

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CUPERNHAM JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Romsey

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115944

Headteacher: Mr David Musty

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey  
3764

Dates of inspection: 21 - 24 May 2001

Inspection number: 194041

Full 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                               |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                 |
| School address:              | Bransley Close<br>Romsey<br>Hampshire |
| Postcode:                    | SO51 7LT                              |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The Governing Body                    |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr M Richardson                       |
| Date of previous inspection: | 28 April 1997                         |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                 |                      | Subject responsibilities   | Aspect responsibilities  |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|--|--|
| 3764         | Stephanie Lacey | Registered inspector | English and English as an additional language                        | The school's results and pupils' achievements.<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>How well is the school led and managed? |
| 9528         | Derek Bowers    | Lay inspector        |  | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.<br>How well does the school care for its pupils?                     |
| 23235        | Fred Riches     | Team inspector       | Equal opportunities, mathematics and religious education             | How well does the school work in partnership with parents?   |
| 23812        | Carol Slade     | Team inspector       | Science, history, geography and special educational needs            |  |
| 20959        | Graham Lee      | Team inspector       | Information and communication technology, art and physical education | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?   |
| 23495        | Anna Sims       | Team inspector       | Design and technology and music                                      |  |

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Cupernham is a large community junior school with 360 boys and girls on roll. There are currently fifty more boys than girls in the school. Almost all of the pupils live close to the school, with about a fifth coming from further afield. Most live in owner occupied housing, with a small minority in housing authority homes. About eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. Most of the families have their cultural roots in the British Isles, with almost two per cent of the pupils coming from other ethnic backgrounds. Three pupils speak English as an additional language. Most pupils transfer to Cupernham Juniors from the infant school on the same site. Only about eight of the ninety Year 3 pupils this year came from other schools. Last year, pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 was broadly average, but this varies from year to year. Twenty-four per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is broadly average for Hampshire schools, and two have a statement of special educational need.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Cupernham is a very good school where pupils are 'proud to achieve'. The teaching is very good and consequently pupils do very well and reach high standards. The headteacher, very well supported by the deputy head and senior staff, has established an exciting learning environment where individual pupils are valued. The school provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils achieve very well and standards are above average, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' personal development is excellent and a direct consequence of the outstanding provision made for work in this area.
- Teaching is very good and this ensures that pupils make very good strides in learning.
- The headteacher and senior staff provide excellent leadership.
- The curriculum is very stimulating and captures pupils' imaginations.
- Governors and parents are very supportive.

#### **What could be improved**

There are no significant areas needing improvement. Staff and governors are continually evaluating the school's provision and putting appropriate plans in place to improve it further.

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in 1997. Good standards have been maintained with improvement in some areas, most notably writing. The quality of teaching has improved and the work planned for pupils is now more challenging. These good improvements have been brought about by a rigorous approach to targeting areas that need development, as well as restructuring the timetable and readjusting the roles and responsibilities of the headteacher, deputy head and senior teachers. In addition to addressing all the issues from the last inspection (related to curriculum planning, assessment, collective worship and the role of subject managers) the school has also introduced the literacy and numeracy strategies and managed the challenges of staff turnover well. It is in a good position to move forward even further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with |      |      |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                 | 1998          | 1999 | 2000 | 2000            |
| English         | B             | A    | B    | B               |
| Mathematics     | B             | A    | C    | B               |
| Science         | B             | A    | A    | A               |

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

*Similar schools are those with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Cupernham is at the bottom of the 8% to 20% band.*

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been above, or well above average for the last few years. In 2000, standards remained well above average in science and above average in English, with pupils doing better in reading than writing. The 'C' grade for mathematics does not fully reflect the pupils' good achievements and in reality more than average reached both the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. (The letter grade is worked out by calculating an average point score, which in this case missed 'above average' by less than one per cent.) Pupils at Cupernham did better than their peers in similar schools in English and mathematics and much better in science.

The inspection found that standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, with an improvement this year in writing. The school is likely to meet the challenging literacy and numeracy targets set for the current Year 6. Standards have also risen even further since the last inspection in information and communication technology (ICT) and are now well above average. They are above average in geography and physical education. In religious education pupils' achievements more than meet the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. Standards are average in art and design, design and technology, history and music. Since the last inspection there has been a marked improvement in standards in design and technology and pupils also do better than they did previously in religious education.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieve very well.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Very good. Pupils enjoy school. They work hard in lessons and are keen to do their best.  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Very good. Pupils behave very well in class and at playtimes and lunchtimes. There have been no exclusions for bad behaviour.   |
| Personal development and relationships | Excellent. Pupils take on responsibilities very sensibly and think carefully about the effect of what they do on others. Relationships between pupils and with staff are excellent. |
| Attendance                             | Very good. Maintained well since the last inspection.   |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

|                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Teaching of pupils:</b> | <b>aged 7-11 years</b> |
| Lessons seen overall       | Very good              |

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The overall quality of the teaching is very good and this ensures that pupils achieve very well. In the lessons seen, 16 per cent were excellent, 36 per cent were very good, 41 per cent were good and the remaining seven per cent were satisfactory. There were no lessons seen where teaching was less than satisfactory. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. There are several strengths that are evident. These include the excellent relationship that exists between teachers and pupils, excellent teamwork and the co-operation between staff in the three parallel classes in each year group. Staff plan very well together and make very good use of support staff. Year 6 teachers use their particular subject expertise well to interest and motivate their pupils.

English is taught very well. There has been a particular focus on improving the teaching of writing skills this year and this has been successful in driving up standards. Good attention is paid to redrafting written work and in several sessions seen pupils worked together to analyse and improve what they had written. Teaching is very good in mathematics, with many excellent features and this ensures that pupils are challenged very well. Teaching is also strong in other subjects. There has been a particular improvement in the teaching of art, design and technology and music where, at the time of the last inspection, some teachers' subject knowledge had been insecure. This improvement has been brought about by staff training, joint planning and systematic monitoring of work in individual classes. Teachers plan work well to meet the differing needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. They ensure that boys and girls are equally involved in discussions and all pursuits. They offer challenging tasks which extend higher attainers successfully in all subjects, particularly literacy and numeracy, but also in art, music and physical education. Homework is an area that concerns some parents. The inspection found that the homework set is appropriate. However, parents are not always clear about what is expected of them or their children. Most teachers monitor the homework books well, but this is not as consistent as it could be.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Very good. There is a lively and stimulating curriculum that grasps pupils' interests and imaginations. Provision for lunchtime and after-school clubs is very good.   |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. Sensitive teaching assistants support them very well in most literacy and numeracy sessions.   |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | Very good support is given to the few pupils learning English as an additional language. Teachers are sensitive to their needs.  |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Planning for pupils' personal, social and health education is particularly strong. Excellent provision is made for pupils' moral and social development, with very good provision made for their cultural development. Their spiritual development is well provided for. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | Very well. Staff know pupils well and take very good care of them. There are very good assessment procedures in place.   |

The school has a very good partnership with parents, with a very active and supportive Parent Teacher Association.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher, very well supported by the deputy head and senior staff, gives an excellent lead. He has a clear vision for the educational direction of the school and combines this well with helping staff to develop their skills through a programme of monitoring and support. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | The governors fulfil their responsibilities very well. They have a clear picture of the school's work through their involvement in committees, meetings and visits. The chair makes a particularly strong contribution. All statutory requirements are met.                           |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | The school has very effective measures in place to gauge how well it is doing. It uses these very well to plan for future developments.   |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Financial planning is very good and closely linked to the school improvement plan. Principles of best value are applied very well.  |

There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. Teamwork is a particular strength. Administrative staff, lunch-time supervisors, kitchen staff, the caretaker and cleaners all make a very good contribution to the smooth running of the school. The accommodation is very good, with well-developed and spacious grounds. Resources for all curriculum areas are good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Twenty-one parents attended a meeting held for them before the inspection and 199 of the 360 questionnaires seeking parents' views about the school were returned.

| What pleases parents most  | What parents would like to see improved  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school expects children to work hard and do their best. (96%)</li> <li>• The teaching is good. (95%)</li> <li>• Children make good progress. (93%)</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed. (92%)</li> <li>• The school is helping children to become mature and sensible. (91%)</li> <li>• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or problem. (90%)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons. (29%)</li> <li>• Homework arrangements. (26%)</li> <li>• Information about children's progress. (16%)</li> </ul> |

*The percentages in the boxes above refer to the responses to the questionnaire*

The inspection wholeheartedly agrees with parents' positive views about the school. Inspectors looked carefully into the three issues that some parents were concerned about. They found that, even though the number of lunchtime and after-school clubs has been reduced since the last inspection, the provision in this area is very good. There are a wide range of clubs and many opportunities for pupils to undertake interesting activities outside lessons. Homework arrangements have many positive features. Tasks are interesting, for example, and often provide opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning. In some classes parents are not given clear enough information about the homework tasks and in a few classes homework books are not monitored sufficiently by the teachers. The information given to parents about their children's progress is very good overall and written reports are clear and informative.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

##### *Starting school*

1 When children started school at Cupernham in Year 3 last year, their attainment as indicated by Year 2 national tests and assessments was broadly average. Standards were above average in reading, average in writing and science and below average in mathematics. Higher attaining pupils did well in reading and writing. This varies from year to year. In 1998 and 1999, for example, pupils' attainment on entry to Year 3 was above average overall and in 1997, when the current Year 6 started in Year 3, attainment was again broadly average.

##### *Results in national tests and assessments*

2 Standards in relation to the percentage of pupils reaching the average level 4 and the higher level 5 in Year 6 national tests in 2000 were well above average in science and above average in English and mathematics. The 'C' grade for mathematics in the table in the summary does not fully reflect the pupils' good achievements and in reality more than average reached both the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. (The letter grade is worked out by calculating an average point score, which in this case missed 'above average' by less than one per cent.) Pupils did better in reading than in writing, which is similar to the national picture. At Cupernham pupils reached much higher standards than their peers in similar schools in science and did better than them in English and mathematics.

##### *Inspection findings:*

3 The inspection found that standards this year are very similar to those last year in Year 6 in mathematics and reading and are above average. Standards in writing have improved and there has been a slight drop in science from well above average to above average. Throughout the school all pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching.

##### *Trends over time and improvement since the last inspection in English, mathematics and science*

4 Standards in national tests over the last four years have risen in line with the national trend, with pupils doing better in some years than others. These minor fluctuations are directly related to the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group. This year there has been an improvement in writing standards.

##### *English:*

5 Standards in speaking and listening are high throughout the school. Pupils are articulate and confident and they achieve very well because they have many opportunities to develop their skills. Drama activities make a significant contribution to work in this area. In reading, pupils' attainment is above average at the end of Year 6. The national literacy strategy is used effectively to develop pupils' phonic skills and knowledge about language. Pupils are clear about the kind of books they enjoy and many have favourite authors or types of books. Standards in writing are improving as a result of the school's concerted efforts. There is a good emphasis on writing for different reasons and pupils are developing spelling and handwriting skills well.

##### *Mathematics*

6 Current standards for 11-year-olds are above average, and in some cases very high. Higher attaining pupils do particularly well in this subject. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well throughout the school because the work is very well planned and the teaching is very good. Pupils appreciate that there are a range of strategies that can be used in mental

calculations and use these well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are each in three ability sets for mathematics. These pupils work at the tasks defined by the numeracy strategy, but at speeds and levels appropriate to their understanding.

#### *Science*

7 Standards are above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' understanding of scientific knowledge and ideas develops hand in hand with their skills in scientific investigation.

