

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MERTON JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Basingstoke

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116001

Headteacher: Mr D H Strauss

Lead inspector: Mrs J Gill

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

Inspection number: 267313

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Junior  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 7 to 11 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 202  
School address: Romsey Close  
Popley Way  
Basingstoke  
Hampshire  
Postcode: RG24 9HB  
Telephone number: (01256) 326 573  
Fax number: (01256) 462 491  
Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mr G Hood  
governors:  
Date of previous May 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Merton Junior School is situated in Popley, north of Basingstoke. It is a disadvantaged area, where the socio-economic profile of the families is very much lower than that found nationally. Around 40 per cent of pupils come from outside the immediate area. Parents choose the school as it has a good reputation for pupils with special educational needs. Many of the children come from complex family backgrounds, a number having emotional and behavioural difficulties. With 202 pupils on roll, the school is around average size. There are ten more girls than boys. The number of pupils entering and leaving the school at times other than the usual time for transfer is high; this means that many pupils in Year 6 have joined the school since Year 3. This has a significant impact on the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, and as such results are variable. The vast majority of pupils are White British; although four pupils speak English as an additional language, they need little extra support. The school is a two-form entry school, eight classes in total. The admission number is 60 but none of the year groups is full. In Years 3, 4 and 6 there are around 50 pupils but Year 5 has only 42. It is the school's policy to have smaller classes, particularly as there are high and increasing levels of pupils with special educational needs. At the time of the last inspection, the proportion was 19 per cent. This has more than doubled and is currently 46 per cent, which is well above average. There are 85 children with special education needs; of these, four pupils have a statement for their specific needs. The pupils' needs relate to moderate learning and speech and communication difficulties. In addition, the percentage of pupils exhibiting emotional and behavioural needs has risen, which means the nature of the school has changed over the last three years. Pupils enter the school with well below average attainment, particularly in language and social skills. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than average, around 20 per cent. This is misleading as fewer parents are eligible because of the change in the allocation of benefits; parents are in employment but some of it is low-paid and part-time. There have been difficulties in recruitment recently and staff sickness, which have had an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and stability of the school. Currently the staffing situation is stable. The

school is involved in the Primary Leadership Strategy and Basingstoke Consortium, which provides student placement. The school received the Healthy Schools Award and FA Charter Mark in 2004.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18706	Mrs J Gill	Lead inspector	English Art and design History Religious education English as an additional language
8919	Mr J Kerr	Lay inspector	
22704	Mr Williams G	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography
23412	Mr A Jeffs	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education Special educational needs

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Merton Junior School is a good school.** The headteacher is a very good leader and manager who is strongly supported by his staff and governors. He has an outstanding commitment to ensuring that all pupils have a positive caring environment where they are fully included in all aspects of school life. This ethos helps pupils gain in confidence and self-esteem. They enjoy school, have positive attitudes towards learning and behave very well. Standards are gradually rising despite a significant increase of pupils with special educational needs and complex behavioural difficulties. From a very low starting point, pupils achieve well, benefiting from improved stimulating teaching and very effective support from teaching assistants. The school gives good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in mathematics and science are improving but are still not high enough in English.
- The headteacher is a very good leader and manager with an excellent commitment to inclusion.
- The governing body is a very effective and efficient team that supports the school very well.
- The quality of teaching has improved; around 75 per cent observed was good or better.
- The work of the teaching assistants is very effective and strongly contributes towards pupils' achievement and integration into all aspects of school life.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good; this helps them achieve well.
- There is a strong sense of community, and relationships are very good which contributes towards pupils' very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour in and around the school.
- The partnership with parents and links with the community are very good, which significantly enhances pupils' learning.
- Pupils' handwriting and presentation are not always good enough.
- There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to use their information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support other subjects within classrooms.

The school has improved well since the previous inspection. Areas of weakness have generally been tackled well, although standards in English, particularly writing, are still not high enough. This continues to be a whole-school priority. Assessment procedures have improved, including tracking progress of pupils with special educational needs. Time allocation to the foundation subjects has improved which makes the curriculum more balanced and a programme has been effectively implemented for personal, social and health education (PSHE).

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Pupils achieve well from Year 3 to Year 6** from a very low starting point and very little higher attainment on entry. Through good teaching, very effective provision for those with special educational needs and a strong commitment to meeting all pupils' needs, some pupils achieve the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In the 2004 national tests, pupils achieved well below average standards in English and below average standards in mathematics and science. Inspection evidence confirms an upward trend in mathematics and science, although the present Year 6 is a very low-attaining group because of the very high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. However, in other year groups, attainment is closer to the level expected nationally but at present, still below average. In English, pupils are gaining in confidence when speaking and they listen attentively; they read with greater understanding. In writing, standards remain low in Year 6, but they are higher in other year groups. Standards of handwriting and presentation are not good enough and contribute to lower standards. Standards are in line with expectations in the foundation subjects by the end of Year 6 and with the locally-agreed syllabus in religious education. There were limited observations to make judgements in art and design, design and technology and music but from the evidence available, it would appear that standards are broadly average by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because provision is very good and work is well matched to their prior ability. There are no significant differences in the performance of girls and boys or of the few pupils from minority ethnic groups. High attainers are sufficiently challenged and achieve well, as is evident from the number who gain the higher levels in the national tests.

**Pupils' personal development is good.** Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with social development being very good. Behaviour is very good and pupils' attitudes to school are very positive. Attendance is satisfactory.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school is good.** Good teaching and effective support from teaching assistants strongly contribute towards pupils' achievements and integration in school life. The very effective provision for pupils with special educational needs helps them make good progress, both academically and socially. Assessment procedures are good overall, but very good in English and special educational needs. The curriculum for all pupils throughout the school is good. Enrichment of the curriculum is good; pupils have good opportunities to participate in sport but less opportunity to become involved in the arts outside of school. Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good and there are very effective partnerships with parents and the community. Accommodation and resources are good and used efficiently; for example, teaching is enhanced by the effective use of interactive whiteboards.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are very good overall.** The headteacher is a very effective leader, with an excellent clarity of vision, and manages the school very well. He has an outstanding commitment to ensuring that all pupils are included in all aspects of school life. His lead is strongly followed by all staff and governors. The leadership and management of other key staff are good overall, but very good in English and special educational needs. Governance is very good; the governors have a particularly clear understanding of the

strengths and weaknesses of the school, offer very good support and ensure statutory requirements are met.

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

The school maintains very positive relationships with parents, who are very satisfied with the school and all it provides for their children's education. The school actively seeks parents' views through general questionnaires and on specific issues. The pupils' response to the recent questionnaire shows that they are very happy with all aspects of school life. Pupils also have very good opportunities to put forward their opinions through the school council.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve standards in English, particularly writing.
- Increase the planned opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills across the curriculum.
- Improve pupils' handwriting and presentation in all subjects throughout the school.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects

Achievement for all pupils throughout the school is good. Standards in Year 6 are below average; in Years 3, 4 and 5 they are closer to the average, but still below.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising in science and mathematics but are still not high enough in English, particularly in writing.
- Pupils throughout the school achieve well, including pupils with special education needs, higher attainers and those few from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Pupils' presentation and handwriting are not neat enough.
- Pupils do not use their ICT skills enough in other areas of 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	24.3 (25.2)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.6 (25.1)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.9 (27.3)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

1. In the 2004 national tests for Year 6 pupils, the school's results were below those of most schools, particularly so in English. The pupils' performance in mathematics matched that of pupils in similar schools. In science, their performance fell just short of the average of similar schools and in English, it was well below the average. Since the last inspection, there has been a trend of improvement in the pupils' results, but the overall rise has been slower than that seen nationally. Although a greater proportion of the pupils are now achieving at the higher level in the tests, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs and these pupils fail to reach the level expected for their age. This depresses the average score for the school. The school's data and assessment information, however, show that the pupils have made good progress from their starting points and the school is adding value to pupils' achievements.

