Islamic Hajj pilgrimage. The subject manager is experienced and has good levels of expertise in the subject, but has not had sufficient opportunities to observe lessons in order to identify the reasons for pupils' lack of adequate progress. She has identified training needs amongst staff, some of whom lack sufficient expertise and confidence in tackling certain aspects of the subject. This is a key feature in the current action plan for the subject. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall in terms of their impact on raising standards.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

79. From the one lesson observed, it is not possible to make a judgement on standards, achievement or provision in **music**. However, from discussion with the subject manager it is evident that pupils are provided with a curriculum that offers many opportunities for them to develop and extend their learning through a suitable range of musical experiences. Teachers' plans are underpinned by a scheme of work that provides suitable progression of skills through the school. A lunchtime guitar club, choir sessions, and the visit of musicians to the school, enrich pupils' learning in and outside lessons. The choir is also involved in a number of music events in the local area, such as the Portsmouth Music Festival and at Christmas, singing carols in the large shopping precinct to raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Research. Additional tuition by outside musicians is also provided, for a small fee, for a variety of instruments, such as the flute, violin, trumpet and clarinet.

80. The subject manager uses her good subject knowledge to promote pupils' learning and to support other teachers when possible. Good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress based on 'I can statements' for teachers to use enable them to make judgements on the National Curriculum levels pupils reach. The school has a good range of resources to support the teaching of music, which also includes instruments from other cultures. The school is well supported by the Portsmouth Music Service.

ART AND DESIGN

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Pupils' observational skills develop well as they move through the school.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils' to work in the style of famous artists.

Commentary

81. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations for Year 6 pupils. Examination of work completed previously indicates that achievement is satisfactory overall. At the time of the last inspection, pupils' progress was said to be satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Pupils have experience of using a suitable range of materials with some good results, for example, the three-dimensional models of Roman soldiers produced by Year 6 pupils based on their work in history. Displays of half-photographs that pupils have completed using

pencils, chalks and charcoal demonstrate good observational skills and attention to detail. The scrutiny of sketch books and the art portfolio confirms that pupils make good progress in their observational drawing skills. Samples of work on display and in the art portfolio show that pupils' painting techniques are average. Displayed work shows satisfactory progress in developing key practical skills as pupils move through the school when for example working with different media such as clay and textiles. However, there was very little evidence to show that pupils are developing a greater awareness of the work of other artists and when talking with older pupils, they were unable to name one artist that they had learned about. Pupils do, however, have sufficient opportunities to appreciate art from diverse cultures, such as African and Aboriginal art. There is insufficient use of literacy to evaluate work and little evidence of the use of ICT.

82. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the lessons observed the pace of learning and the opportunity to develop creativity as well as art skills were satisfactory. During the inspection, activities in Year 4 involved pupils in designing a motif for their Roman purses to scale, showing the different sewing stitches to be used. The collage work of pupils in Year 5 based on work in the style of Henri Rousseau was satisfactory. In Year 6 pupils used a combination of materials and techniques to make individual samplers to show personal memories of their time in school. This involved pupils in learning how to sew a button on. The teachers had planned and prepared activities well and the teaching of techniques extended the pupils' knowledge and understanding of working with textiles.

83. Art is suitably supported by the scheme of work that ensures the coverage of all aspects of the subject and the progressive development of pupils' skills. Pupils are able to choose from a suitable range of art materials, such as paints, chalks, pastels, charcoal and textiles for the many different aspects of the art curriculum. Throughout the school, pupils use sketchbooks appropriately to try out their ideas and to practise different techniques. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has had the opportunity to monitor provision and has clear priorities for improvement in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Progress is unsatisfactory and standards are below average.
- Although a scheme of work is in place it is not being implemented fully or consistently throughout the school.
- There is insufficient recording of pupils' design work and inadequate resources to support learning.
- Some teachers have limited subject knowledge and expertise.

Commentary

84. The previous inspection found that achievement in DT was unsatisfactory, and this is still the case. Very few examples of pupils' work were available and that which was seen in Year 6 was of a low standard and did not meet the expectations or requirements of the National Curriculum. For example, pupils had made Greek temples as part of their history topic, but these were simple paper reconstructions which were not assembled with a great degree of skills. It was not possible to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. Only one lesson could be observed, in Year 4, and here, too, standards were below average as pupils attempted to recreate a Roman building from a plan. Pupils' designs lacked detail and accuracy and the quality of the finished products showed that pupils' skills and techniques were of a low standard.

85. The school has adopted a scheme of work and allocated a topic to each year group in each term. Discussions with Year 6 pupils revealed that they had not covered any of the topics for the current year. An examination of pupils' books in all year groups showed that very little work is

recorded. There was little evidence to show that pupils are able to generate their own ideas by collecting and using information or to record their ideas in the form of labelled sketches or working models. Nor is there evidence to demonstrate that pupils consider the end user of the product, improve their designs as they progress or evaluate the finished product and suggest modifications or improvements.

86. As little work is recorded, the subject does not support the development of pupils' literacy skills, for example in writing instructions using bullet points. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in accurate measuring. The range and quality of tools and materials that are available to pupils are inadequate to enable pupils to reach good standards in the subject, as was seen in the observed lesson.