#### *Targets:*

8 The school has set suitably challenging targets for pupils' performance in Year 6 tests in English and mathematics this year, which it is likely to meet.

#### *Foundation subjects and religious education*

9 By the end of Year 6, pupils reach very high standards in ICT. Standards are above average in geography and physical education. They are average in art and design, design and technology, history and music. Standards in religious education more than meet the requirements of the local agreed syllabus. There has been a marked improvement in standards in design and technology, with pupils also doing even better than they did at the time of the last inspection in ICT and religious education.

#### *Pupils with special educational needs*

10 Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make very good progress overall because their needs are identified and they receive well-targeted support in most literacy and numeracy lessons. They did less well in two Year 4 numeracy lessons when tasks were too demanding and support was lacking. In Years 5 and 6, the tasks and support are particularly well focused through setting arrangements for numeracy and grouping for literacy. Individual education plans are prepared for pupils who need them. They are well designed, setting realistic, achievable targets to ensure learning success. In so doing they effectively raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

#### *Gifted and talented pupils*

11 Gifted and talented pupils do very well at Cupernham, especially in mathematics and ICT. They are identified well and set appropriately challenging work by their teachers. A Year 6 mathematics extension group meets regularly with the deputy headteacher to tackle challenging work well beyond the scope of most eleven-year-olds. Pupils with talents in sport, art and music also find positive outlets to show their skills, both within the curriculum and through additional activities. Pupils at Cupernham have won the area football and netball trophies and the local cross country tournament. The most talented singers and actors perform principal roles skilfully in biennial school productions, such as *'Oliver!'*. Musicians receive individual tuition in a variety of instrumental lessons and have regular opportunities to perform to school and parents.

#### *Pupils learning English as an additional language*

12 Less than one per cent of the pupils are learning English as an additional language. These pupils are fluent English speakers. One pupil, who joined the school last September, has made tremendous progress because of the sensitive support he has received.

#### *Pupils from ethnic minority groups*

13 Less than two per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority groups. The school does not currently analyse their progress as a separate group, but it was apparent in lessons that these pupils achieved as well as their peers.

#### *Boys and girls*

14 Overall there is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls and all are

challenged well. Analysis of attainment by gender shows no significant differences between boys' and girls' attainment over the past four years.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

15 This area was strong at the time of the last inspection and has developed even further as a result of the school's efforts. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now very good. Pupils and staff now enjoy excellent relationships and this promotes pupils' excellent personal development. As a consequence, pupils make very good strides in their learning.

#### *Pupils' attitudes*

16 Pupils are happy at school and have very good attitudes to their work in all lessons. They are always ready to work and maintain good concentration throughout each session. They are interested in their work and often very enthusiastic. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the pupils showed clear motivation and enjoyment while investigating the relationship between the circumference and diameter of a circle. Pupils often tell the teachers how much they have enjoyed a lesson.

#### *Pupils' behaviour*

17 Pupils behave very well in lessons and at playtimes. They are friendly, polite, very reliable and trustworthy. The progressive sanctions for misbehaviour are seldom used. There have been no exclusions. Pupils are consistently well managed in lessons and at playtimes.

#### *Relationships*

18 Staff are very good role models in their excellent relationships with the pupils. There is substantial mutual respect and interactions are invariably conducted in a cordial, positive manner. Pupils of all ages relate very well to each other. Pupils work together extremely effectively and listen well to each other in discussions.

#### *Personal development*

19 The personal development of the pupils throughout their time in the school is excellent. They are given many opportunities to take responsibility for class and whole school duties. They always respond very positively and effectively. Some of the older pupils have responsibility for arrangements at playtimes such as organising games and ensuring that no pupils are isolated. They are particularly proud of being members of the 'Cupernham Crew' or the 'Green Team'. The constructive way that pupils respond to these challenges makes a positive contribution to the smooth running of the school.

#### *Attendance*

20 Attendance is very good and there are few unauthorised absences. Punctuality is very good. This is a similar picture to that at the last inspection.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

21 The overall quality of the teaching is very good and this ensures that pupils achieve very well. In the lessons seen, 16 per cent were excellent, 36 per cent were very good, 41 per cent were good and the remaining seven per cent were satisfactory. There were no lessons seen where teaching was less than satisfactory. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, brought about by a concerted effort to improve teachers' skills through a planned programme of monitoring and support. This strong teaching is apparent in all year groups and ensures that pupils learn very effectively.

#### *Strengths in teaching*

22 There are several strengths that are evident in all lessons. One is the excellent

relationship that exists between teachers and pupils. Staff and pupils respect each other and enjoy working together. As a result, lessons run smoothly and there is rarely any need for teachers to speak to pupils about inattentive behaviour. Pupils appreciate teachers' occasional flashes of humour and work confidently in the knowledge that their efforts are valued.

23 Another strength is the excellent teamwork and the co-operation between staff in the three parallel classes in each year group. This is especially evident in the planning and preparation for lessons. Staff plan together so that pupils have the same work and level of challenge. Objectives for lessons are clear and learning is brought to life by imaginative and interesting activities. In the Year 3 history sessions, for example, pupils 'dug' in sand to discover Egyptian artefacts, appreciating the excitement of archaeological work. Resources are also prepared jointly and, as a consequence of sensible timetabling, teachers share artefacts, equipment and printed materials.

24 In Year 6, very good use is made of teachers' particular subject expertise. Teachers swap classes so that design and technology, geography and ICT are taught by specialists. This is particularly helpful for these older pupils and ensures a good level of challenge in these subjects.

#### *Teaching of English*

25 English is taught very well. Teachers base their planning on the national literacy strategy and ensure that pupils acquire the necessary skills in reading and writing by making the work interesting and relevant. Pupils enjoy reading and do well because they have many opportunities to practise their skills during the day. There has been a particular focus on improving the teaching of writing skills this year and this has been successful in driving up standards. Good attention is paid to redrafting written work and in several sessions, pupils worked together to analyse and improve what they had written. Teachers also use very good quality texts as a basis for their lessons. This attention paid to good professional writing helps pupils to develop as writers themselves. In Year 6, for example, pupils studied Allan Ahlberg's '*The Jolly Postman*', in order to look at different types of writing. They are moving on, in a few weeks time, to writing their own books for young children in the Infant School. At Cupernham teachers also give a good emphasis to the teaching of speaking and listening skills, which goes far beyond the question and answer sessions in the introduction to lessons. Pupils are encouraged to discuss in pairs, for example, and in drama sessions they are given the opportunity to create their own dialogue.

#### *Teaching of mathematics*

26 The teaching of mathematics is very strong with a very high percentage of excellent lessons seen. Teachers are clearly enthusiastic about the subject. Strengths are apparent in all aspects, including planning, the preparation and use of resources, very good use of support assistants to help pupils with special educational needs, brisk mental and oral sessions, very good use of time and opportunities for pupils to review what has been learnt. Teachers have high expectations. They know their pupils' capabilities and show that they expect the best of them. Consequently pupils achieve very well.

#### *Teaching in other subjects*

27 Teaching is also strong in other subjects. There is a particular improvement in art, design and technology and music where, at the time of the last inspection, some teachers' subject knowledge had been insecure. This improvement has been brought about by staff training, joint planning and systematic monitoring of work in individual classes.

#### *Evaluating pupils' progress*

28 In practice teachers have a very good, rounded understanding of their pupils' personalities as well as their intellectual development. During lessons they ask searching questions which

reveal to them the levels of learning and understanding of their pupils. Teachers are very active during individual and group learning time in lessons. They watch and listen, carefully observing pupils' ways of working and thinking, all of which give them clues to pupils' progress. Marking is good. A majority of pupils' work is marked regularly and teachers frequently make brief, often encouraging comments, which are sometimes developmental and help pupils to improve.

#### *Teaching of pupils with special educational needs*

29 Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make very good progress as a consequence of good teaching. Teachers have a very good understanding of their pupils. Teaching assistants and the part-time special needs teacher work very effectively when deployed alongside teachers in the daily literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils with special educational needs learn very successfully in these lessons. In several examples of excellent practice, pupils were grouped around an assistant during class discussions, so that the assistant could give additional prompting encouragement to reinforce understanding and help pupils focus. In just a very few lessons, though teachers had simplified work for pupils with special needs, tasks proved too demanding and pupils struggled with insufficient support.

#### *Meeting all pupils' needs*

30 Teachers plan work well to meet the differing needs of all pupils. They ensure that boys and girls are equally involved in discussions and all pursuits. They offer challenging tasks which extend higher attainers successfully in all subjects, particularly literacy and numeracy, but also in art, music and physical education. Through additional instrumental teaching, after-school activities, concerts and shows, the school offers very good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and recognise their talents. Teachers recognise the talents of the very small number of pupils who speak English fluently as an additional language and give them huge encouragement.

#### *Minor areas for improvement*

31 There are no significant weaknesses in this very strong area. In one or two of the satisfactory lessons teachers spent a little too long talking with pupils in the introductory part of the lesson, which tended to slow the pace. One or two inconsistencies were also noted. In one or two classes, for example, teachers do not have such high expectations of good written presentation.

#### *Homework*

32 Homework was an area that concerned some parents. The inspection found that the homework set is appropriate and frequently provides opportunities for parents and children to work together on interesting tasks. However, parents are not always clear about what is expected of them or their children. Most teachers monitor the homework books well, but not all use the books as an opportunity for communication with parents. This means that some parents are not so involved and others are not clearly informed of how well their children are doing.

### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?**

#### *An interesting and challenging curriculum*

33 The school offers its pupils rich and diverse opportunities, which meet their needs and interpret statutory requirements in an interesting and stimulating way. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy, with a commitment to high standards. At the same time the curriculum is broad and well balanced between the other subjects. A wealth of additional opportunities are offered and the school makes the most of its resources from within and outside the school to enrich pupils' experience. There is also a very strong

emphasis on pupils' personal development and the promotion of respect, responsibility and pride permeate the ethos of the school. All statutory requirements in relation to the National Curriculum and religious education are met. The school has fully addressed the key issue of the last inspection relating to design and technology, which did not at that time comply with those requirements. It has made good strides in developing curriculum planning in all subjects since the last inspection. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education by the time they leave the school.

#### *Planning for literacy, numeracy and work in other subjects*

34 The school has adopted the national literacy and numeracy strategies very successfully and standards are high in these subjects as a result. At the same time attention is given to the speaking and listening elements of the curriculum with a particular emphasis on drama. In numeracy, setting arrangements at the upper end of the school have contributed well to the high standards. Planning for other areas of the curriculum is a real strength, with detailed plans underpinning the work. It ensures a consistency of provision between classes and that knowledge, skills and understanding are developed from year to year. This represents very good progress from the last inspection when the lack of detailed planning frameworks was a key issue. A feature of the planning is the good links made between different subjects. For example, art work in Year 6 on William Morris fed into the designing of slippers in design and technology. Similarly, work in geography on St. Lucia utilised skills in ICT very effectively. These links help to fulfil one of the major strands of the development plan, which is to ensure that ICT is integrated across the curriculum. However, during the inspection ICT was not used as fully as it might be to support work in literacy and numeracy.