#### *Inspection findings*

2. Pupils in the present Year 6 classes are particularly challenging and exhibit far greater needs academically and socially than in other classes in the school. This has been the case since this group of pupils started at the school, whether in Year 3 or at other times. It is to the credit of the teachers and the totally inclusive nature of the school that these pupils are achieving well. The starting point of this particular group of pupils was very low in Year 3 and despite their complex needs and high percentage of special educational needs, they achieve standards that are broadly in line with expectations in many subjects. Inspection evidence shows that standards in mathematics and science are below average, which represents good progress and

maintains standards gained in 2004. In English, however, standards in writing are well below average, but better in reading, speaking and listening. The school has been working with the local education authority to implement a range of strategies to raise standards; these are beginning to have an impact, particularly on Years 3, 4 and 5 where prior attainment is not as low as in Year 6.

3. All pupils throughout the school achieve well. This is because the school has an outstanding commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils and work is matched very well to the needs of all pupils. The headteacher and staff make very sure that provision for educational inclusion is excellent and has a marked impact on the learning and social development of all pupils. In addition, the data from effective tracking of pupils' attainment and progress is used well to inform planning and the next steps in learning. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve similarly to other pupils; they benefit from the inclusive nature of the school and achieve well. No significant differences were noted between the performance of boys and girls; their needs are addressed well. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well. This was commented on by parents at the preliminary meeting with inspectors. These pupils are being challenged well, as the higher grades in the National Curriculum tests indicate. Pupils with special educational needs progress well in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, especially in reading and speaking and listening skills. These pupils make very good progress with regard to the targets within their individual educational plans (IEPs), which frequently relate to behaviour, social skills and self-confidence.
4. Improvements in the promotion of literacy across the curriculum are contributing to pupils' growing confidence in speaking and being able to listen attentively and build on the opinions of others. There are more opportunities for drama in subjects such as history and religious education; these are encouraging pupils to use more complex sentences and a greater vocabulary related to the subject. Research skills are developed well through the use of non-fiction books and the Internet and are helping pupils read more confidently. They write in different styles and for different purposes. There are some good examples of numeracy being used in subjects such as science and ICT to complete graphs and enter data, and the use of co-ordinates in geography. However, the planned use of promoting mathematical skills is variable. ICT skills are used to support learning in other subjects, but they are not always systematically planned, and consequently, opportunities are missed. This is evident from a scrutiny of pupils' work and it is clear that opportunities to promote these skills are not always taken.
5. In the foundation subjects<sup>1</sup>, subjects are generally in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 6. In art and design, music, and design and technology, a firm judgement could not be made as there were limited observations during the inspection, but from an examination of pupils' work, standards are similar to those expected. Standards in history have improved since the previous inspection, when they were found to be unsatisfactory. Religious education makes a particularly positive contribution to pupils' personal development; they are achieving well, particularly in Year 3, and reach standards at the end of Year 6 that are in line with the expectations of the locally-agreed syllabus.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour in the classroom help them to achieve well.

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<sup>1</sup> Foundation subjects include art and design, design and technology, geography, history, ICT, music and PE.

- Relationship between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good, as a result of the ethos of consideration for others and the good examples set by staff.
- Pupils grow in confidence and their self-worth is developed as they progress through the school.
- Because of the strong sense of community and the very good relationships, pupils' social development is very good.
- Spiritual, moral and cultural development is good.
- A minority of parents take their children out of school for extra holidays.

## **COMMENTARY**

6. In most lessons, pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They listen well and are articulate in giving answers and in class discussions. Because of the very good relationships between pupils, they work very well in groups or in pairs and are ready to point out the excellent work of their peers. For instance, they know who are the best artists and they respect the skills of the best athletes. When stimulated by good teaching, pupils of all abilities rise to a challenge and really enjoy what they are doing.
7. Pupils with special educational needs are enthusiastic about coming to school and about receiving additional support. They participate enthusiastically in class and group work and feel very much part of the school. Pupils who do not experience significant learning difficulties relate to them well, and the overall effect of the very good special needs provision is to make the school an extremely inclusive and welcoming place to learn and play.
8. Standards of behaviour are very good in school and in the playgrounds, where pupils play harmoniously together with little need for supervision. Pupils have natural good manners and are proud of their school. They are keen to show visitors what they are doing and to discuss aspects of the school life with them in a very responsible way. Aggressive behaviour is exceptional and though bullying sometimes occurs, parents confirm it is swiftly and fairly dealt with. One boy has been excluded for violent behaviour on two occasions for fixed terms in this academic year. There has been a decline in the number of exclusions.
9. Pupils are enterprising when given a challenge or responsibility. This is well demonstrated by the ideas and activities initiated and organised by the school council. Peer councillors, recruited from Years 5 and 6, take their duties very seriously and make a valuable contribution to the school community and the harmonious atmosphere. Peer councillors are carefully trained and know very well how to carry out their responsibilities. Pupils of all ages enjoy the responsibilities which contribute to the life in the school. They keep their classrooms clean and respect the school's resources. They are proud to show visitors features of the school, particularly the colourful mural on the Year 6 staircase.
10. The school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall. Particular strengths lie in pupils' social development, which is very good. Pupils are given good opportunities to explore values and beliefs. The ethos of the school contributes strongly towards pupils developing self-esteem and respect for one another. The religious education programme develops pupils' ability to question their own and others' feelings. This concept was effectively promoted in a Year 3 lesson. A clear moral code is reflected in the behaviour policy which is consistently applied by all staff. Through the PSHE programme, 'Rights, Respect and Responsibilities', pupils learn about justice, equality of opportunity and right and wrong. Pupils display empathy for those less fortunate by raising funds for charity, such as the recent Tsunami disaster. Children take on responsibilities very well, such as peer mentoring and looking after younger pupils in the neighbouring infant school. The school council

is a successful forum where pupils can express their opinions about how the school can be improved. There is a good programme of visitors, class trips and school events which provide pupils with good understanding of British and other cultures. Subjects such as religious education, art and design, music and geography contribute to their awareness of different cultures across the world and in Britain.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.3	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

11. Although attendance is satisfactory overall, it could be improved. It is in line with other schools nationally in Years 3, 4 and 5 but below in Year 6 where several pupils have been absent through long-term sickness. Parents are being asked to provide medical certificates for repeated absence in certain cases. The school needs to be even more rigorous in applying regulations on family holidays in term time. Some parents continue to disregard the school's advice on this matter. With very few exceptions, this unduly interrupts their children's education. Punctuality at the start of the day is good.

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Any other ethnic group

### Exclusions in the last school year

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
184	8	1
1	0	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
4	0	0

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. The curriculum is good and there is good enrichment through a number of after-school clubs and sporting activities. Accommodation and resources are good. The headteacher, strongly supported by all staff, ensures that there is a very positive friendly atmosphere, where pupils are well known to all and, consequently, very effectively cared for. Links with parents and the community are very good and with other schools, they are good.

## Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment procedures are good overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good, which has had a positive impact on pupils' achievements.
- Teachers promote equality of opportunity extremely well; this means that the significant group of pupils with special educational needs, higher-attaining pupils and the few from minority ethnic backgrounds are taught well.
- Behaviour management is consistently applied and with good humour, which contributes to very good relationships. Pupils respond by behaving very well and have positive attitudes to learning.
- The very high quality of teaching assistants strongly contributes to the achievements and inclusion of pupils, including those with special educational needs, in all aspects of school life.
- Teachers' expectations for neat presentation and handwriting are not always high enough.
- Assessment procedures in English and special educational needs are very good; in mathematics and science they are good.

### Commentary

#### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	12 (31%)	17 (43%)	10 (26%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

12. The table above indicates the quality of teaching seen across the school. Teaching and learning are good. There has been an improvement in the percentage of good and very good teaching seen since the previous inspection. There are particular strengths in teaching in Year 6, which is a very challenging year group, and also in Year 3. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the current inspection, unlike the previous inspection when eight per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. There were weaknesses in behaviour management of a few pupils and the match of work was not always good enough. Both of these weaknesses have been addressed well.
13. Effective strategies have been put into place to bring about improvement, including greater monitoring by the headteacher, leadership team and curriculum co-ordinators and strong links between performance management and continuing professional development. Additional support has been used effectively through the school's involvement in the Primary Leadership Strategy. The subject co-ordinators for English and mathematics have worked with the local educational authority advisors monitoring teaching and learning and implementing strategies to raise achievement and further teachers' knowledge and understanding. It is evident from the lesson observations that teachers have good expertise in teaching basic skills and use aspects of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well, which is contributing towards higher standards. Teachers use technical terminology well which helps pupils discuss processes using the correct vocabulary. For instance, in Year 4, pupils knew the meaning of metaphors and personification and used them appropriately in the construction of poems in an English lesson. Teachers, however, do not always have high enough expectations for good presentation and neat handwriting in English and other subjects, which has an adverse impact on standards.