87. Leadership and management in the subject have been unsatisfactory and have not ensured sufficient improvement since the last inspection. The school is aware of the shortcomings in the subject and has recently appointed a new subject manager who has written an action plan to begin to address these weaknesses, providing satisfactory but as yet undeveloped leadership. The school is aware that a number of teachers lack expertise in DT and has identified the need to provide in-service training.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are varied in different aspects of the subject.
- Few pupils show above average attainment.
- Provision in swimming does not promote high standards.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and sensibly competitive.
- The pupils are not always challenged or shown how to improve sufficiently.
- The school's accommodation has strengths and weaknesses.
- Extracurricular activities and competitive sports fixtures with other schools enhance provision in PE.

Commentary

88. Overall, standards in those aspects of PE seen during the inspection were average in Year 6. Average standards were seen in athletics but below average standards in cricket were observed. Discussions with the school indicated that too few pupils reach the expected standards in swimming. Overall, this represents satisfactory achievement which is promoted by satisfactory teaching and learning. These judgements are broadly the same as those made by the school's 1999 inspection which indicates that there has been a satisfactory improvement in the school's provision for PE since then.

89. Pupils clearly understand the principles of passing a baton in relay racing. A few did this skilfully but most were at average levels. In cricket, most pupils had weak batting, bowling and catching skills and did not make good use of space. Most pupils understand the need to warm up and cool down and the effects of exercise on their bodies. However, in the lessons observed, too little development of their evaluative skills took place and their ability to balance was below average. Provision for swimming takes place in Year 3 and, as most pupils learn to swim, it is sufficient to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, it does not provide enough time to allow all pupils to reach the standard required in Year 6 or to achieve standards in excess of this level. At the time of the school's 1999 inspection, no provision for swimming was made for pupils who joined the school after Year 3. There is now some provision.

90. Pupils enjoy their work in PE. They show great eagerness to engage in the planned activities and sustain this throughout the lessons. The pupils like to do well in the competitive aspects of games and athletics. For example, they cheer and applaud their own team in relay races and are

eager to bowl someone out in cricket. However, the pupils show an understanding of what it means to lose which enhances their social and moral development well. Teachers structure lessons well and have good management and control skills. They show a very careful regard for safe practice. However, teachers do not always give pupils sufficient help in raising their standards. Too often, improvements needed are noted by the teacher but the pupils are simply exhorted to improve. There is often too little demonstration of good practice and too little insistence that pupils adopt it.

91. The subject is satisfactorily managed by a temporary co-ordinator. The main points on the action plan for the development of PE are to ensure that the scheme of work is taught appropriately and to carry out an audit of resources. There are good assessment procedures which result in all pupils being given a National Curriculum level of attainment. However, the school does not keep records of the pupils' standards in swimming after they leave Year 3. The school has two halls – one of which is used for PE – of a good size, and ample hard surfaced area. However, noise from PE in the hall disturbs other classes and the school has no field or easy access to one. The fact that the school's hard stand did not have a running track marked on it and that the surface contained some loose gravel placed some limitations on the pupils' progress during the lesson observed. The school runs a sound range of sporting extracurricular activities including football, netball and hockey. Competitive fixtures are arranged with other schools. In conversation, Year 6 pupils were particularly pleased with their success in hockey and netball matches.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education, including citizenship (PSHCE) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places a very high level of importance on pupils' personal development.
- Provision effectively permeates the whole school.

Commentary

92. Personal, social and health education, including citizenship is given a very high priority in the school. The school's strong ethos of inclusion and high expectations of conduct underpin pupils' personal, social and health education in all aspects of school life. A very well-planned curriculum provides all pupils with a weekly lesson in which a range of topics, from personal health, behaviour and bullying are considered. Provision includes consideration of sex and relationships, drugs and anti-racism. Through science, physical education and other specifically planned lessons pupils are taught the importance of, and ways to keep themselves healthy and safe. The school has received *Healthy Schools* recognition.

93. In the one lesson observed, where pupils in Year 5 were considering how change can affect the way people behave, the teaching, learning and achievement were good. Pupils felt sufficiently at ease to be able to share their concerns openly about what made them cross, due to the sensitive questioning and response of the class teacher.

94. The School Council provides many opportunities for pupils to be involved in the running of the school and developing their awareness of citizenship. Pupils value the opportunity to belong to the Council and take their responsibilities seriously. Four pupils represent the views of the children by attending governors' meetings. The system of head girl and boy, prefects and playground monitors supports other pupils well.

95. Pupils are involved in the decision making process, through opportunities in discussions to explain their views and to make their own suggestions. A healthy tuck shop was set up and more playground equipment purchased as a result of these discussions. Pupils have also set up a school court and appointed peer mediators to support other pupils with any friendship issues and behaviour issues. They receive training for these positions from community police and have a very clear sense

of responsibility when carrying out the role. This makes a very good contribution to raising their awareness of their responsibilities as young citizens.

96. During the maternity leave of the subject manager, the head teacher has taken on the responsibility. This is a good arrangement for the school and together with the strong commitment of all staff ensures the PSHCE programme continues to have a high profile in the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (Ethos)	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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