#### *Equal opportunities*

35 The curriculum includes all pupils in every aspect and enshrines equal opportunities for all. Boys and girls have equal access to all that the school offers. Regular analysis of assessment data ensures that this is reflected in the performance of boys and girls. The few pupils with English as an additional language are fully integrated into the school's life. Pupils with particular gifts and talents are catered for well within lessons through the appropriate challenges they are set. In mathematics this is enhanced in the setting arrangements at the upper end of the school. The deputy head has also been working with a small extension group in Year 6 and, as a result, their levels of attainment are very high. There are plans to extend the work with the most able, gifted and talented pupils next year not only in mathematics but other areas as well. Work in parallel classes is well matched, so that pupils in each year group receive the same curriculum. The school ensures that all pupils attend collective worship daily. (The previous report's criticism of the practice of withdrawing pupils for additional help was swiftly addressed.) All pupils have equal access to a rich variety of additional activities, which enable them to develop their personal interests and give expression to their talents.

#### *Provision for pupils with special educational needs*

36 The school's commitment to equal opportunities is also demonstrated through its provision for pupils with special educational needs. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and equality of opportunity within it. Special needs support is well planned, so that most support is within the classroom and associated with the timetabled subject. When pupils go out for additional support, the school ensures that they are not regularly missing the same lessons. Teachers adapt learning opportunities to meet the needs of individuals, including pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils too. Very good use is made by staff of outside agencies to help in this process. These regularly include the educational psychologist, speech therapist, school's support social worker and educational welfare officer.

### *Lunchtime and after school provision*

37 The wide range of lunchtime and after-school opportunities offered by the school remain a strength and considerably enrich the curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a variety of sporting activities and to compete against other schools on a regular basis. Cupernham has been extremely successful in many of these tournaments. Every opportunity is taken to enhance this provision through, for example, links with sports clubs such as Southampton Football Club, Hampshire County Cricket Club and Solent Athletics Club. In addition, a qualified parent runs a gymnastics club. There are also opportunities for pupils to take part in recorders, computers and French clubs. A range of visits and visitors help to bring a variety of topics alive for the children and the annual residential trip to the Isle of Wight is a feature of life in Year 6. The school's commitment to the arts is celebrated in a biennial whole school production. The last was a highly successful and memorable performance of '*Oliver!*'.

### *Provision for pupils' personal development*

38 The school makes excellent provision for pupils' personal development. This is done informally through its ethos and relationships and formally through its excellent structured programme for personal, social and health education, which also encompasses citizenship. This programme aims to develop pupils' life skills and provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on issues through the high profile afforded to circle time in the school. The programme covers sex education and drugs misuse.

39 The headteacher, staff and governors have placed pupils' personal education as the top priority in the school's strategic plan. The adoption of the motto '*Proud to achieve*' symbolises the school's commitment to establishing a culture and ethos where all pupils want to work hard and do their best. The working atmosphere in classes, the warm relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff, and the enthusiasm of pupils to take responsibilities and show initiative all testify to the school's effectiveness. The school has an excellent personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and pupils' personal development is excellent.

40 The headteacher has redesigned the school timetable in order to ensure that PSHE is included along with the National Curriculum subjects. This reflects the school's commitment to providing the best it can for its pupils. Pupils study PSHE regularly, use exercise books and take this subject seriously. The subject manager has worked hard to produce a thorough scheme of work which guides teachers in what to teach and when. This scheme includes areas on healthy eating, sex education and drugs, thereby fulfilling statutory requirements. The school nurse, school's liaison police officer and local vicar play active supporting roles. An array of striking paintings in the shared area of the Year 3 classes depicts the theme of 'relationships', demonstrating vividly the way teachers are blending separate subjects together so that learning is relevant to pupils' experiences. The care in both observation and use of artistic techniques by the youngest pupils in the school reveals rare depth and sensitivity. Their work in art has greatly deepened their understanding and strengthened their work through discussion and writing in PSHE.

41 The headteacher presents personal achievement awards at a weekly assembly. Certificates carry individualised phrasing, personal to each recipient, praising pupils' efforts and attitudes as well as achievements. In one PSHE lesson observed, Year 6 pupils discussed '*what makes a person admirable*', with the teacher leading a very good discussion while pupils justified their choice of people through reference to personal characteristics. Teachers in Year 3 guide pupils in consideration of friendships, feelings and disabilities. As a result of teachers' sensitive leadership of circle times, pupils learn to express themselves confidently. They listen to others well and respect their views. Teachers praise and encourage pupils wherever possible, successfully raising their self-esteem.



### *Spiritual development*

42 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Teachers provide frequent opportunities in religious education, PSHE lessons and circle times for pupils to develop their own beliefs, attitudes and values while learning about those of others. The high quality of several poems, illustrations and paintings shows pupils' thoughtful response to teachers' sensitive presentations. Among the many examples from religious education lessons, Year 3 pupils' poems '*The clocks stopped*' and Year 4 pupils' designs for a reflective garden are particularly notable. The teacher's use of a candle and music in one Year 3 lesson created an excellent atmosphere for pupils to share personal thoughts about someone or something dear to them. Teachers also offer pupils occasional opportunity to express a sense of awe and wonder through art, using nature as inspiration during a focus on William Morris prints, for instance. Well-planned, daily acts of collective worship also make a positive contribution. Pupils reflect quietly together on the thought behind the themes and experience a sense of worship through enthusiastic singing, sometimes to the headteacher's guitar accompaniment.

### *Moral development*

43 Provision for moral development is excellent. Pupils eagerly subscribe to the five-point Cupernham Code displayed in all classrooms and at points throughout the school. Classes also compose their own rules and keep them. Staff provide excellent role models for pupils and many of the oldest pupils offer excellent models to the rest of the school in their roles as house captains, members of the 'Cupernham Crew', 'Green Team' and a range of monitoring roles. Pupils recognise that positive effort and behaviour is rewarded through the house point system. Teachers show that they expect nothing other than good behaviour and thereby create a culture in which inappropriate behaviour is very unusual. The school has sensible sanctions in place and involves parents appropriately in handling instances of unacceptable behaviour or where pupils have particular emotional and behavioural needs.

### *Social development*

44 Provision for pupils' social development is also excellent. Teachers involve pupils in all classes in helping with day-to-day organisation and care of resources. Lists of duties involve all pupils in some classes and rotas are in place in others. Two years ago, the school introduced the '*Cupernham Crew*', who assist in the organisation and supervision of play activities at lunchtime. The success of the school's involvement of pupils in taking on positions of responsibility owes much to the strong philosophy shared by the headteacher and deputy. They think carefully about the way they present opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of pride in their school community. They ensure that older pupils see their roles as a privilege and something to be worked for. Other Year 6 pupils act as house captains, art and sport captains, library, mathematics, laptop and assembly monitors. They make a considerable contribution to the sense of community, carrying out their roles responsibly.

45 The school also offers pupils a range of opportunities to develop independence and show initiative. For example, '*The world's largest cake sale*' on Comic Relief Day stemmed from a letter sent out to all parents on school headed notepaper and signed by the group of pupil organisers. Pupils are encouraged to raise money for a variety of good causes, most regularly for Barnardos. This helps them develop a sense of responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves. As well as encouraging collaboration through many paired and small group activities in lessons, staff support pupils in many additional activities at lunchtime and after school, in which they play active roles as members of a team. The school musical productions in particular offer an opportunity for everyone in the school to make a contribution. As the headteacher explained to governors, *such activities provide a vital opportunity for individual pupils to experience a sense of achievement and joy in the arts, as*

*well as bringing huge enrichment to the quality of school life'.*

#### *Cultural development*

46 Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school provides rich opportunities for pupils to learn about the traditions of Western cultures through work in history, geography, art, music and English. Within the last few months a theatre company has visited, involving pupils in a presentation of a *'Midsummer Night's Dream'* and a local artist has led Year 6 pupils in a workshop on watercolours. Teachers often use the work of classical musicians and artists as a stimulus for their work. One excellent example was the use of a painting of Jesus' baptism to 'freeze' time, so that pupils could write a poem *entitled 'When the clocks stopped'*. The school also uses more up-to-date Western culture, inviting a Liverpool Folk Singer and a member of Status Quo to perform and lead pupils in a workshop, for example.

47 At the last inspection, provision for pupils to develop an awareness of cultural diversity was a weakness. The school has fully addressed this. Through religious education, PSHE lessons and collective worship, staff ensure that pupils develop very good awareness of a variety of world cultures. Both assembly themes and PSHE lessons involve pupils in looking at prejudice, whether towards disability, race or creed. Teachers engage pupils in sharing views about current issues and they express their views on refugees, for example. The story of Jesse Owens' achievements in the 1936 Olympic Games captured pupils' interest in one assembly. Pupils reflected on the way he had committed his life to helping others, forgiving the wrongs done to him because of the colour of his skin. Displays throughout the school represent a variety of artistic traditions, currently featuring African and American Indian techniques, as well as ancient Celtic, Egyptian and Roman art. Schemes of work in dance and music also draw on a variety of cultural influences.

#### *Community links*

48 Cupernham regards itself as an important part of its local community and these links enhance the curriculum for pupils. As well as the sporting activities, there is a strong link with an international computer company and a number of their employees, who are also parents, help with studies in ICT on a regular basis. Local studies and visits enhance the curriculum. The school also reaches out to others in the community. The choir sings to local senior citizens at Christmas time, for example.

#### *Links with other schools and colleges*

49 There are good links with Cupernham Infants School, which shares the same campus. The headteachers meet on a regular basis and there are opportunities for joint training and staff meetings on occasions. There is good liaison at the point of transfer, which ensures a successful transition for the pupils. This has been carefully thought through and the reading scheme and associated records, for example, travel with pupils into the junior school. The school is an active member of the cluster of local schools, which operates at the level of headteacher and subject managers. This has been helpful in pooling ideas and resources. The school has a successful link with King Alfred's College.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

50 The school's care for pupils is very good and both procedures and practice have been developed further since the last inspection.

#### *Care for individuals*

51 Both the experienced and the recently appointed staff all know the pupils and their families very well. The excellent relationships between the staff and pupils ensure that the teachers are very approachable. This gives pupils and parents confidence to seek

information or advice. Parents find the staff very welcoming and helpful both in dealing with immediate school matters and those relating to wider aspects of family life and circumstances, such as responding to bereavement.

#### *Policies and procedures for managing behaviour*

52 The school has a very good set of policies for behaviour and preventing and managing bullying. Progressive sanctions are clearly stated and incidents recorded. There is emphasis on positive reinforcement with a series of awards for very good behaviour, responsibility and helpfulness in all areas of school life. All staff are very consistent in their approach to pupil management and there is close liaison between the deputy head and the lunchtime staff to ensure good sharing of information.

#### *Monitoring attendance*

53 The records in the attendance registers are transferred to a computer and this helps the staff to track any patterns of absences. The teachers, headteacher and administrative officer monitor attendance very closely and are given good support by the education welfare officer if the need arises. Late arrivals are recorded rigorously and any pupils arriving after 9.10am are recorded as absent for the session. This close monitoring of absences and arrivals helps to maintain the very good attendance and punctuality of pupils.

#### *Child Protection*

54 The headteacher is thoroughly trained in child protection procedures, which are underpinned by a very good, clear policy. He reports to the whole staff after updating courses to ensure that they are also fully aware of these procedures. There is good liaison with the local welfare and social services agencies.

#### *Health and safety*

55 The clear, comprehensive policies for health and safety, drugs awareness and child protection are reviewed regularly to take account of the latest guidelines from the local authority. All staff are familiar with these documents. The governors' health and safety representative works closely with the staff representative to ensure that the school meets its obligations fully. There are regular risk assessments and inspections, which are documented fully and the outcomes are reported to the governors regularly. There are very good procedures to handle medicines, accidents and illness.