14. Very good relationships, with a sense of humour and an insistence on high standards of behaviour, mean the majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning, enjoy their lessons and behave very well. The orderly sense of purpose in the classrooms and throughout the school contributes strongly to the very positive ethos and to pupils being happy at school. Teachers are supported very well through the very visible presence and support of the headteacher and through effective whole-school systems for behaviour management. There are, however, very occasional lapses in the concentration of a few pupils in a minority of lessons, which is linked to some worksheets being too complex and wordy and small groups of pupils not sufficiently supported, as in an ICT lesson when they became “off-task”.
15. The headteacher is totally committed to ensuring that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of learning. His lead is adopted wholeheartedly by all staff, which means pupils are given whatever support they need. The very effective deployment of the teaching assistants and the high quality of their work make a significant contribution to pupils’ achievements, both academically and socially. In addition, pupils also have good opportunities to work in small groups with other adults on intervention programmes. All of these opportunities ensure all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities as others.
16. Staff provide very good opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. Class teachers make good use of individual education plans (IEPs) in their day-to-day planning and ensure that all pupils’ needs are well matched to tasks and materials. The special educational needs co-ordinator is herself a skilled teacher and provides a very good role model for all colleagues. The good achievement in the area of special educational needs is also attributable to the very skilled and committed work of teaching assistants. They know their pupils very well, use sensitivity in their relations with pupils and show considerable skills in the support of literacy and numeracy development.
17. Planning and preparation are conscientiously conducted, with good consistency of curriculum content between classes in each of the year groups; this ensures equality of opportunity for all pupils. Learning objectives, class and individual targets are shared effectively with pupils, as observed in an English lesson when the teacher referred to editing work – “*one of your targets is to edit your work; make sure it makes sense*”. At the end of lessons, teachers effectively draw their pupils’ attention to what has been learnt, as in a Year 6 history lesson when pupils were expected to state what they had found out about living conditions in Tudor times. Teachers use interactive whiteboards very effectively to focus pupils’ interest in many subjects, for example in history to download relevant pictures and information to bring incidents and historical periods to life and in mathematics to involve Year 6 pupils in reading and plotting points in the four quadrants. Teachers capitalise on using technology to motivate and make teaching stimulating; this works well as pupils display a very high level of attention and learn well.
18. Assessment is good overall, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. An assessment cycle is now in place and reviewed regularly. Assessment procedures are very good in English and for pupils with special educational needs; they are good in mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils’ progress is tracked well in English, mathematics and science and test data is effectively analysed to identify those who need extra support or greater challenge in their work. For example, the curriculum has been adjusted effectively in mathematics by setting pupils by ability across two year groups, which has contributed towards higher standards. Results of standardised test papers are analysed to find strengths and weaknesses in pupils’ learning. Areas of weaknesses are addressed through school, class and individual targets, which are referred to in lessons and effectively shared with pupils and their parents. Assessment in the foundation subjects is satisfactory and is undertaken regularly at the ends of units of work.

## **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision overall is good. There are good enrichment opportunities on offer for all pupils. Accommodation and resources are good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- There is an imaginative approach to providing a balanced curriculum that is well suited to pupils' needs.
- The school ensures equal opportunities for all pupils to participate in learning and recreational activities.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop skills of independence and social awareness that equip them well for their future education.
- There are good opportunities for all pupils to participate in sport and attend a range of clubs.
- Accommodation and resources are good and good staff training ensures that there is a high level of staff expertise.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to become involved in the arts outside of school.

### **Commentary**

19. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, including the requirements for religious education and collective worship. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in allocating appropriate time for history, geography, art and design and design and technology. In particular, staff have worked hard to develop a curriculum that is meaningful to all pupils, many of whom experience difficulties with language and literacy skills. This has been done by linking subjects together well. For example, work on the Tudors saw pupils visiting a local stately home, eating and dressing as Elizabethans and performing dances that brought in detailed music and movement skills. Pupils remember these experiences and talk about them with enthusiasm. The use of setting according to pupils' ability within mathematics has made a good contribution to progress within this subject. The good improvements in ICT have ensured that pupils experience the full range of computer skills in exciting contexts such as producing a school newspaper in an after-school club, and designing presentations on St Lucia in geography.
20. The curriculum is also strong with regard to personal and social development. Pupils are well prepared for entry to the school. The induction programme is sensitive and enjoyable. During their four years at the school, pupils are prepared for the increasing demands of the curriculum by regular and purposeful assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. They also mature as members of the school community by acting as library monitors and playground mediators, answering the telephone and taking an active part in the school council. By the age of 11, they have been well prepared for secondary education in the development of their speaking and listening skills and their awareness of their rights and responsibilities.
21. Planning for PSHE is now good, having overcome the problems of consistency identified in the last report. In conjunction with physical education, science and circle time, the school ensures that pupils have good opportunities to gain knowledge about sex and relationships and drug misuse. There is a strong emphasis upon healthy living and eating, which enabled the school to gain the Healthy Schools award in 2004. This is backed by a strong emphasis on sport. All pupils have swimming lessons and over three-quarters of them gain the national expectation of swimming 25 metres by the age of 11. In addition there are opportunities for many other sports including football, basketball, tennis, rugby and cricket. The school has a good track record of success in football locally and pupils receive good coaching from skilled staff and players from a number of local teams.

22. Sport is only one aspect of activities that enrich the curriculum outside the classroom. There is a good range of school clubs, from tag rugby to ICT, guitar and choir. In addition there is a varied programme of visits to local places of historical interest, museums and art galleries. Visiting theatre groups and 'book fairs' support literacy skills, dancers support physical education and performance skills, whilst local visitors, such as police and members of the church, add richness to the spiritual and moral aspects of the curriculum. Although pupils have the opportunity to visit theatres and galleries, more could be done to introduce pupils to the arts in the area. Most pupils have extended residential experiences and report on these with great enthusiasm.
23. Provision for special educational needs is very good. Pupils are assessed as soon as they reach the school. Where appropriate, programmes of small group and one-to-one work are organised within class and with teaching assistants or the co-ordinator throughout the week. The new spelling programme recently introduced by the co-ordinator is already beginning to show good results and its effect is expected soon to have a significant impact on spelling and writing levels. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are very well supported and receive exactly the support identified within their plans. Despite this attention to individual programmes, pupils are totally included within classes and have the same opportunities for enrichment activities as their peers. The progress they make and the maturity shown by all pupils bears testimony to the success of the school's vision of a school that works for everyone.
24. The school has ensured that good staffing levels lead to smaller class sizes. In addition, the good level of teaching assistants ensures that pupils are well supported. All staff demonstrate good curriculum knowledge and the school's programme of professional development has meant that they are kept up-to-date with new curriculum developments and teaching strategies applicable to specific pupils, such as those experiencing visual, auditory or communication difficulties.
25. Accommodation and resources are at a good level within all subjects, well cared for and up-to-date. This is particularly the case in ICT where new interactive whiteboards have made a significant contribution to the good standard of teaching.

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

In this well-managed school, all members of staff have an eye for detail in their attention to the safety, welfare and guidance of pupils, making this aspect of the school's work very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is good. Involvement of pupils in the life of the school is very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils feel secure and work in a healthy and safe environment.
- They achieve well because of stimulating teaching and advice on how they could improve their progress.
- Because of the strong links with the infant school and the induction procedures, pupils make quick progress as they start school.
- The school council is well respected and makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school.
- There are good mechanisms for the transfer of pupils into school and pupils are well prepared for life in their secondary schools.



