

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FREEGROUNDS INFANT SCHOOL**

Hedge End, Southampton

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115918

Headteacher: Mrs Angela Featherstone

Reporting inspector: Mr Fred Riches  
23235

Dates of inspection: 22 - 24 April 2002

Inspection number: 194865

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hobb Lane Hedge End Southampton Hampshire
Postcode:	SO30 0GG
Telephone number:	01489 782075
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gill Wright
Date of previous inspection:	9 June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This community infant school has 257 children on roll aged four to seven, with an even number of boys and girls. It is fully subscribed. The number on roll has varied little since the last inspection. There are 88 children in the reception year, all attending full time. All of the children live in Hedge End, West End or Botley, mainly in owner-occupied housing. Just under six per cent are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. Most families have their cultural roots in the British Isles, with six children coming from other ethnic backgrounds, of whom three speak English as an additional language. Children's attainment on entry to the reception classes is above average overall. Just over 16 per cent of the children are on the school's register of special educational need, which is below average. Two children have a statement of special educational need.

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

This is a good school. By the end of Year 2 standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Teaching and leadership are good. The headteacher and staff work very effectively as a team, with the result that standards are improving and children of all abilities enjoy school, have very positive attitudes to their work and achieve well. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science at age seven are well above average.
- Children's attitudes and behaviour are excellent.
- Teaching is good overall and very good in reception classes, promoting successful achievement by children of all abilities.
- The headteacher has established a strong sense of teamwork, where all staff contribute to raising standards and improving the quality of education provided.
- Arrangements for assessment, care, guidance and personal development are very good.

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

- Consistency and care in the way children's recorded work in several subjects is presented, collated and kept .

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

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

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in 1997. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science, already good at that time, have improved further. The quality of teaching has also improved, with a much higher proportion of very good and excellent teaching. The school has brought about these improvements by analysing its strengths and weaknesses and giving thoughtful attention to areas that need development. The issues related to expectations and planning in mathematics and science and to the development of manageable assessment systems have been fully addressed. The school has improved the collation and storage of children's work in English, mathematics and science, but needs to give further thought to the way work is presented and kept in some other subjects. The improvements have put the school in a good position to move forward even further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	B	A	A	B
Writing	B	B	A	B
Mathematics	C	D	A	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Similar schools in the above table are those with under 8 per cent of children eligible for free school meals.

Standards at age 7 in 2001 were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and children's performance was better than that of their peers in similar schools. Standards were above average in science and in line with those of similar schools. Higher attainers did particularly well in science, with 60 per cent reaching the higher level 3, putting the school's performance in the top five per cent nationally. The proportion of children reaching the higher level 3 was also well above average in reading and mathematics. Overall, girls did better than boys last year, but the difference between boys' and girls' attainment is not as great as nationally. The school has made good improvement overall since the last inspection, when standards were judged well above average in reading, but average in writing, mathematics and science. In writing, this improvement stems from a particular drive by the whole school over the last two years. In mathematics, the dramatic improvement from 2000 to 2001 stems from the school's recognition of weaknesses in the subject and a rigorous focus on improving the teaching of numeracy skills and mental strategies.

The inspection found standards in the current Year 2 to be well above average in all aspects of English, mathematics and science. The school is on course to meet the challenging literacy and numeracy targets it has set for this summer. Children with special educational needs, those who are gifted and talented, those from ethnic minorities and those learning English as an additional language, all achieve well during Years 1 and 2. Handwriting, a weakness at the last inspection, is now a strength. While the school has put its main emphasis, successfully, on improving standards in English, mathematics and science, standards seen in the broader curriculum are not so high. In a few displays, in design and technology and art and design, standards are above average, almost matching those in English, mathematics and science. However, children's work in design and technology, geography, history and religious education, kept in folders, and in sessions observed in information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education show average standards in Years 1 and 2. Children in the reception year achieve very well in all areas of learning. Most meet the national early learning goals for all six areas of learning before the end of their reception year and many are working at early stages of the National Curriculum before they enter Year 1.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Children enjoy school. They are eager to learn, work hard in lessons and concentrate fully in order to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Children behave very well in all classes and at playtimes and lunchtimes, outside and around the school. One temporary, one-day exclusion during the past year was an appropriate use of this sanction.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children work very well independently and collaboratively when required. They carry out responsibilities sensibly and relate very well to each other and staff.
Attendance	Excellent. Very high.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	Very good	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 teaching is good and this ensures that pupils achieve well. In the 22 lessons seen, teaching was excellent in two, very good in ten, good in six and satisfactory in the remaining four. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Several strengths are evident. These include the very positive relationships established by teachers and assistants with the children, excellent teamwork, including careful joint planning between staff in the parallel classes in each year group, and high expectations. Teaching in reception classes is of very good quality overall. Six of the eight lessons observed were very good. Children recognise that their teachers care about them as individuals. They enjoy responding thoughtfully and actively to the imaginative teaching. Other strengths evident throughout the school, but particularly notable in reception lessons, include excellent deployment of support staff and use of resources, rigorous planning and organisation and expressive explanation, instruction and questioning. This high quality teaching produces highly motivated children who develop extremely positive attitudes to learning.