#### *Monitoring pupils' personal development*

56 The substantial personal, social and health education programme provides good opportunities for staff to foster and monitor pupil development. Much attention is given to this. All staff monitor pupils' responses to opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and being involved in whole-school duties.

#### *Assessing and monitoring pupils' academic progress*

57 The school has made major improvements in its assessment procedures since the previous inspection. A clear policy is in place, which strives to minimise the pressure on teachers whilst ensuring that assessment measures are informative, useful and manageable.

58 There are regular assessment procedures to measure pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy, which begin in Year 3 and complement the information on attainment received from the feeder infants' school. Targets for all pupils are set and reviewed termly and predictions made as to attainment levels in English and mathematics at the age of 11. A sample of nine pupils in each age group of above average, average and below average abilities are tracked more intensively and samples of their work carefully retained to ensure

that all ability groups are being fully stretched. Science assessments take place regularly at the end of each topic. Whilst some teachers are already beginning to make assessments of foundation subjects in the revised 'Curriculum 2000', whole school systems are not yet generally in place for these.

59 Subject managers are very active in their assessment monitoring. They regularly sample pupils' workbooks across the school to ensure that standards are being maintained in their subject. Some subject managers have compiled useful collections of pupils' work. Where these have been annotated to clarify National Curriculum levels, they are an effective assessment guide for less experienced teachers.

60 Pupils with special educational needs are usually identified during their time in the infants' school. There is good special needs liaison between the infant and junior schools and between junior and secondary schools. This ensures full awareness across the phases about pupils with learning difficulties. It ensures continuity of support when pupils transfer from one to the other. Special needs pupils are carefully monitored and those who need individual education plans, including the two pupils with statements of special educational needs have appropriate narrow targets, tailored closely to pupils' learning abilities. They are reviewed regularly and parents, learning support assistants and teachers are fully involved in this process. The school provides well for its two pupils with statements of special educational needs. Very good quality one-to-one help is available for parts of the day for each pupil and they particularly benefit from this during literacy and numeracy lessons.

61 Very good use is made of the range of assessment information gathered by the school. Class teachers usually adapt individual learning aspects of lessons to match the abilities of higher attaining pupils as well as those with special educational needs. Assessment is also used to set pupils for numeracy in Years 5 and 6 and to group pupils for literacy throughout the school. The provision of additional help from learning support assistants and the special needs teacher are also based on assessment information. A small group of pupils identified as very high attainers receives extra mathematics teaching to ensure that they too are fully stretched.

62 The school has very effective procedures for ensuring that all pupils are assessed and challenged to do their best. The deputy headteacher and English, mathematics and science subject managers effectively track and monitor pupils' progress in these subjects to ensure that they are progressing well.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

### *Parents' views*

63 Almost all parents have very positive views about all features of the school. Questionnaire replies and comments at the meeting confirm that parents are very pleased with the quality of teaching and with the way the school is led and managed. They are confident that their children are making good progress and that the school is helping their children become more mature. They know that their children are expected to work hard in lessons. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with suggestions or complaints. Each of the above conclusions stems from 90 per cent or more positive responses to questions from 199 questionnaire replies. Inspection findings fully support these positive views.

64 In 29 per cent of replies, parents felt the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside school and in 26 per cent of replies they felt their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home. The inspection looked carefully into these areas, where a comparatively high minority of parents expressed concern.

65 The range of activities provided at lunchtime and after school is better than at most schools. The dissatisfaction appears to stem from comparison with the school's previously better provision. Prior to inspection notification, the school had already sent a letter to parents asking for support in maintaining or broadening the high level of activities offered and between 20 and 30 parents have replied positively. In the light of this excellent response, the school is reviewing the range of activities to be offered from September. One or two parents expressed concern about equality of opportunity for pupils to participate in additional activities. The school's positive stance on equality of access to the curriculum and its full range of activities is not in question. While numbers and age group restrictions clearly apply for various activities, all are open to boys and girls. The school supports pupils financially, where this is appropriate, for instrumental lessons for example. Confusion may arise with clubs run privately on the school premises, where the school's policies do not apply.

66 The inspection team looked at a representative sample of homework books from each year group and found that the range of homework set for each age group is appropriate. The quality of activities encouraged in mathematics in particular is excellent. There are many examples of valuable home learning activities where children can work together with their parents, explaining games and consolidating their understanding by sharing their knowledge. Systems for recording what is to be done and when it is to be handed in, however, are varied. This inconsistency probably lies behind the dissatisfaction expressed. The school is aware that systems vary and that some of the books are untidily kept. It is set to address this finding.

#### *Information to parents on children's progress and school life*

67 The large majority of parents are pleased with the information the school provides about how their children are getting on. A few parents (16 per cent) expressed some dissatisfaction. The evidence supports the majority view. Consultation meetings are held each term but if there are concerns at other times, parents are welcome to contact the school and make an appointment or teachers take the initiative to contact parents. Written annual reports on pupils' progress are very carefully composed and show clearly how well teachers know and care for the children in their class. Reports cover all subjects and include grades for behaviour and effort, as well as a full picture of what pupils understand in English, mathematics and science. The first item on the report is a section on personal development, reflecting the importance the school attaches to this aspect of its work. The school is currently revising its report format to ensure that all reports include a clear statement about whether the child's work is at, above or below national expectations. Teachers share year group targets in mathematics with parents and are beginning to use individual or group targets in English and mathematics to review pupils' progress and discuss targets for the following term at consultation evenings. The school experiences the same difficulty as many primary schools with setting arrangements, as parents see only the class teacher, but the school ensures that each mathematics set teacher conveys the necessary information to the class teacher. Where parents require clarification, they are able to make a further appointment. Overall, the school provides very good information to parents about their children's progress.

68 Information provided for parents is very good. The prospectus, governors' annual report, letters, newsletters and guidance books for parents are very informative and well presented. Year group leaders and class teachers send letters home from time to time informing parents about particular aspects of studies, such as visits, but there is no regular communication from school to home each term, to help parents support their children in the units of work being covered.

#### *Partnership with parents of children who have special educational needs*

69 Parents of pupils with special educational needs have regular, close contacts with the school, including two interviews with teachers annually to discuss their child's progress. Parents are also present at the formal annual reviews for pupils with statements of special need. In both cases parents sign their child's individual education plan in acknowledgement of the targets set for the future. Generally speaking, parents are not asked to commit themselves to regular support tasks as part of the plan, though many parents do so as a matter of course.

#### *Parental support*

70 Parents give very good support to the school in all areas of school life. All have signed up to the home-school contract, a jargon-free, concise document, which clearly outlines the school's and parents' commitment to supporting children's education. A good number of parents help regularly in classes. There is substantial support for the very active Parent Teacher Association, which raises considerable additional income for the school to enhance resources and the environment. Parents share the high expectations of staff and work closely together with the school on individual action plans to improve behaviour or learning. Most parents help their children regularly with reading and other homework. Many support their children's participation in additional activities, attending concerts and sporting events at the school and in the neighbourhood. They give very positive support to events organised by pupils for charity, such as the 'The World's Biggest Cake Sale' for Comic Relief. Enthusiastic applause from a full hall showed parents' appreciation of the combined efforts of staff and pupils during the school's four nightly performances of 'Oliver!'.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

#### *Inspirational leadership*

71 The headteacher, very well supported by the deputy head and senior staff, is an excellent and inspiring leader. There is a very clear educational direction for the work of the school, with pupils, staff and governors ascribing to the school's motto: 'Proud to achieve'.

#### *Very strong contribution from the senior management team*

72 In a sensitive and considered way the headteacher has enabled the staff to work together as a very effective team. This has been brought about by careful choice of new staff and a remodelling of the management structure. As a consequence of this, staff are very supportive of each other and senior teachers give a very strong lead to their colleagues. The governors have wisely budgeted to enable the deputy headteacher to work in school without a class responsibility. He has a clearly defined role, involving a good deal of work in classrooms. He works very closely with the headteacher and they complement each other very well.

#### *Time to think about education*

73 Particularly impressive features of the teamwork is the shared enthusiasm for tackling new initiatives, such as the recent drive to raise writing standards. The staff are interested in education, enjoy talking about educational principles and are continually trying to improve the provision for the pupils. Staff have time to reflect on what is successful in their work and what needs to be improved. This is made possible by providing regular release time for subject managers to monitor different aspects of their subject.

#### *Management of provision for pupils with special educational needs*

74 The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. The school governor assigned to special needs has a well-informed background as a former learning support assistant in the school. The roles and responsibilities of the special educational needs manager and the special needs teacher are clearly defined. Teachers receive very good support in preparing individual education plans and in the distribution of learning support assistants to where need is greatest. The current effective policy is to prioritise support in

the lower school. Good use is made of guidance from outside agencies in efforts to meet pupils' needs more fully. Learning support assistants are very committed. Some have attended special courses as training for their work. Their roles and line management are clearly defined.

#### *The governors' roles and responsibilities*

75 Governors make a very good contribution. The chair has a very effective partnership with the headteacher. He has a clear view of the particular strengths of individual governors and ensures that these are harnessed well in the best interests of the school. Governors are kept well informed of what is going on in the school by the headteacher's reports, information passed on at meetings and by visits to the school to look at particular aspects of work. The annual report to parents is very informative and all statutory requirements relating to governors' work and responsibilities are met.

#### *Planning for improvement*

76 The school has also made good improvement since the last inspection because it has planned carefully for development in particular areas. The way in which the school plans for the future has been restructured and the improvement plan now sets a very clear agenda for development. It is based on a clear identification of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

#### *Financial planning*

77 Strategic planning is of a very good quality and is the result of wide participation and consultation with all staff and governors. The process is driven by the strong senior management team with inputs from the subject managers and governing body committees. The action plan is used directly to inform financial planning. Planning for school improvement and financial planning extend over three years and there are strategies to manage any variations in income and pupil numbers. The annual income is spent fully and wisely for the benefit of the current pupils.

78 The principles of best value are applied very well in financial planning, review and control. There is wide consultation with all staff and governors in planning and evaluation. There is also a good level of challenge in seeking and securing substantial additional income from commercial organisations and the PTA. Their support is usually targeted well. For example, the parents underwrite the annual lease costs for the recently acquired computers. Local companies have provided substantial money for the development of the play areas and enhancement of the computing facilities. The governors review contracts regularly. For example, the school has secured better value for money by employing its own cleaners. The premises maintenance contract ensures proper competitive tendering for projects. The staff and governors are making increasing use of comparative primary school data to enable them to view expenditure and performance within a wider context.

#### *Financial administration*

79 The administration is managed very well by an experienced administrative officer and assistant, who are very competent and provide very good support to the whole school, working closely with the headteacher on budget development and attending all meetings of the finance and premises committees. Financial controls are very good and the accounts records are in good order. This high standard of financial management and control was confirmed by the most recent auditors' report in March 2000. The school completed the implementation of the recommended additional procedures by July 2000. Good use is made of ICT facilities to support the administration and teaching. For example, attendance information is analysed on a computer and this speeds up the tracking of absences and the annual DFEE returns. The school accounts properly for its expenditure of the Standards Fund and income for special educational needs. The school is giving very good value for money.

### *A team effort*

80 A very effective staff team, who are appropriately qualified and experienced, provides a wide range of expertise. The numbers of teachers and support staff are very well matched to the demands of the curriculum. They include a part-time librarian, in addition to class-based teachers and support assistants. Several visiting teachers give instrumental lessons each week. The effective administrative staff, the hard-working caretaker and his team, the kitchen staff and lunchtime supervisors, as well as the teaching and support staff all contribute very well to the life of the school.