## **Commentary**

26. There is a very happy feeling in the school, which has a marked impact on learning. Pupils feel secure and because of this, they find it easy to make friends, they work well and learn well together, often teaching each other a particular skill. Close attention is made to health and safety issues. For instance, careful consideration to these matters has been paid by governors and management in planning the new extension to the school. Governors and staff make regular inspections of the buildings and equipment. Defects are noted and swiftly dealt with. Staff are qualified to attend pupils who are sick or injured. Records are kept and parents informed. Child protection procedures are clear and staff know their responsibilities. Parents are very satisfied with the way the school looks after their children.
27. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well. They are sensitive to their needs and are therefore well able to provide good support and guidance. Individual pupils have the confidence to seek advice on a particular point and there are good systems in place if groups of pupils have not understood new learning. Good assessment procedures ensure that teachers track the progress and personal development of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, which ensures that pupils achieve to their potential.
28. There are good procedures for assessing and reviewing pupils' individual education plans and their statements of special educational needs. In this way, the school ensures that pupils receive the education they require. A significant number of pupils experience medical and emotional difficulties. The provision for these pupils is detailed and appropriate. Pupils are involved in their own targets and reviews. This process can now be developed even further.
29. There are very good relations with the infant school so the arrangement as pupils transfer helps them to integrate quickly. The flow of their education is not unduly interrupted and they soon learn what is expected of them in their behaviour, their responsibilities and the school routines. Similarly, pupils are well prepared for transfer to the secondary schools.
30. The school council is well respected and makes a valued contribution to the management of the school. Councillors report that they sometimes have to work hard to gain a consensus of ideas in the classes but once proposals are put to the council, they are carefully debated and recommendations are put to management for suitable action. The peer mediation scheme is very well established and pupils are confident to approach councillors. They are properly trained and know their limitations and responsibilities. The school's management values their contribution in reducing tension and increasing the general air of harmony in the playgrounds and about the school.

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

The school maintains very good relationships with parents and the community and there are good links with local schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are very supportive of the school and its activities.
- The school values parents' views and their concerns, which are dealt with, following careful consideration.

- There are very good links with the community which help pupils to broaden their sense of belonging.
- There are strong links with the adjacent infant school and well-established relationships with local schools and colleges.

### **Commentary**

31. Parents are very satisfied with the school and all it provides for their children's education. They say that teachers are always available if they have a concern. The school takes trouble in seeking parents' views, for instance, about healthier snacks at break. They are kept well informed both by the school newsletters and the pupils' own well-produced newsletters. Annual reports to parents are to the point and tell parents what their children know and can do. They also give parents an assessment of their children's attitude to work and what their children need to do to improve in some of the main subjects.
32. Attendance at school events such as concerts is high. The regular open evenings each term are reasonably well attended. The school's efforts to involve parents in the curriculum have not been so well supported. The Family Independent Learning Project, where parents learn about a topic with their children, has been slow to start with. However, future projects are planned.
33. Parents confirm that there are very good links with the community. Links with the church are strong and there is regular involvement with the local residential home for the elderly. Very close links with the infant school means that pupils' progress benefits from the continuity of education. Year 6 pupils give regular help in the infant school. Outside coaching in football and tennis not only helps to maintain sporting ties with the world outside the school but also helps to develop pupils' social skills. Student teachers from the local college relate closely with pupils and make a valued contribution to the development of relationships.
34. There is a good level of involvement from a wide range of specialists, including educational psychologists and occupational, speech and language therapists. Particularly impressive is the work carried out with those pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and those for whom co-ordination is a problem. Particularly good work is carried out with the infant school to assist transition into the school. These pupils are also well prepared for transfer at 11. Parents are encouraged to participate as much as possible. Where they do, they see benefits in their child's progress.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management and governance are very good. Very effective management systems are in place. Leadership by other key staff is good. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties very well and plays a high quality role in supporting the work of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Excellent clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high expectations are shown by the headteacher.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He is very well supported by his deputy and an effective leadership team and this has a very positive impact on raising standards.
- The leadership and management of special educational needs are of a very high quality.

- The headteacher, staff and governors are very strongly committed to including all individuals in the life of the school and to equality of opportunity for all.
- The governing body is a very effective, highly efficient and well-established team that supports the school very well.
- Strategic planning for the long vision future is fully in place. It is well thought out, with its main focus on ensuring that all pupils, whatever their ability, are well prepared for their secondary education.
- Financial planning is prudent and careful monitoring of the school budget has allowed the previous higher than recommended under-spend to provide the necessary resources to impact positively on raising standards.
- Day-to-day financial management is efficient and helps the school achieve its priorities.

## Commentary

35. The leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are very strong and highly effective and a major strength of the school. The clarity of vision, sense of purpose and very high aspirations of the headteacher are excellent. Because of this, there is very positive ethos in which pupils thrive. The drive to raise standards and to ensure that pupils are happy and secure in their work and in the school community is uppermost in the actions taken by the school. This is exemplified by the very good procedures for performance management which ensure that key targets are linked to whole-school improvements. The focus on analysing data to monitor pupils' progress is having an impact on raising standards. The school, as a whole, holds great store by daily formal and informal monitoring by the staff and headteacher. This is fed back to staff, which links directly into their future planning. The school has carried out a rigorous self-evaluation of its work, including sending out questionnaires to parents, a procedure which the chair of governors considered a very valuable exercise. From this, the school has been able to make its own very clear and well-informed identification of strengths and areas requiring improvement. The actions taken in response to this evaluation have had a positive impact on standards in the school.
36. The headteacher is well supported by the school's leadership team and staff with management responsibilities. The role of the co-ordinators has been extended since the previous inspection and they now have a greater understanding of their role. This has had a positive impact on raising standards. It has given co-ordinators greater ownership of their aspects and subjects. They report to the governing body on a regular basis. They recognise the importance of their role as well as establishing effective teams to deliver aspects and subjects more effectively. Shared planning is now a critical part of the whole-school curriculum management system and provides all staff with a clear overview on management and evaluation.
37. At the time of the previous inspection, provision for special educational needs was good. Improvement since then has been good and provision is now very good. The leadership provided for special educational needs is of a very high quality. The co-ordinator keeps meticulous records and manages teaching assistants on a regular and effective basis, making the most of additional support to ensure that all pupils make good progress. She is supported in this by a very good special educational needs governor who provides an informed and enthusiastic link between the staff and the governing body. Overall, the commitment to the full inclusion of pupils with special educational needs could not be better. The headteacher has ensured that through the school's professional development programme teaching assistants are well trained to

support these pupils well. Resources are well matched to needs and effectively used to help raise standards in this area.

38. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher's commitment has been a significant factor in successfully addressing the key issues raised in the last report. Detailed analysis provides clear informative data to set targets and monitor trends. Monitoring of teaching and learning is developing well and supports curriculum development effectively. Procedures for assessment used by co-ordinators are good. It is used to inform future planning and teaching decisions. The leadership of the curriculum leaders, particularly in the core areas, is effective. It provides high levels of support and guidance for staff and pupils. As part of a very effective team, the curriculum leaders work very well together to ensure that provision is good and there is a continuing upward trend in standards. There is a clear commitment among the whole staff team to ensure the school is successful in maintaining its excellent inclusivity and individual whole-school child approach, good achievement and sensitive care for all pupils.
39. The governing body is very clear about its role and responsibilities and has a very good awareness of the school's strengths and areas where it needs to move forward. Governors contribute very effectively to the shaping of future developments. The chair of governors, who works very closely with the vice-chair of governors, is highly respected, very well informed, extremely effective, totally committed to securing the very best for the pupils of the school and a very capable strategist. His knowledge of the local area and his long connections with the school are invaluable. This is further enhanced by his similarly committed association with the infant school's governing body. He spends a lot of time in school, is always eager to speak to staff and pupils and believes fervently in training through practical opportunities of both new and experienced members of his governing body. The governing body operates very closely with the school leadership team and shares the same high expectations, with energetic determination to provide a quality of education within the school where quality of life for all underpins its philosophy. The governing body has a clear understanding of the achievements of the school and decisions made are objective and based on first-hand knowledge.