81 The deputy head is responsible for organising staff training and induction and manages this very effectively. The school also welcomes students from King Alfred's College, Winchester, and the headteacher offers advice on their training course. Performance management procedures are in place and arrangements are to be reviewed shortly.

### *Accommodation*

82 The accommodation is very good overall. The school shares an eight-acre site with the infant school and provides a very good learning environment for all pupils. There are twelve classrooms on two floors, a hall, a library, a room for special educational needs, a small music room and a food technology area. Some alterations have been made to the original building and a courtyard has been incorporated to create an attractive, more easily accessible library, in order to promote a love of books and learning. Staff have worked hard to display pupils' work attractively and make the classrooms lively and interesting. The school has a planned programme of redecoration and work on the current project, a more effective computer suite, is scheduled to start in the summer holiday.

83 The grounds are a very important feature of the school and have been an inspiration to others. They have been extensively developed to maximise learning potential with a pond, a turf maze, an amphitheatre, and a heated swimming pool. A local blacksmith made the intricate weather vane, which stands to the front of the school, and some pupils, known as the '*Green Team*', help to care for the grounds and keep them tidy. An environmental fund was used to re-develop the playground with equipment, seating and appropriate markings for learning games.

### *Learning Resources*

84 There are good levels of resources in all subjects. They are particularly good in physical education, science, music, design and technology and ICT. Priority has been given to addressing the specific areas identified in the last inspection, as well as literacy and numeracy. In design and technology there are now resource boxes with detailed planning, guidance and examples of pupils' work for each theme covered. An extensive range of materials accompanies each topic, resulting in some imaginative and interesting work. Teachers take particular care to identify appropriate aspects of world cultures in planning resources for art, dance and music. Books focusing on a range of cultures are also used. A highlighted priority is the replacement of out-of-date computer equipment, to ensure eighty per cent of hardware is less than five years old. Computers in the special needs resource room have recently been updated but software designed specifically for use with special needs pupils is underdeveloped. Delegated responsibility for resource management to teachers with subject responsibilities has been a major development in the school.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

85 There are no significant areas for improvement in the school's work. The headteacher, staff and governors are continually monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and the priorities set for next year are entirely appropriate. They are related to work on the following areas:

- *'Proud to achieve'* objective;
- Provision for work in information and communication technology;
- Improving writing further, if results in 2001 statutory tests and assessments have not improved;
- Provision for more able pupils;
- Refining the teaching and learning policy.

The headteacher, staff and governors might like to consider the following minor areas for improvement for inclusion in their development plan:

- Consistency in the setting and monitoring of homework.  
(Reference paragraphs: 32 and 66)
- The use of ICT in other subjects.  
(Reference paragraphs: 90.103 and 129)
- Providing timely information about the work planned for each class.  
(Reference paragraph: 68))

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 67 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 38 |

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

|           |           |      |              |                |      |           |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
| 16%       | 36%       | 41%  | 7%           | 0%             | 0%   | 0%        |

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>   | Y3 – Y6      |
| Number of pupils on the school's roll  | 360          |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals        | 28           |
| <b>Special educational needs</b>   | Y3 – Y6      |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs                | 2            |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register          | 88           |
| <b>English as an additional language</b>                                     | No of pupils |
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language                      | 3            |
| <b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>                                | No of pupils |
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 13           |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 8            |

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
|                           | %   |
| School data               | 3.7 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

#### Unauthorised absence

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
|                           | %   |
| School data               | 0.5 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2000 | 42   | 44    | 86    |

| <b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b> |          | <b>English</b> | <b>Mathematics</b> | <b>Science</b> |
|--|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above    | Boys     | 34             | 33                 | 41             |
|  | Girls    | 37             | 37                 | 44             |
|  | Total    | 71             | 70                 | 85             |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above  | School   | 83 (85)        | 81 (92)            | 99 (99)        |
|  | National | 75 (70)        | 72 (69)            | 85 (78)        |

| <b>Teachers' Assessments</b>                |          | <b>English</b> | <b>Mathematics</b> | <b>Science</b> |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | 31             | 36                 | 35             |
|   | Girls    | 34             | 41                 | 39             |
|   | Total    | 65             | 77                 | 74             |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 76 (86)        | 90 (89)            | 86 (94)        |
|   | National | 70 (68)        | 72 (69)            | 79 (75)        |

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 0            |
| Black – African heritage        | 0            |
| Black – other                   | 2            |
| Indian                          | 0            |
| Pakistani                       | 0            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 1            |
| Chinese                         | 1            |
| White                           | 354          |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 1            |

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

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

|                              | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage   | 0            | 0         |
| Black – African heritage     | 0            | 0         |
| Black – other                | 0            | 0         |
| Indian                       | 0            | 0         |
| Pakistani                    | 0            | 0         |
| Bangladeshi                  | 0            | 0         |
| Chinese                      | 0            | 0         |
| White                        | 0            | 0         |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0            | 0         |

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 14.8 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 28   |
| Average class size                       | 30   |

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 8   |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 122 |

### ***Financial information***

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Financial year                             | 1999 - 2000 |
|  | £           |
| Total income                               | 571770      |
| Total expenditure                          | 595330      |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 1711        |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 31896       |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 8336        |

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 360 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 199 |

### Percentage of responses in each category

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 40             | 47            | 9                | 3                 | 1          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 40             | 53            | 6                | 1                 | 1          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 31             | 56            | 8                | 1                 | 5          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 22             | 50            | 23               | 3                 | 3          |
| The teaching is good.  | 45             | 50            | 3                | 1                 | 1          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 32             | 53            | 14               | 2                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 51             | 39            | 8                | 2                 | 1          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 55             | 41            | 3                | 0                 | 1          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 32             | 53            | 10               | 3                 | 3          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 45             | 47            | 4                | 1                 | 4          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 41             | 50            | 4                | 1                 | 5          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 23             | 39            | 23               | 6                 | 10         |

Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number and may therefore not total exactly 100

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **ENGLISH**

#### *Standards and pupils' achievements*

86 Standards in Year 6 national tests in 2000 were above average overall. Pupils did better in reading than in writing, which is similar to the national picture. At Cupernham, these pupils reached higher standards than their peers in similar schools.

87 The inspection found that this year standards are high in speaking and listening. Standards are again above average overall in Year 6, with pupils still doing better in reading than in writing. However there has been improvement in writing standards throughout the school as a result of the teachers' concerted efforts. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the very good support that they receive, both in lessons and when they are withdrawn for extra help. Higher attaining pupils also do very well because of the appropriate tasks set. The school does not analyse the progress of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds separately and so there is no evidence to indicate whether this group of pupils is doing as well or better than other pupils. In sessions seen, these pupils were achieving as well as their friends. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. High standards have been maintained well since the last inspection, with some improvement in writing.

#### *Speaking and listening:*

88 Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above average throughout the school. Pupils speak confidently to both adults and their friends, varying the style of their delivery to suit the listener. They listen very carefully to their teachers and each other and in many classes you could hear a pin drop during the teacher's introduction. They achieve very well because teachers plan varied opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. This is particularly evident in teachers' use of questioning, with many providing good opportunities for pupils to develop their thoughts. Pupils frequently work in pairs and negotiate well with their partners at these times. Drama also plays a significant part in enabling pupils to talk imaginatively. In two sessions seen, for example, pupils from Year 6 worked in small groups to make up adverts for products referred to in Allan Ahlberg's *'The Jolly Postman'*. They showed great inventiveness in their work and all groups worked very well together to produce some amusing thirty-second pieces.

#### *Reading:*

89 Most pupils starting in Year 3 read fluently, with a few needing extra support. Teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to enjoy personal reading and to share good quality texts with the class. Pupils are encouraged to take books home to read and this forms part of the homework for all pupils. All select books initially from a range that has been colour-coded to reflect interest and difficulty levels. Books are kept and displayed in several areas of the school and are easily accessible to all classes. The library houses most of the non-fiction texts and is an attractive and inviting place for pupils to work and browse. Most pupils are enthusiastic about reading and talk with excitement about their favourite books and authors. Many pupils recommend books to their friends. Annual events, like *'Book Week'* also help to fire pupils' enthusiasm, although there are few displays around the school to draw pupils' attention to particular books and authors, in order to attract the more reluctant readers. There is also very good teaching on the structure and use of non-fiction texts. In Year 5, for example, pupils were studying persuasive texts during the inspection and in the sessions seen brought their understanding of the structure of non-fiction texts to help them analyse the success of the persuasive writing they were studying. Teachers take care to use good quality writing both within the literacy hour and when they read stories or poems to their

class. This not only challenges pupils, but also indicates to them, by the time given to sharing books, that reading is a valuable and worthwhile activity.

*Writing:*

90 Writing has been a focus for school improvement this year and as a result of the concerted efforts of staff, standards are rising and are now above average. One of the reasons for this is the way in which teachers convey to pupils the excitement of writing. In Year 3, for example, pupils worked on *'Stranded'* by Andrew Collett to draft first person accounts. Teachers captured pupils' imaginations and they produced work of high quality, such as:

*'I watched the undulating body of the aquatic creature, carefully cutting its way through the water'*

and

*'It was like I was stuck in my own nightmare'.*

Another contributory factor to improvement is the use of good writing as models for pupils. In Year 6, for example, the pupils are looking at an apparently simple, but in reality very complex text, to use as a model for their own writing. They are studying Allan Ahlberg's *'The Jolly Postman'* and will draft their own books for younger readers. Re-drafting also features prominently in the teaching of writing and this helps pupils to act as writers and to reflect carefully on the effect of the written word. There are some opportunities for pupils to use computers to word-process their work, but this was not a feature of work during the inspection. Spelling is systematically taught. In Year 4, for example, pupils looked carefully at 'ee' and 'ea' sounds to help them to spell more accurately. Spelling logs have been piloted this year and pupils find them useful. The next step is to agree a consistent use of these books across the school. Pupils' handwriting is well formed and work is generally well presented, with this needing a little attention in one or two classes. By the time that they reach Year 6, most pupils write in a joined style.

*Teaching:*

91 The quality of teaching in literacy hours ranged from satisfactory to excellent in the lessons seen and is very good overall. This ensures that pupils achieve very well. There are several strengths that run through the teaching. One is the joint planning and preparation in year group teams. This means that teachers share good ideas and save time in the preparation of resources. Planning is soundly based on the national literacy strategy, but brought alive by interesting activities. Teachers also explain new work carefully and this helps pupils to move forward quickly. Teachers make the focus for the lesson clear to pupils at the start and this helps pupils to concentrate well on what is being taught. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of behaviour and working attitudes and as a result pupils try hard and concentrate well. Occasionally, in the introductory part of the lesson, teachers spend too long in talking to the pupils, with little opportunity for them to participate, except in answering questions. This means that sometimes pupils are not as involved as they might be. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons and sometimes withdrawn for extra help. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to this area.

*Planning for the future:*

92 The very effective and enthusiastic subject manager has a clear view of standards and provision through the school. She has a clear view of the next step in developing this area and has achieved a great deal since she has been appointed to this role.

## **MATHEMATICS**

### *Standards and pupils' achievements*

93 Standards at age eleven have risen in line with the national trend since the last inspection. Results have varied from year to year, with especially strong year groups in 1997 and 1999 achieving well above the national average. Last year's results were on the borderline between average and above average, with pupils doing better than those at similar schools. A greater proportion than average reached the expected level 4 and the higher level 5. Standards in the current Year 6 are above average. The school tracks pupils' progress very carefully and accurately through the use of termly assessments and annual optional national tests. Simple tracking sheets provide an efficient overview of each individual's and each year group's progress. The school is set to meet its appropriately challenging target for 81 per cent of pupils to achieve level 4 or higher this year. Pupils of all abilities are currently achieving very well throughout the school as a result of a very well planned curriculum and very good teaching. The school has made good improvement in its provision for mathematics and maintained good standards in the subject.