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

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	589,060
Total expenditure	581,010
Expenditure per pupil	3,090

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	67,435
Balance carried forward to the next year	75,486

40. The previous financial year indicated a high carry-forward figure which was outside the recommended guidelines. It arose through prudent management as a strategy to provide, in the current financial year, interactive whiteboards for all classes and laptops for staff, to ensure that classes remain below 30 and improving the quality of the building. Much of this has already been achieved and, by the end of the financial year, the amount of carry-forward figure with the proposed current expenditure will be well within the recommended guidelines. The day-to-day financial operations are effectively and efficiently managed by the administrator. The recommendations of the most recent audit report have been implemented. The finance administrator usefully updates the governors and leadership team. The school always looks very carefully for best value when making purchases and goes out to tender where larger sums are

involved. Value for money by the school is good, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.

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

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

#### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

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

- Strategies implemented to raise attainment are beginning to work and standards are rising in speaking and listening and reading.
- Literacy across the curriculum is good.
- Standards in writing are well below the standard expected in Year 6.
- Standards of presentation and handwriting are not good enough.
- The leadership, management and assessment of English are very good.

#### **Commentary**

41. Pupils' achievement is good, including for those with special educational needs and the few pupils from minority ethnic groups. When pupils entered the school, very few had achieved the average or higher levels, particularly in writing. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests, 41 per cent of pupils achieved the average Level 4 and 15 per cent the higher Level 5, representing good progress from a low starting point. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last report, which is an improvement in itself as there are far more pupils with special educational needs than previously. The quality of teaching, assessment and management of the subject has improved and pupils with special educational needs now make better progress than previously, due to very good targeted provision.
42. Standards in speaking and listening are below average across the school. The school has identified pupils' speaking and listening skills as a priority for development. Pupils enter the neighbouring infant school with extremely low skills in language and communication which are still low when pupils enter the juniors in Year 3. A range of strategies, including drama, has been put in place to overcome the weaknesses. Teachers are giving pupils good opportunities to speak aloud in assemblies and lessons and they help pupils to develop more active listening skills. In a particularly effective religious education lesson in Year 3, the teacher encouraged mixed-ability groups of pupils to discuss events in Holy Week; this was particularly effective in a class containing a number of pupils with special educational needs, as pupils supported one another. Teachers' questioning is of high quality and they effectively direct questions if pupils appear to be 'reluctant responders'. Teachers use questions to encourage longer replies than pupils generally give and insist on pupils listening to each other and building on previous responses. Pupils are gaining in confidence when speaking and using technical vocabulary appropriately. In Year 6, pupils prepared statements for and against a proposal. Under the guidance of the teacher, they confidently put forward views on vivisection and showed an understanding of the main points of the debate. Pupils are generally working at below average standards but the

teachers' records indicate that good progress has been made since the start of the academic year, when pupils found it difficult to listen to one another and lacked confidence to speak in front of others.

43. In reading, standards are below average but improving, particularly in the technical aspects of reading. The school promotes reading and the use of books for research purposes. Pupils visit the school library regularly and have learnt to find their way around the library index system. The library is a very good resource, which is well maintained with up-to-date books and used well by pupils who enjoy using it. Teachers are promoting the use of research skills well and offer good strategies for locating information. For example, by the end of a Year 5 lesson, pupils had learnt how to find information in texts such as the *First Lunar Landing* by skimming and scanning. They understand the importance of contents and index pages in finding information and know that non-fiction books state facts and a glossary which explains technical vocabulary. Pupils have more difficulty empathising with characters in books, describing the storyline and reading 'beyond the text'. They are encouraged to complete reading journals regularly, describing the characters and whether they would recommend the book and why. In an effective Year 3 lesson, pupils were asked to think about exciting words to describe the character and appearance of characters from Greek myths. Through group reading sessions, pupils are introduced to a good range of popular children's authors and in discussion with Year 6 pupils, they described their favourite authors – Paul Jennings, Jacqueline Wilson and Roald Dahl - and the type of story written. Poetry is used to promote pupils' writing and they are aware of the conventions of plays. These strategies are beginning to make a difference and standards are improving.
44. Standards in writing are well below average in the current Year 6, but below average in Years 3 to 5. Following analysis of the 2004 test papers, it was identified that marks were lost in sentence construction and punctuation. Strategies to improve these areas have been put into place. In Years 3 to 5, sentence construction has begun to improve; there is evidence of extended sentences and punctuation is usually accurate. More speaking and listening activities have been built into the curriculum to support pupils' writing; these have been effectively implemented in many subjects. These include pupils being encouraged to rehearse their sentences before they write them. Good examples were observed in a Year 6 literacy lesson as pupils drafted their notes for a debate; they were encouraged to say what it was they wanted to write before committing their ideas to paper. Effective questioning means pupils give satisfactory, and sometimes good, answers to questions but find it much more difficult to record their thoughts using adventurous vocabulary. This is one reason why many pupils do not reach the higher levels by Year 6. In addition, teachers do not always demand high enough standards in the presentation of work and quality of handwriting in English and in writing in other subjects; this has a negative impact on standards. The standard of pupils' handwriting is below average; it is often untidy and a number of pupils still use print, even as late as Year 6. Standards in spelling are below average. Errors in pupils' written work often reflect how they speak, but they are gaining in confidence and often make plausible phonetic attempts for more adventurous words.
45. The quality of teaching is good, with very good aspects. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which enables them to give clear explanations and teach key skills effectively. Technology is used very well. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively which motivate and maintain pupils' interest. Although pupils use computers within lessons for word-processing, little use of ICT was observed during lessons. Teachers plan in year teams and very effective support is given to those pupils who

need it. This is because assessment procedures are used very efficiently to ensure pupils' needs are met. Lower-attaining pupils are supported very effectively by well-trained teaching assistants who make a significant contribution towards ensuring all pupils are fully included in lessons. This helps them achieve well, some from an extremely low starting point. In addition, higher attainers are sufficiently challenged in lessons by teachers; this is evident in the increase of the higher Level 5 in the National Curriculum tests. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and for pupils co-operating with one another while working. Very positive relationships and a sense of humour have a significant impact on the generally positive attitudes pupils have for learning, which help them achieve well.

46. The leadership and management of English are very good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic and determined to raise standards through the school. Assessment procedures are extensive and the results of teachers' assessments and data from standardised and national tests are analysed very carefully to identify areas that need further development and the next steps for pupils. The co-ordinator has a very good grasp of priorities. He has initiated and led training, moderated pupils' books, held child conferences and observed teaching and learning in the classroom. To ensure teachers are accurate in setting and sharing targets with pupils, he has constructed a thorough set of grids to show the next steps in learning for pupils. All of these initiatives are gradually having an impact on raising standards, particularly evident in Years 3, 4 and 5.

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

47. There are good cross-curricular links with other subjects in order to develop pupils' literacy skills. Teachers provide plenty of opportunity for pupils to write in different styles and for different purposes across the curriculum. This contributes to the good achievement and interest of pupils. There has been a greater emphasis on developing reading skills and enjoyment, and research methods are used well across the curriculum in such subjects as history and religious education. Opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills are promoted well through drama, discussion and questions posed by the teacher.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

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

- Pupils achieve well but do not attain the standards expected by the age of 11.
- Teaching is good throughout the school, with detailed planning that matches pupils' stages of development well to tasks and materials.
- Analysis of assessment data has ensured a clear focus on weaknesses such as problem-solving.
- There are good links with ICT in teaching and learning.
- Marking is not consistent and often misses opportunities to help pupils move on.
- There are insufficient links between numeracy and other curricular areas.