94 Many pupils in Year 3 are making excellent progress as a result of teachers' insistence that they explain their understanding. Pupils have rapid recall of addition and subtraction to 20. They explain that they use such strategies as taking 5 and one more away when subtracting 6 from 15 and that they know  $7-4=3$  because  $3+4=7$ . They know that it is easier to add a smaller number to a larger number and use 'partitioning' to add numbers up to 100. In one lesson, pupils showed their fascination and enjoyment of numbers when suggesting a variety of ways of adding a sequence of small numbers. Throughout these explanations, the teacher maintained everyone's enthusiasm with warm praise, showing her own enthusiasm. Pupils in Year 3 know the relationship between multiplication and division, they estimate and measure length, capacity and weight and investigate the properties of shapes.

95 Pupils in Year 4 take this wide range of mathematical activities a step further. In mental and oral sessions they give the other number of a pair to make 100, holding up digit cards in swift response to the teacher's number given. Pupils of high and average attainment successfully add hundreds, tens and units, using pencil and paper methods to carry a ten or a hundred where necessary. They use this strategy in adding pounds and pence, for example, learning about the use of the decimal point. In some lessons, especially where there is no additional assistant, pupils with special educational needs struggle, even though the teachers provide additional practical resources. Again in Year 4, pupils show enthusiasm for mathematics, motivated by their teachers' imaginative presentation of tasks. Groups in one class, defined as deadly dividers, magical multipliers and super subtracters, excitedly set to work adding numbers to two decimal points because they were ordering three courses from a Chinese menu or two from a pizza parlour.

96 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are each in three ability sets for mathematics. Pupils throughout the two year groups work at the tasks defined by the numeracy strategy, but at speeds and levels appropriate to their understanding. Year 5 pupils show a good understanding of the use of the four rules of number and place value. Higher attainers find fractions and percentages of numbers, discovering what is half of 86.6 metres or a fifth of £19.20 for example. Pupils of average ability understand and use the terms average, mode and median, converting fractions to decimal and percentages. Pupils in the lower set also make very good progress as they cover a variety of strategies for calculating, using the four rules. All pupils gain a good understanding of rounding and estimation. They understand compass points, area and angles, with higher attainers working on supplementary and opposite angles.

97 Year 6 pupils show good understanding of ratios and proportions. They fully understand equivalent fractions and percentages, explaining that  $\frac{4}{25}$ ths is equal to 16 per cent for example. Pupils make good use of data to create graphs and interpret them. They understand how to use co-ordinates and work with negative numbers on axes. All pupils understand the way nets relate to three-dimensional shapes and a small group of the highest



attainers tackle work well beyond the scope of most eleven-year-olds, investigating formulae to construct a polygon with as many sides as possible on a 4x4 dotted grid for example. During the inspection, all three sets investigated the relation of the diameter to the circumference of a circle, discovering formulae such as  $\pi D$ . Again, teachers presented lessons imaginatively, with pupils in the lowest set highly motivated by measuring the diameter and circumference of the grass maze in the school grounds to test their theory.

*The quality of teaching and subject management*

98 Mathematics is never boring at Cupernham. Under the experienced leadership of the subject manager, teachers use imaginative ruses to enliven their lessons. Investigations are presented as fascinating mysteries and mental skills are developed through briskly paced, snappy sessions. Pupils learn successfully because they catch their teachers' enthusiasm and respond to the high levels of encouragement and praise given. Of 14 lessons observed, six were excellent, three very good, four good and one satisfactory. It is very unusual to find six excellent lessons across the whole curriculum, let alone in one subject. The high quality of teaching is testimony to the leadership of the subject manager, whose own enthusiasm and knowledge of how to make mathematics interesting to children underpins the consistently high quality of provision. All teachers have benefited from her sensitive and insightful monitoring.

99 Strengths are apparent in all aspects of teaching. Teachers plan thoroughly in year groups, following the numeracy strategy, but adapting it well to suit their classes according to their professional judgement. Their preparation and use of resources result in very well organised lessons, with no time wasted. In every lesson, the teacher places a card bearing the learning focus on the whiteboard and draws pupils' attention to it. Mental and oral sessions are almost always brisk and retain pupils' 100 per cent attention and effort. Teachers consistently set an appropriate time for group activities and draw pupils together to review what has been achieved and highlight main teaching points in the plenary. Teachers assess helpfully while pupils work, particularly while they are explaining their understanding. They ensure that pupils record their work carefully in exercise books and that worksheets are chosen to promote good learning. All recorded work is regularly marked and during the following lesson teachers draw pupils' attention to points arising from marking.

100 In several lessons, part of the concluding session was set aside to explain an activity to be pursued at home, either consolidating or developing the concepts being learned. The school has clearly given much thought to the home learning activities to be set. They make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly as many of them are mathematical games, requiring pupils to spend time with an adult or another member of the family 'talking maths'.

101 Factors contributing to the large proportion of very high quality lessons are teachers' clear enthusiasm for the subject and their ability to involve pupils in fully explaining their understanding to their teachers and to each other. Another important factor in several of the best lessons was the deployment of support staff and their interaction with pupils who would otherwise have found it difficult to keep up. In one Year 3 lesson, the teacher led the whole class in a very successful session adding two-digit numbers such as 49 and 12 by partitioning the tens and units. The assistant was seated very carefully amidst a group of lower attainers, whispering quietly through the same processes and using a small whiteboard to mirror the teacher's messages and pupils' replies. In this lesson, as in many, the warm and encouraging relationships apparent between adults and pupils underpinned highly positive attitudes towards the subject. In many lessons, pupils were on the edge of their seats in their eagerness to contribute.

102 Overall, teaching is characterised by very high expectations. Teachers know their

pupils' capabilities and show that they expect the best of them. It is clear that they enjoy teaching. The pupils thrive on the atmosphere of encouragement and praise.

#### *Areas for development*

103 Amidst such a strong picture, two areas for improvement are apparent. Firstly, in a few lessons, notably in Year 4, pupils with special educational needs struggled when tackling tasks too difficult to master without a high level of adult support. Secondly, as the school has recognised, a good proportion of pupils in each year group show very high attainment. Although they are already well challenged and enjoy their mathematics, there is still room to extend pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 further. The subject manager is currently re-scheduling the various mathematical elements to be covered each year so that they coincide with relevant contexts for the application of numeracy in other subjects. This imaginative development, together with increased use of ICT to support mathematics, will still further strengthen provision and raise standards in an already very well planned subject.

## **SCIENCE**

#### *Standards and pupils' achievements*

104 National test results showed that in May 2000 a majority of the then eleven-year-old pupils attained well above average results in science. Pupils did much better than their peers in similar schools. Amongst this year's group of pupils there are more with special educational needs so although standards are above average, they are not quite as high as in the previous school year.

105 No science lessons were timetabled for Year 6 during the week of the inspection, which took place after pupils had completed their national assessment tests. Evidence was gathered from an analysis of pupils' previous work, from curriculum planning and discussion with a sample group of nine pupils of varying abilities. By the time most pupils reach the age of eleven they are achieving standards which are above the national average. A significant minority of pupils do better than this and they are working to standards which are well above average. A few pupils with special educational needs do not meet national standards, although they are achieving well within their abilities. Standards have been maintained at an above average level since the previous inspection.

#### *Teaching and learning*

106 There is a close match between the good quality of teaching and pupils' good achievement. Teachers provide a full and stimulating curriculum, to which pupils are very responsive. They plan challenging, hands-on experiences of good quality, which make a major contribution to the high standards of pupils' learning. Pupils have a secure understanding of basic scientific skills such as observation, interpretation and prediction. They have a good understanding too of the essential elements of fair testing. For example, in an investigation of how materials change, pupils in Year 5 explore this scientific idea confidently to complete and discuss fully their research on evaporation. Teachers' own confident knowledge of science enables them to keep lessons moving quickly. Particularly good use is made of plenary time towards the end of lessons. During these, pupils articulate and evaluate their own learning and share their ideas and discoveries with their peers. For example, pupils in Year 4 explored with interest how living things adapt to their environments and are interdependent. They scientifically classified plants and animals as 'producers' or 'users' and positioned each appropriately as they devised possible food chains. Findings were then shared confidently with the whole class. Teachers make their lessons enjoyable for their pupils and this heightens interest and learning. In Year 3 pupils took pleasure in exploring how sound is produced and transmitted and articulated their understanding fully and accurately. They investigated the sound transmission of materials by burying or immersing alarm clocks in such things as sand, water, wood and metal. Findings were carefully

calibrated and reproduced in block graph form for easier interpretation. This is but one example of how effectively mathematics is used throughout the science curriculum to explain experimental findings. Its frequent use makes a major contribution to the high standards achieved in science generally.

#### *Pupils' attitudes*

107 Attitudes towards science are very good. Pupils show high levels of interest, concentration and persistence in their science learning. Just as teachers work effectively in year teams carefully planning interesting lessons, most pupils have the same team spirit when working in collaborative groups.

#### *The role of the subject manager*

108 The subject manager makes a significant contribution to standards. Her influence is felt not only in the high standards achieved in her year group but also across the school. She prepares a subject action plan annually and has compiled a comprehensive folder of the best of pupils' work in year groups, some of which is annotated for National Curriculum levels. This provides useful guidance to new teachers in particular as to the high expectations the school sets itself for achievement in science. Resources for science are very good. They are well organised and are used regularly and effectively during lessons to help achieve learning aims.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

#### *Standards and pupils' achievements*

109 Standards are at least average by the age of eleven. Pupils make sound progress and achieve particularly well in Years 3 and 4, where the standard of work seen was high for the age of the pupils. This broadly replicates the picture found at the last inspection. Currently, higher standards in Years 3 and 4 also stem from the improved planning for the subject introduced into the lower school. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged and generally achieve well. Those with particular talents have the opportunity to develop their skills and sometimes produce work of high quality.

#### *Improvements since the last inspection*

110 There have been clear improvements in provision since the last inspection. There is a very detailed and helpful planning framework in place, which ensures that pupils' knowledge and skills develop from year to year. This has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching, which is now much more consistent across the school. There are now more examples of the work of different artists around the school. For example, in Years 3 and 4 the environmental artist Andy Galsworthy and Lucy Casson provide a stimulus for some of the work. ICT continues to be used very effectively in art and there are very good links with other subjects. Although sketchbooks are beginning to be used effectively as a resource, particularly at the lower end of the school, this area remains under-developed.