#### **Commentary**

48. There have been a number of improvements since the last inspection. Then, the trend in standards was erratic. Since 2002, there has been a steady improvement in test results for 11-year-olds. Although work by the current Year 6 pupils suggests that attainment will not

progress further this year, work by ten-year-olds indicates that from 2006, the upward trend will continue and pupils should meet the national standards in mathematics. In 1999, teaching, learning and management were seen as satisfactory. They are now good. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

49. Although pupils do not meet national expectations at 11, all make good progress over the four years, having started at a low level on entry. At that point, most pupils experienced some difficulty with mathematics, either in using their limited reading skills to understand questions or in transferring basic number skills to everyday contexts. As the result of good teaching, which identifies clear targets for each group; pupils develop their mathematical skills well. Early on, they show greater confidence in their use and retention of mental processes, such as multiplication tables and number bonds. They begin to apply these rules in solving everyday problems as they move through the school. With good support from computer programs, they develop a good understanding of basic graphs and charts. The most significant achievement for all pupils is their understanding and use of the technical vocabulary involved within mathematics. By the age of 11, all pupils are comfortable with terms such as 'symmetry', 'factors', 'formulae' and 'co-ordinates'. More recently, and as the result of the good analysis of achievement and assessment data, pupils have begun to use their mathematical skills well in problems that involve reading and interpreting. Thus, in a good Year 6 lesson on using supermarket flyers to plan a party, most pupils showed good skills in deciding what was good value for money, taking into account two-for-one offers, percentage discounts and bulk buying.
50. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is good. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established and teachers use mental mathematics activities well to focus pupils and reinforce basic tables and bonds at the start of lessons. When completing a lesson, most teachers refer back well to the learning objectives and discuss with pupils what they have learned. This emphasis on targets for a whole class has worked and pupils are beginning to focus well on the areas that have been proven to present difficulties in class work and in assessment activities. A very good Year 3 lesson typified many of the strengths of mathematics teaching. The lesson started with pupils immediately settling to tables revision. This was then reinforced by challenges that saw three pupils attempting to meet targets in a quickfire quiz activity. The lesson was characterised by pace and very good relationships which encouraged pupils to finish tasks and move on as quickly as possible. The teacher and teaching assistant provided prompt and knowledgeable assistance for pupils who found tasks difficult. Pupils also worked very well together, pooling knowledge and assisting each other as required. Pupils achieved very well in this lesson as the result of detailed planning and teaching that followed the plan in an exciting and supportive way.
51. The school has adopted setting by ability throughout for mathematics and this has worked well in enhancing the performance of all pupils. Setting allows teachers to focus on skills and strategies that are quite specific to each group. It also means that higher-attaining pupils can move on to more complex aspects of algebra, geometry and data-handling more easily. Similarly, pupils with learning difficulties have the opportunity to work at a more acceptable pace, with good reinforcement of skills that they may find difficult to acquire. Teaching assistants also find this way of working valuable. They focus on a specific set of skills and strategies within each lesson and find it easier to challenge pupils. Teachers mark work promptly and regularly. However, the quality of marking varies. Where it is good, it provides advice to pupils as to how to move on and questions some ways of working. In too many cases, it is just a matter of ticks and a positive comment. All teachers use the interactive whiteboards well to teach mathematics. They also emphasise technical words and this is bearing fruit in pupils' knowledge and ability to discuss processes using the correct vocabulary.
52. Leadership and management in mathematics are good. The co-ordinator has analysed the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' work and set targets accordingly. She has made good links with the local education authority adviser and this has helped move the subject on well. She has also linked mathematics well with ICT. This has meant that pupils are well motivated



and there is a range of ways in which to reinforce basic skills. Her emphasis on problem-solving and the development of individual strategies is exactly right for pupils who start with limited mathematical skills. Although she has only recently returned to the school, she is keen to move her subject on so that the upward trend in standards continues. At present there are not enough opportunities for her to visit classrooms and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching throughout the school.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

53. In some subjects, such as science and ICT, mathematical skills are used well to complete graphs, enter data and measure sizes. The skills are, therefore, reinforced well. In history, the use of timelines and in geography, the use of co-ordinates and rainfall levels provide good opportunities to revise and use a number of mathematical skills. However, there is no consistent policy for the use of mathematics concepts and vocabulary across the curriculum and practice varies. In one very good Year 6 physical education lesson, the teacher used work on balance well to reinforce symmetry work in mathematics. Opportunities were taken to emphasise asymmetry, turns and rotation. In many lessons, such opportunities are missed.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in science are improving.
- Investigative work is introduced consistently across the school, with good examples of cross-curricular links. This results in skills of investigative use and scientific thinking being well developed.
- Teaching is good overall with some very good teaching observed in Years 3 and 6. This ensures that effective learning takes place and pupils make good progress.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards science and very good relationships are effectively promoted through collaborative group work.
- Assessment is good. Data is analysed to identify any areas of concern and provide support where needed. Marking does not always provide guidance on what pupils need to do next.
- Presentation of work and handwriting is unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good and have been instrumental in raising standards.

### **Commentary**

54. Standards in the 2004 National Curriculum tests indicated an upward turn from previous results. When compared to schools nationally, results were just below average at both Level 4 and Level 5. Against similar schools, they were also just below the average. Since the previous inspection, there had been a slight decline but the trend now is upwards.

55. Achievement throughout the school is good. Current inspection evidence reveals results in Year 6 remain below average, but this is cohort related. Inspection evidence from lessons observed in other year groups clearly indicates standards which are moving towards average. Given the overall good, and sometimes very good, teaching in the school, it is likely that within the next year, pupils' standards will improve.
56. Pupils in Year 3 are developing a good scientific knowledge and understanding across the whole science curriculum. They are learning how to use their senses to observe and perform investigations well. For example, they used the digital camera to gather pictorial evidence to monitor growth of plants under 'fair test' conditions. The practical activity was purposeful and the task encouraged pupils to think about what they have learnt and how to use this information to progress to the next stage and confirm, or otherwise, the prediction they made prior to the investigation. Pupils in the parallel class considered the requirements of a 'fair test' to investigate what a plant needs to make food, based on previous learning. Pupils in both classes received opportunities for reflection, consideration and collaboration and develop their investigation and prediction skills. By the time pupils reach Year 6, their knowledge and understanding are improved as a result of the effective teaching and the purposeful and practical wide range of experiences offered, followed by good quality discussion. Collaborative group work is of good quality, as was observed in one Year 6 class, where pupils worked in pairs to use their knowledge of electrical circuits to produce a practical application, for example a quiz game where, given the correct answers, a bulb would light whilst an incorrect answer would result in the noise from a buzzer. Pupils listen carefully to what others say; they work well collaboratively and make their own valuable contributions to the outcomes. The promotion and effective development of investigative skills are now strong features of the science curriculum.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with evidence of very good teaching in the Year 3 and Year 6 classes. Management of pupils in most classes is very good but occasionally some boisterous behaviour does result in a slower pace than normal. This limits overall achievement. Where teachers have high expectations of behaviour, pupils respond positively, resulting in very good relationships and very positive attitudes to work. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and make learning challenging and interesting. Planning and preparation are of high quality and teachers are making very good use of the interactive whiteboards to stimulate and motivate pupils, resulting in good, and sometimes very good, learning.
58. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and the information is used to track and monitor areas of concern in order that they may be dealt with quickly. Marking, however, is inconsistent in terms of indicating to pupils what needs to be improved. This, together with unsatisfactory presentation, does not subscribe positively to the development of positive attitudes. The school acknowledges this as an area requiring improvement.
59. Leadership and management of the subject are good and are instrumental in securing an improvement in investigative aspects of the subject, promoting staff confidence and reflecting an upward trend. The curriculum is good, with cross-curricular approaches planned, as was evidenced in both Year 3 classes, this promotes ICT and literacy skills. The effective use of the interactive whiteboards is significant in contributing to the enthusiasm for the subject. Resources and accommodation are good and make a good contribution to the school's focus on practical and investigative work.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The subject is well led and is developing well.
- ICT is a very popular subject as the result of good hardware and motivational programs.
- Pupils' achievement is good over the four years, but their performance within lessons varies from class to class.
- The lack of technician support places limits on the learning that takes place.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to support other subjects within classrooms.