#### *Teaching and learning*

111 The quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4 is very good, which results in pleasing progress for the pupils. Teachers prepare very well for lessons and make the purpose of activities clear to pupils. There is an appropriate emphasis on creativity and experimentation in the work. For example, in a Year 3 lesson pupils learnt that paint can be resisted using various techniques. They experimented with paper and wax crayons before moving onto fabric. The teacher used questions effectively to deepen pupils' understanding and to reflect on the difficulties they had experienced. In a Year 4 lesson on printing techniques, the teacher provided a range of interesting resources and clearly described the possibilities of the task. She made very good links to other subjects, such as the language of shape in mathematics and the importance of patterns in some religious observance. Pupils were free to experiment

with creative ideas and developed confidence and insights as a result. Very little teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6. In one session in Year 6 pupils were creating abstract designs using the inspiration from the work of William Morris and from nature. The teacher recapped briefly and clearly on the task and offered effective feedback throughout. As a result, some pupils produced work of high quality. The session was enhanced by a learning support assistant, who also provided very good feedback and support to pupils. The lesson was shared with ICT and half the class were working on the adjacent landing. This meant that the teacher did not have as much time to develop and reinforce pupils' artistic skills. Evidence of good quality work in clay and paper-and-paste models was also seen. Pupils clearly enjoy art. They respond to the teaching with enthusiasm, concentrate well and strive to improve their work

#### *Subject management*

112 The subject is extremely well led by an active and enthusiastic subject manager. The profile of art has been raised throughout the school, with more emphasis on exploration and creativity. The subject manager has produced a very detailed scheme of work, which draws to some extent on national guidelines, but emphasises the school's context and the progression of skills. The school enhances its provision by inviting local artists such as Daphne Ellman to work with the pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

#### *Standards and pupils' achievements*

113 Design and technology lessons alternate with music each half term. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection but evidence was also drawn from discussions with the subject manager and pupils, examples of pupils' work, a review of planning, resources and the very comprehensive subject files. Displays of work around the school show the good standard pupils are achieving. The scheme of work is mainly based on national guidelines, supported by the '*Technology in a Box*' initiative. However, it was only implemented in September, with the result that pupils have not yet had the opportunity to cover the range of topics planned. This is the reason why their standards are only in line, rather than above national expectations at the age of eleven.

#### *Improvement since the last inspection*

114 Every aspect of the subject has improved since the last inspection, when the oldest pupils were not achieving the standard expected at the end of Year 6. Planning has improved and the range of activities now fully covers the requirements of the National Curriculum. The quality of teaching is very good, as is the quality of the pupils' finished products, which show imagination and attention to detail. The timetable is well structured to allow adequate time for pupils to handle construction kits and investigate everyday objects, by taking them apart for example, in a recent project on torches.

#### *Teaching and learning*

115 The quality of teaching in lessons overall is very good. In a lesson seen, where the younger pupils explored different containers for money, the class teacher gave a humorous demonstration showing how she had made three examples of containers, and tried to improve her original ideas. The pupils shared the teacher's pleasure and were eager to try out their own designs with newspaper. The lesson also owed its success to well-planned preparation work. This had taken place in an earlier session, where pupils had examined money containers in detail, looking at seams and seam allowances and fastenings, and had practised sewing techniques for joining. Resources were well prepared with clear instructions on handling pins and staplers safely. Pupils had to remember for whom they were designing, the shape, the size and the aesthetics of the finished article. Their imaginative ideas included a small kite, a football and an envelope wallet for credit cards.

Pupils showed great consideration for each other as they shared the equipment sensibly.

116 In one session, some of the older pupils joined and combined materials to produce chairs. All designs were drawn to scale, a quarter the size of an average pupil in their class. Using card and split pins to joint limbs, they carefully made stick men to the same scale to confirm the dimensions of their chairs. The classroom was well organised, pupils used tools with care and they measured accurately to ensure all chair legs were the same length. Pupils in parallel classes have followed the same approach. These pupils have also evaluated a variety of chairs – an inflatable chair, a deck chair and a dining room chair. An exciting lesson with the oldest pupils showed the importance of considering aesthetics when designing. They evaluated an unusual range of artefacts, considering form and function. Very well prepared resources and good organisation enabled pupils to move sensibly round the classroom discussing quietly the materials used and the purpose of each item. Their final task was to design an interesting stapler. Among their very imaginative ideas was the Leaning Tower of Pisa, a crocodile with an open mouth for the paper, and a bird with an open beak.

#### *Subject management*

117 The subject manager's main aim has been to raise the profile of the subject, to remove the fear of technology from teachers' minds, and to develop the skills taught and used through the school. He has placed a greater emphasis on developing design skills. Current projects require pupils to consider the needs of the user and to generate designs after they have investigated products and developed skills. The subject manager has integrated ICT into the units of work. He has monitored planning and samples of work, focusing on quality rather than quantity, and standards are improving as a result. He offers very good support to the teachers and has ensured that there is a wide range of materials to accompany each project.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

#### *Standards and pupils' achievements*

118 The school has successfully maintained above average standards since the previous inspection. A significant minority of pupils in Year 6 are attaining well above average in their geographical enquiry skills and in their knowledge and understanding of sustainable development. Pupils with special educational needs receive full access to a curriculum well matched to their abilities and benefit from practical, meaningful approaches to the subject.

#### *Teaching and learning*

119 Teaching of geography is very good. Teachers are knowledgeable and their co-operative planning in most year groups ensures consistency of high quality learning in all classes. Well-chosen resources make a strong impact on the depth of learning in lessons. For example, pupils have continuing access to a wide variety of maps of differing scales and contents throughout the school. They create their own reference keys and confidently use those compiled by map publishers. Very good use is made of the local area. Pupils investigate the impact of human intervention on the surrounding community, for example, identifying services in the area as well as industrial and leisure facilities. The use of accurate geographical vocabulary is taught systematically. Activities tap pupils' creativity as well as their extending knowledge. For example, in a project on the River Rhine, pupils prepared informative travel brochures to stimulate tourism. There are many very good examples of how pupils use their knowledge gained in other subjects. Pupils' compass skills and their detailed knowledge of the geography of the school grounds are well developed through orienteering in physical education. Mathematical skills are used regularly and effectively, for example in understanding map scales or comparing weather features such as rainfall in London with that of St. Lucia in the Caribbean. In their final year, all pupils benefit from

excellent specialist geography teaching. This enables pupils to make very good strides in their learning and prepares them well for life in their secondary schools.

120 There is an enthusiastic atmosphere in geography lessons. Their interesting content and appropriately levelled tasks meet pupils' needs so well that they are keen to work hard, maintain good levels of concentration and work productively in collaborative groups.

#### *Subject management*

121 There is a newly appointed teacher for the temporary management of geography. She manages a well-organised and researched subject with a carefully planned scheme of work. The latter effectively combines the national scheme with the school's own curriculum needs. Good use is made of field visits to regional areas of geographical relevance such as the local River Test and the quarry at Kimbridge. Year 6 pupils can participate in a residential visit to the Isle of Wight during their last term in the school.

## **HISTORY**

#### *Standards and pupils' achievements*

122 Pupils' attainment in knowledge, skills and understanding of history has been maintained at a satisfactory level since the previous inspection. At the age of eleven standards generally are comparable with those achieved nationally, though some pupils do better than this. Pupils with special educational needs benefit well from the school's hands-on approach to history.

#### *Teaching and learning*

123 The quality of teaching is good overall and ensures pupils learn effectively. Some very good teaching was also observed. Teachers work creatively to make learning interesting and meaningful for pupils and they are particularly successful in enabling the past to come to life for them. Through rich, well-planned experiences and carefully chosen resources, pupils know that a wide variety of evidence about historical periods can be gathered. In a Year 3 session, pupils were very responsive to an exciting role-play activity as they mimicked the roles of archaeologists and delicately brushed sand aside in deep trays in a 'search' for buried Ancient Egyptian artefacts. As part of their work about the effects of invasion and settlement on British history, other pupils have had the opportunity to dress as Romans for the day. Pupils make perceptive, informed comparisons between rich and poor in their investigations of life in Tudor times. They begin to interpret the politics of history as they observe and describe differences in the authentic clothing of rich and poor children as worn by two members of the class. Year 6 pupils studying the Victorian period use fascinating early photographs to accurately compare the use of buildings in the locality of Romsey in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in present times.

124 Teachers plan together, pooling ideas, knowledge and expertise. In this way they ensure their pupils in every class, in every year group, have access to all they offer. In this respect they are fine role models for their pupils in co-operative working. Pupils in their turn have very good attitudes towards their history lessons. They work patiently and sensibly together, listening and learning well from the ideas of both teachers and peers.

#### *Subject management*

125 The subject manager for history has infectious enthusiasm for the subject. She has negotiated with staff a well thought out scheme of work, which clearly informs teachers what to teach and when. It also secures the continuing development of historical skills from ages 7 to 11. She ensures that the school takes full advantage of the invaluable historical loans available to schools in Hampshire, in providing good resources to illuminate the subject for pupils. For similar reasons the school makes regular use of museums and historical sites in

the region. For example, pupils studying The Tudor dynasty were fascinated by a recent visit to the museum which houses 'The Mary Rose' and all the artefacts found with it.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

### *Standards and pupils' achievements*

126 This is an area of considerable strength in the school and pupils' standards are well above average by the age of eleven. This is a further improvement on the already high standards found at the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils are confident in the use of ICT and achieve well. By the time they leave the school pupils search the Internet and download information. Pupils also develop a good understanding of simulation. They understand that they are representations of 'real life' and work with different simulations involving videos and spreadsheets for example. They share information through multi-media presentations, using digital photography and scanners and are confident in the use of electronic mail. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils who are gifted and talented have many opportunities to enhance their ICT skills to support their work in other subjects. Pupils with special needs are also confident in the use of ICT and use it to support their learning very effectively. For example, in the independent part of a Year 6 literacy lesson pupils with SEN used a CD ROM very effectively to enhance their learning.

### *Improvement since the last inspection*

127 Despite the good picture painted at the last inspection the school has not rested on its laurels. The determination to improve still further is indicated by the inclusion of ICT as a major strand in the improvement plan. The quality of teaching has improved significantly as have the already good levels of resourcing. The ratio of pupils to computers is now 8:1, which is much better than is often found in primary schools. This is supported by a very good range of software. The weakness relating to resources for pupils with special educational needs, identified in the last inspection, has now been fully addressed and the already good levels of resourcing have been improved still further.

### *Teaching and learning*

128 The teaching of ICT is of high quality throughout the school. Teachers are now confident and communicate their enthusiasm to pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy working with computers and regard them as a natural part of their armoury. Teachers are very clear about the purpose of activities and recap well on previous learning. They give pupils opportunities to experiment with software. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on symmetry and enlargement using 'Colour Magic', pupils used the software to create shapes. They reduced and enlarged them successfully and talked confidently about the software. In a Year 6 lesson linked to multi-media presentations on St. Lucia, the teacher supported pupils very effectively whilst encouraging independence and creativity, introducing new ideas in a manageable way. As a result, pupils saw a range of possibilities in creating their multi-media presentations. Teachers also encourage pupils to review what they have done. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on simulation using videos, good questioning resulted in pupils having a clear understanding of the nature, benefits and limitations of simulations.

### *Subject management*

129 The very experienced subject management team has done much, with excellent results, to raise the profile of ICT and the confidence of staff. There is a detailed scheme of work in place, which draws largely on national guidelines. There are plans to develop a suite of computers at the lower end of the school and to replicate the mini-suite on the Year 6 landing on the Year 5 landing using laptops. These have proved to be very effective in Year 6. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their skills in a computer club and Year 6 pupils often come in before school to continue their work. The school is committed to ensuring that ICT is fully integrated into the curriculum. In many subjects this has been largely successful although

ICT is not yet used as fully as it might be to support work in literacy and numeracy sessions.

## **MUSIC**

### *Standards and pupils' achievements*

130 Pupils make good progress in music and standards attained at the age of eleven are average overall. A very comprehensive scheme of work, which includes the new requirements, is in place. It has been designed to link with the school's planned programme of topic work, but also has a particular focus on other cultures where appropriate. Music lessons alternate with technology lessons each half term, so no music lessons were seen with Year 6. Judgements have been based on the three lessons that were seen during the inspection, discussions with the subject manager and pupils, and also planning, displays of work and attendance at assembly and singing practice.