### **Commentary**

60. Pupils aged 11 demonstrate a range of skills that match the requirements of the National Curriculum and they achieve well. They use word-processing confidently for writing poems and stories and are comfortable with spreadsheets and using formulae. They are beginning to use computers to control robots, model fairground rides and traffic light sequences. In addition, they have developed good skills in the production of basic graphs and charts. Their confidence with computers means that they can adapt to new programs quickly. This is evident in the way they are taking to the new presentation program in geography. All pupils show confidence in using the Internet and cut and paste skills are developing well in assisting pupils to extract the relevant illustrations and information from a range of websites.
61. The development of ICT is attributable largely to the good leadership provided by the co-ordinator. Himself a skilled computer user, he is able to advise and support staff whose skills and confidence are not as great. He has done this through training, working alongside colleagues and being available throughout the week for advice and support. In addition, he has designed a very good website with pupils and, in general, acts as a good role model for staff and pupils alike. The new 'ICT passports' are a very imaginative development, allowing pupils to identify the skills they have learned and the progress made.
62. As a result of this, ICT is popular with all pupils. They enjoy using the hardware, which is of a good standard, and become very involved in the range of motivational programs available. The popularity is shown in the standard of presentation that pupils demonstrate and their wish to complete existing tasks and learn new skills. Thus, in a good Year 6 lesson dealing with traffic light sequencing, pupils needed to construct, revisit and edit their sequence of instructions for a traffic light junction. The development of the flow chart that controlled the process was detailed and challenging. However, pupils stayed with their task and discussed in detail how the sequence might be modified. Even those pupils who did not complete the correct sequence enjoyed the process and showed good progress in developing and editing a flow chart.
63. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress from when they enter the school to when they leave. However, performance and achievement vary from class to class. When teaching is good, pupils stay on task well and achieve well, but when classroom management is less effective, attention declines and achievement suffers.

64. Teaching seen during the current inspection was always satisfactory and sometimes good. The best teaching was characterised by detailed planning, clear instructions and the setting of manageable tasks within a sensible timeframe. It also involved teachers in modelling the processes they wished pupils to learn. However, when teaching was weaker, not enough attention was given to the range of learning needs within the class, which meant that some pupils lost interest or struggled without adequate support. Currently, some teachers are better than others at overcoming staffing limitations and also in incorporating ICT into subject lessons within class.
65. The constraints placed on the successful teaching of ICT are threefold. The school does not have a regular ICT technician which means that the co-ordinator has added this to his already heavy workload. Consequently, computers and other items of hardware often malfunction and the solution is not immediate. Secondly, most class lessons in the ICT suite are conducted by a single teacher. This means that when pupils work in pairs and meet difficulties, there is only one person to assist them. As a result, some pupils' progress is slowed unnecessarily. Similarly, some teachers find it difficult to ensure that every pupil has the same opportunity to use ICT within the classroom.

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

66. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good in a few areas such as mathematics, but is generally just satisfactory, as the result of the variation in teacher confidence. Although most staff have become quite confident in the use of the new interactive whiteboards for teaching, some are less adept at identifying when ICT can be used to enhance pupils' learning within other classroom subject lessons.

### **HUMANITIES**

Religious education, history and geography were inspected in full. Curriculum provision meets statutory requirements and sufficient time is now spent on the subjects.

### **GEOGRAPHY**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

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

- Teaching is strong in Year 6. Lessons are prepared with careful planning to secure interest and enthusiasm in the subject.
- Use of technology, including interactive whiteboard, digital camera and speaking and recording equipment, is effective.
- Pupils display positive attitudes towards this subject by Year 6.

#### **Commentary**

67. Standards overall in geography are in line with those expected for this subject and achievement is satisfactory. Geography is a subject which is gathering impetus and the use of technology, with particular reference to the interactive whiteboards, illustrates clearly how lessons may be made interesting. A Year 6 lesson, which was carefully planned and well thought out, simulated a 'points of view' broadcast, to consider the arguments of local people and tourists about the proposed building of a

new complex. It was recorded for future examination. Pupils representing either locals or tourists had carefully prepared their opinions for or against the complex, with specific reference to its impact on both. The lesson promoted high pupil involvement, challenged their thought processes and promoted their speaking and listening skills.

68. Pupils display positive attitudes to the subject and speak confidently with reasoned arguments. They listen carefully to each other's point of view displaying courtesy, good manners confirming positive and appropriate responses to the high expectations of their teacher. Discussion with pupils confirmed their enthusiasm and an understanding of mapping skills and comparing human and physical features of different communities. Pupils are sometimes less interested when teachers dominate the discussion, thereby reducing their opportunity to address tasks and improve skills.
69. Teaching is satisfactory overall, based on lessons observed and scrutiny of pupils' books. Planning is generally thorough and well thought out. The use of technology is having a positive impact on raising pupils' interest and developing their skills in accordance with the National Curriculum requirements. Teachers' day-to-day assessment is appropriate overall, discussing and revisiting aspects where and when required. However, the presentation in pupils' books is lower than generally expected. There were examples of good quality presentation in Year 6 when pupils were involved in a project about their own locality. In their project folders, there was clear evidence of the use of the digital camera, of good keyboard skills and appropriate presentation. Pupils' work was well presented and demonstrates the good standards and capability of pupils by Year 6.
70. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Resources are good and pupils use the local environment to promote comparative study skills. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision in history has improved; there is now sufficient time spent on the subject.
- There are good links to other subjects, particularly literacy.
- Speaking and listening skills are promoted well through drama and discussions.
- Visits and visitors to the school enhance the subject.

### **Commentary**

71. Standards have improved since the last inspection: they are now in line with expectations and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The amount of time spent on history has improved, and is now appropriate. There are good links with other subjects, for example design and technology, when pupils design and make Greek chariots in Years 3 and 4. Greater promotion of drama and discussion contribute towards pupils' enjoyment of history but also give them good opportunities for speaking and listening, which is currently a school priority.
72. Teaching observed was good, often with very good elements. The very good interaction and support offered to pupils by the teaching assistants contribute significantly to the effective integration of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils are kept on task and encouraged to listen actively to others.

Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' good behaviour and are particularly skilled at questioning. For example, by the end of a Year 6 lesson, pupils had drawn conclusions about the lives of poor people in Tudor times from secondary sources. They found out about possessions in houses from an inventory and estimated the value of the goods. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to focus pupils' interest. The use of information technology to download relevant pictures and information brings incidents and historical periods to life. For example, in lessons in Years 3 and 4, pupils learnt effectively about Greek myths, the Gods and the legend of Troy. There are good links with spiritual and moral development, as pupils consider the emotions that the Greeks and Trojans might have felt – the Greeks when they were waiting inside the horse and the Trojans when they first saw the wooden horse.

73. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject is being temporarily managed by the headteacher, which is a holding situation, as history is not a particular focus for development. However, there has already been good induction for the newly-qualified teacher and she is receiving training to take over the subject at the beginning of the next academic year. She is enthusiastic about this proposal and keen to co-ordinate the subject. Assessment is systematically undertaken at the end of each unit of work. Visits to such places as Windsor Castle and Basingstoke Museum are closely related to topic work and not only enhance the pupils' learning but bring the subject alive. Good links with the nearby residential home for the elderly often provide pupils with good opportunities to interview the residents about their past experiences. The school takes advantage of artefacts available from the local education authority and the Hampshire Wardrobe, which adds interest to the subject. The pupils enjoy dressing in role, as is evident in photographs of pupils reliving past times.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and by Year 6, their attainment is in line with that expected.
- Teachers are teaching the revised Hampshire agreed syllabus well.
- There are good links with English. Teachers are promoting speaking and listening and drama well.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual and cultural development.
- The subject is led and managed well.

### Commentary

74. At the end of Year 6, standards are in line with expectations. Pupils' achievement is good, particularly in Year 3, where the co-ordinator teaches. Increased attention has been given to religious education and it now has a higher profile in the school and teaching of the subject is good. There are particularly good links with English, as teachers regularly use drama and discussion which engage the pupils and result in them enjoying the subject. Together with very good support from teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs are able to access the subject well. In a very successful Year 3 lesson, pupils thought about events during the Easter period; they were effectively led, through discussion and drama, to think about the emotions that Jesus and the disciples might have had during Holy Week. Pupils suggested that the disciples were *joyful* and *happy* at the beginning of the Last Supper but were

*heartbroken, sad and unhappy* when they learnt of Jesus' arrest. These pupils are learning through religion and interpret the events well. The planned work in religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development, such as learning to appreciate and respect the beliefs and values of other faiths and cultures.

75. In discussion, it is clear that pupils in Year 6 are developing a sound understanding of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. They displayed positive attitudes and interest in the subject. They demonstrated an understanding of Bible stories and satisfactorily explained the meaning behind such stories as *The Good Samaritan, Noah's Ark* and stories about miracles when people were healed. Pupils had an appropriate awareness of Christian symbols used, through their visit to the church. They had a satisfactory understanding why they learnt about different religions in lessons – '*so we understand other people and their religions*'. This was illustrated when pupils discussed the five Pillars of Islam and that the holy book for Muslims is the Qur'an, showing a sound knowledge and understanding of Islam. They also showed an understanding of aspects of Hinduism, as they described the elements of the festival of Holi.
76. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and very knowledgeable about the subject and has introduced the new agreed syllabus and planning effectively. She has been influential in raising the profile of religious education within the school but it is too early to see significant improvements in pupils' attainment. Whilst there is a suitable emphasis given to Christianity, the curriculum covers other world religions appropriately. Planning shows that requirements of the recommended guidance are met and statutory requirements for corporate worship are now met. Teachers assess pupils' progress at the end of each unit of work. ICT is used to support the subject but not extensively, CD-ROMS are used in order for pupils to gather information about different aspects of the subject. Pupils visit the local churches, which support their learning of Christianity, and the vicar from the local church visits the school to lead assembly regularly. Pupils tend not to visit other places of worship, which is a missed opportunity; however, outreach workers have on occasions visited the school to talk to pupils about their religions. In addition, parents of other religions are happy to send in artefacts to support teaching and learning and some pupils will discuss their beliefs with their teachers and classmates.

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

Physical education was inspected in full. Art and design, music and design and technology were sampled and were not a major focus during this inspection. Limited teaching was observed and there was not enough evidence across the school to judge standards and achievement. Planning follows national guidance that has been adapted well to meet the needs of all the pupils. Statutory curriculum requirements are met and subjects are now allocated sufficient time.

77. There were limited observations of **art and design** during the inspection. Pupils' artwork displayed shows that in Year 6, standards are similar to those expected. Art and design contributes well to work in other areas of the curriculum. Evidence from around the school indicates that pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to mix colours and use a range of different media such as paint, pastels and pencils. Year 6 pupils have produced some particularly good representations in pastel, based on the works of Picasso, in which they showed a good awareness of colour and use of texture to add interest to their pictures. Pupils have opportunities to explore three-dimensional art and use their design skills, as illustrated in the Year 5 lesson

observed. Pupils constructed their papier-mâché hats carefully, checking on the designs in their sketchbooks. The teacher effectively used ideas from the Internet, which were demonstrated on the whiteboard. The use of computers for pupils to enhance their artistic skills is, however, limited. Pupils' work is assessed at the end of each unit of work, as in other foundation subjects.

78. No lessons were observed in **design and technology**, but scrutiny of pupils' books, examination of models made by the pupils and discussion with pupils indicate that attainment is average. The requirements of the National Curriculum for design and technology, including food technology, are carefully planned, including cross-curricular activities, such as powering funfair models using scientific skills. Planning and discussions with pupils indicate that they are taught to prepare carefully before making their models. They make annotated sketches of their designs and list the tools and materials they will need. In Year 6, when making the frame, pupils carefully measure, cut and join using cardboard mitre corners. Leadership and management are good. Resources are good and pupils spoke of their progress enthusiastically, including what they would do next time to improve their end product.
79. No lessons were observed in **music**. However, observation of assemblies and discussions with the co-ordinator and pupils indicate that this is a popular and exciting subject. There is a broad and interesting curriculum which provides good experiences of song and music across a wide range of cultures. As a result, singing is tuneful and enthusiastic. Pupils also enjoy composition and performance within lessons and at fixed points in the year, such as Christmas. The school gives pupils the opportunity to sing outside the school and this is much appreciated by the audiences. There have been good links between music and physical education in the developing dance curriculum. In history, opportunities are taken for pupils to listen to and perform music from the periods being studied. The co-ordinator has good links with the local education authority's music service and takes the opportunities that present themselves to advise and support less confident colleagues in teaching music. There is room for more work to involve pupils in musical activities within the community.

## **Physical education**

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Physical education is a popular subject and one that provides many opportunities to participate and succeed.
- Pupils achieve well and, by Year 6, meet the standards expected.
- Over three-quarters of pupils learn to swim and all achieve well.

### **Commentary**

80. During the inspection, three lessons were seen and discussions took place with the co-ordinator and a number of Year 6 pupils. Pupils develop their physical education skills well and meet national expectations by the age of 11. At that stage they have developed good control of their bodies and their use of space. They understand the rules and tactics in a wide range of team games and understand what sorts of exercise are good for them. Through the dance curriculum, they have developed the ability to express emotions and ideas by the use of their bodies and have developed well in their ability to work in pairs and small groups, providing support and developing imaginative performance routines. There is also a very



strong link between physical education and the development of fitness. Most recently, the school has signed up to the British Heart Foundation's skipping project and this links well with both physical education and personal, social and health education.

81. Teaching of physical education is always satisfactory and some lessons are very well taught. Thus, a very good lesson for 11-year-olds concentrated on balance on the floor and using equipment. The teacher showed very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. This, together with good pace, clear instructions and strong adult-pupil relationships meant that pupils were always keen to achieve. As the lesson progressed, individual pupils and pairs were asked to demonstrate good practice, with the teacher pointing out the strengths for others to copy. This allowed the teacher to challenge higher ability pupils as well as encourage those who found physical education difficult. Where lessons were only satisfactory, teachers showed less confidence and intervened less to demonstrate and encourage good examples of skills.
82. Pupils enjoy physical education. The curriculum is broad and supported by a good range of clubs and after-school activities. Gymnastics and games have continued to develop well, whilst the curriculum has been enhanced by the development of dance. All pupils have the opportunity to take part in residential activities that introduce them to a range of adventurous pursuits. In addition, the school links well with secondary schools and local clubs to enhance the opportunities through the visits of trained coaches and teams such as the Hampshire Cricket Club, the Basingstoke Bisons Ice Hockey team and Reading Football Club. There is an opportunity for girls and boys to play football, and new sports such as volleyball and tag rugby are introduced to pupils on a regular basis.
83. In Year 5, every pupil has the opportunity to swim and over 75 per cent of pupils reach the national target of swimming over 25 metres. One member of staff is an ex-national swimmer and a trained coach which provides the opportunity for developing highly skilled coaching.
84. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is new in post and the introduction of a new scheme of work is at the very early stages. Sensibly, this is being trialled and evaluated so that practical adaptations can be made before the full published scheme is introduced to all staff. The co-ordinator shows an enthusiasm for the subject, uses staff skills well and already has plans in place for a new assessment scheme, making good use of pupils who do not take part, as assessors during lessons.

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

85. Personal, social and health education is given a high priority in the school. It makes a very good contribution to establishing very good relationships between everyone in the school. Its success is reflected in pupils' very good attitudes to learning. The comprehensive scheme of work links well to other subjects and circle time is timetabled. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. Pupils are elected to the school council by democratic vote, promoting responsibility and ownership. This contributes significantly to social and moral development. Sex and relationships education is implemented and monitored and altered to suit the growing maturity of its pupils. In the health programme and drugs awareness education, pupils have the opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have.
86. The school is a harmonious community in which all pupils are given equal status and show tolerance and respect for each other. Pupils speak positively about the support they receive from staff and the opportunities they have to show their sense of responsibility for others. Pupils develop a good understanding of growing up in a community as responsible citizens. They recognise the need for rules and laws and feel they contribute to the rules made in the school through electing representatives for the school council and subscribing positively to the peer mediation programme.

The strong programme of extra-curricular provision, residential visits and the good quality of assemblies makes a positive contribution to this subject.

87. The teachers and support staff know pupils very well and circle time provides regular opportunities to discuss school issues and concerns that pupils may have. As part of the planning, the co-ordinator has identified further aspects to be developed, such as planning for 'Rights, Respect and Responsibility' to be developed across the school after its successful trialling in Year 4. Pupils' progress in this area is to be assessed. The subject is effectively led and managed. The well-planned programme is implemented well and parents are appropriately advised of aspects such as the sex education programme.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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