### *Improvement since the last inspection*

131 All issues from the last inspection have been addressed. Staff confidence in music has improved considerably as a result of a policy which fosters the enjoyment of music through attitudes and teaching methods, and the guidance and resources now in place. Teachers use their knowledge of musical terms to discuss ostinati, timbre and pulse and to ensure pupils also understand the meaning of these terms. Good use is made of the authority's music service and pupils have opportunities to learn brass, strings, percussion and woodwind instruments. Choir and recorder groups meet during the week. Resources have been extended and include a wide range of instruments, as well as those from other cultures.

### *Teaching and learning*

132 Although no lessons were seen with the youngest pupils, a display shows their response to the painting '*Tiger in a Tropical Storm*' by Henri Rousseau. This was the starting point for a sound picture. Work for a second display was in response to '*The elephant and the aviary*' from Saint Saens' '*Carnival of the Animals*', where pupils used symbols focusing on colour and shape in a variety of media, paint, pastels and oils, to represent the music they had heard. Teaching was satisfactory in the lesson seen with pupils in Year 4. They improvised body rhythms for a song learned the previous week. They were then introduced to an African song from Zaire, *Bomba Lao*, but the pace was slow and there was insufficient time to complete the whole of the planned session. The lesson was also less successful than it might otherwise have been because the pupils had only just finished a singing practice in the hall.

133 The quality of teaching was good in both lessons with pupils in Year 5. Pupils discussed time signatures and were able to identify and clap 6/8 rhythms. They remembered the terms 'timbre' and 'duration' and explained their meanings. Good questioning to assess prior knowledge, well-prepared resources and opportunities to practise and improve contributed to the good learning. Pupils were also given a clear focus when they listened to music and compared their own recording of '*Greensleeves*' with a Tudor version. They were encouraged to be critical of the performances, using a musical vocabulary, and they identified different dynamics, timbre, pulse and accent. They have a good knowledge of musical terms.

134 The oldest pupils discussed in detail their response to music with some unusual instruments used to create a sound picture of space. They identified the four sections of the symphony orchestra and could name the instruments used in each. They also knew a wide range of musical terms and had listened to a variety of both classical and popular music. They were eager to explain that the song, '*Proud*' sung by Heather Small at the Olympics, had been an inspiration for them too. All pupils thoroughly enjoyed the singing practice, where a focus on technique and the excellent guitar accompaniment ensured tuneful singing



and attention to tempo and dynamics.

#### *Subject management*

135 The new subject manager has been determined to raise staff confidence and enjoyment in music. This she has achieved by compiling a very effective scheme of work, using the local authority's guidance on skills progression and planning, and by offering good support in planning lessons and using the resources. Standards are now beginning to rise. The school is fortunate to have a room dedicated to music, where a wide range of instruments is stored. Pupils will have an opportunity to demonstrate their skills in a summer concert later in the term. This alternates with a production, which last year was a performance of '*Oliver!*', enjoyed by all.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

#### *Standards and pupils' achievements*

136 Standards are above average overall. Only gymnastics activities were seen in Years 5 and 6 and from these it is evident that pupils attain average standards by the age of eleven. Pupils turn, roll, twist, balance and move with appropriate levels of skill on the floor and apparatus. They link these movements together in sequences, effectively working towards a finished performance, although the quality of control and precision in movements could be better for some pupils. Standards in games and dance are above average. Pupils develop good skills in striking, throwing and catching and use these in various games situations. In dance they create and perform dramatic movements in response to music and other stimuli. Pupils achieve well in swimming and almost all swim at least 25 metres before they leave the school. Most do considerably better than that. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Most pupils achieve well in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs do well in all activities and those with particular talents have scope to excel both within lessons and in the many additional opportunities provided by the school.

#### *Improvement since the last inspection*

137 The good picture painted at the last inspection has been improved upon still further. The already high standards and good quality of teaching have been matched and bettered. A very detailed scheme of work, which draws on national guidelines and the schools' own work, is now in place ensuring that pupils acquire and develop skills from year to year. The scheme links well to other subjects. For example, the orienteering work supports mapping skills in the geography curriculum. The very good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs has been maintained and the extensive grounds are used fully for games and outdoor and adventurous activities.

#### *Teaching and learning*

138 The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and sometimes very good, ensuring that pupils achieve well. Very detailed planning supports the less confident teachers and ensures a consistency of approach. As a result, pupils acquire and develop skills effectively from year to year in all aspects of the subject. Teachers are very good role models for the children in terms of their dress and approach. As a result, pupils respond well. They clearly enjoy physical activities and behave very well. All lessons begin with an appropriate warm-up, although occasionally this is insufficient to prepare pupils properly for lessons. Teachers recap on previous learning and demonstrate skills effectively. They encourage pupils to improve their performance both individually and collectively, for example, in a Year 6 gymnastics lesson the teacher emphasised quality and poise in sequences of movements. As a result, pupils co-operated effectively, made clear progress and took a pride in their finished performance. Teachers provide good feedback to pupils, which

encourages them to improve their skills. They also give opportunities for pupils to give feedback to one another, although this aspect of the work could be developed in some lessons. In games activities, teachers encourage pupils to consider team play and tactics. As a result, pupils develop an understanding of what it is to be a member of a team. This was evident in cricket lessons in Years 3 and 4. A minor weakness in some lessons is that pupils spend too much time watching and listening and not enough in vigorous activity. All teachers emphasise health and safety and, as a result, pupils handle equipment and move safely and sensibly.

#### *Subject management*

139 The subject is extremely well led by an enthusiastic subject manager who has worked hard to improve provision still further from an already strong position. A comprehensive scheme of work is in place and pupils receive a very broad experience, including orienteering in the grounds and swimming in the school's own pool. The subject manager provides support to colleagues and has been using video to monitor and improve dance in the school. The very good lunchtime and after-school clubs include gymnastics, country dancing, football, cross-country, netball, cricket and rounders. The school makes good use of coaching from parents and sporting clubs such as Hampshire CCC and Southampton FC. The school takes part in a variety of local competitions with considerable success in recent times.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

#### *Standards and pupils' achievements*

140 Standards at age 11 more than meet the requirements of the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is above that expected for pupils of this age. This is shown by the quality of pupils' thought in discussion and in the written work and illustrations of several Year 6 pupils. The written and illustrated work of pupils in Years 3 and 4 is of a very high standard and is very carefully presented in books, which provide an excellent record of pupils' learning and their thoughts. Boys and girls in all year groups complete an appropriate amount of recorded work, although there are gaps in the work collected by some pupils in Years 5 and 6, where work becomes scattered partly in exercise books and partly on sheets of paper. Higher attainers do particularly well when challenged to produce literary and artistic responses. Pupils with special educational needs are given good opportunity to express themselves well in discussions and receive warm support to complete their recorded work. Overall, pupils of all abilities achieve very well throughout the school, showing interest in lessons, contributing thoughtfully in discussions and showing pride in their recorded work.

#### *Strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education*

141 The high quality of teaching and learning stems from an excellent scheme of work, based on the local Agreed Syllabus, but with an added, distinctive Cupernham flavour. The series of themes covered by each year group clearly reflect the school's ethos of helping pupils take pride in their work by making learning relevant and interesting. The subject makes a very positive contribution to all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. It offers pupils many opportunities to reflect on their own values and those of others. Through the programme of visits, to a synagogue and Hindu Temple for example, teachers put across to pupils the reverence people of other faiths have for their place of worship, symbols and sacred writings. Through themes such as the creation of a reflective garden in Year 4, they offer pupils the opportunity to reflect personally on the nature of a person or a pet very dear to them. In their garden design, pupils use symbols to portray aspects of their chosen one's character and give particular significance to an area, which will contain a poem composed as a dedication.

### *Examples of the high quality of work*

142 The quality of work in Year 3 and much in Year 4 is outstanding. Pupils show clear understanding in their illustrated comparisons of a Hindu temple and a Christian church. They express a sense of awe at seeing the size of scrolls in the ark and listening to the Rabbi reading a prayer during their synagogue visit. Work completed during a topic on 'Angels' shows exceptional depth of thought and expression. Pupils convey their own images of what angels are at the outset of the topic. Later, following consideration of the effect of angel messages on their recipients in Matthew's Gospel, pupils imagine themselves in the position of receiving an angelic message. This example is typical of the school's imaginative approach to teaching religious education and the quality of the resulting work fully rewards teachers' creative presentation. Further excellent, imaginatively presented opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills appear in '*Dear Editor, I disagree with indignant of Jerusalem*', '*The clock stops*', a poem 'freezing' the moment of Jesus' baptism, and '*What is this and who uses it?*', an introduction to work on the rosary. Pupils also apply their artistic skills imaginatively, using a range of colours to represent the wonder of the New Testament transfiguration story in Year 3, for instance, and creating a painted frieze depicting events in the life of Moses in Year 4.

143 Pupils in Year 5 have studied creation myths before using their own thoughts to compose original myths. A display shows very high quality presentation and handwriting, revealing the continued pride pupils have in their work in this year group. Year 5 class discussions also show a mature understanding, as pupils compare initiation ceremonies of baptism and confirmation with the Hindu rite of the sacred thread. Pupils in Year 6 compare the different versions of the Christmas and Easter stories in the gospel narratives, adopting the role of critical theologian. In the Year 6 lesson observed, pupils discussed the ten commandments as a class, before considering in pairs which were most relevant to today and trying to formulate all-embracing rules for the new millennium. 'Respect the world and living things around you' was one of the suggestions. By the time they are 11, pupils have a wide knowledge of the customs and beliefs of Christianity and other religions. They have had plenty of experience of discovering the values and beliefs of others and forming their own. They have used many ways of expressing their understanding, particularly through art, writing and discussion.

### *The quality of teaching*

144 The quality of teaching is very good overall. Of five lessons observed, one was excellent, two very good and two good. Work samples from pupils throughout the school show pupils learning very successfully and, with very few exceptions (among only the oldest pupils), taking pride in the way they present their work. Pupils are attentive and confident in putting forward their own ideas. Teachers show that they value the content of their lessons, setting out clear objectives and using imaginative approaches to stimulate original thoughts and creative responses from pupils. The attention to detail shown in a Year 3 lesson was typical of this. The teacher organised the class to sit in a circle, lit a candle and played an excerpt of some music that meant a lot to her. She then encouraged pupils to listen to each other's comments, responding sensitively to their descriptions of things and people dear to them.

145 Positive, trusting relationships between teacher and pupils were a feature in all lessons. Without them, the sensitive lesson on designing a reflective garden, coming towards the end of a sequence of lessons on this theme, could not have happened. Pupils' readiness to share their thoughts about people and pets and express them through symbols and the written word was a testimony to the outstanding quality of the teaching. Teachers make excellent use of visits and artefacts to stimulate pupils' thinking. Their planning owes a lot to the original ideas of the subject manager, but teachers make the ideas their own. They convey a sense of mystery and excitement as they lead pupils to search for meaning and

discover the variety of ways people throughout the world have interpreted and expressed their faith. Lessons are thoroughly well prepared and very well organised, with the pace of explanations, discussions and recording well suited to the purpose of each lesson.

*Next steps*

146 The subject manager has recently left and the school is aware of the need to continue the plan of action begun. The scheme of work and imaginative approaches to lesson planning are in place. Exercise books, already in use in Years 3 and 4, are to continue into Years 5 and 6, so that pupils will have a full record of their work throughout their junior years. The school is now set to establish a manageable assessment system in line with the local syllabus recommendations.