All aspects of English are taught very well. The focus on improving the teaching of writing over the past two years is evident in the quality and range of children's work. Teaching is good in mathematics, with some excellent features. Teachers use the literacy and numeracy strategies effectively. Children of all abilities are challenged and supported very well as a result of joint planning in each year group, together with careful assessment and use of targets. Teachers plan work well in all subjects to meet the differing needs of all pupils, including higher attainers, those with special educational needs, the few from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language. They ensure that boys and girls are equally involved in discussions and all pursuits. There has also been improvement in the teaching of ICT, where, at the time of the last inspection, resources were limited and teachers' confidence was still developing. Improvements in teaching stem from staff training and systematic monitoring of teaching, especially in writing and mathematics. Amid many strengths, one area for attention is consistency in the way children's work in design and technology, geography, history, ICT and religious education is presented and collated, so that they can take a pride in their recorded work in these subjects. Another minor area for improvement is the pace of mental and oral sessions in some numeracy lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good foundation stage curriculum. Satisfactory breadth and balance for Key Stage 1, with very good arrangements for English and mathematics, but a few subjects have a low profile outside specific project weeks. Meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The co-ordinator manages this aspect well. Class teachers and assistants give high quality support through shared use of well-focused planning for individuals.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Class teachers and assistants give good support and the school receives sound advice from other agencies.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school uses a range of effective strategies to promote children's spiritual, moral and social development very well. The school's improvement plan includes a focus on cultural development, which is at present satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Child protection, health and safety and first aid procedures in place. Teachers, assistants and supervisors care

very well for children. Assessment systems used very effectively.
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## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Teamwork, under the headteacher's democratic leadership, is a strength of the school. English, mathematics and foundation stage co-ordinators give a very strong lead in these areas. Management systems are mainly very good, but monitoring of work in the broader curriculum needs attention.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors are well informed and give good support under the chair's conscientious guidance. More experienced governors act as mentors to help induct new members. The school meets all statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. Very good for English, mathematics and science; satisfactory for the broader curriculum. The school sets agreed, manageable priorities in its improvement planning following a full consultation process.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school uses its budget well to support agreed spending priorities. It applies the principles of best value very well, especially in comparing its achievement with similar schools and its costs with all Hampshire schools.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

*Parents returned 130 questionnaires and 20 parents attended the pre-inspection meeting.*

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like school;</li> <li>• Teaching is good;</li> <li>• Children are expected to do their best and they make good progress;</li> <li>• The school helps children become mature and responsible and behaviour is good;</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed and the headteacher and staff are approachable;</li> <li>• Children get the right amount of homework;</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents; they feel well informed about children's progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents felt they would like more activities outside school hours;</li> <li>• A very small number of parents raised individual concerns about children's behaviour and information from the school;</li> <li>• A few parents at the meeting and in questionnaire replies were concerned about the effect of staff changes on their children's education.</li> </ul>

The inspection supports wholeheartedly the positive views expressed by parents about all aspects of the school's work. The questionnaire received 90 per cent or more favourable responses to all but one of the twelve statements. Replying to the statement about the range of activities outside lessons, 27 per cent felt the school does not provide a wide range of after-school clubs, but the majority of this 27 per cent made it clear in additional comments that they are happy with the current arrangements. The inspection finds the school's arrangements satisfactory. The few individual concerns should be taken to the headteacher or class teacher, as the school is very ready to listen to these and respond as necessary. The inspection finds behaviour excellent and the school provides clear and regular information. The school has managed its staffing changes well, making successful permanent and temporary appointments and ensuring that year group leaders support those new to the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Standards in English, mathematics and science at age seven are well above average**

##### ***Statistical evidence***

###### *National standard assessments in 2001*

1 Children's performance in reading, writing and mathematics tests at age seven in 2001 was well above the national average. It was better than that of schools with children from similar socio-economic backgrounds (those with fewer than eight per cent of children eligible for free school meals). The proportion of children reaching the expected level 2 or above in science was above the national average and in line with that of similar schools.

###### *The trend in standards since the last inspection*

2 Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection in 1997. Results over the past five years show the school's performance rising faster than the national trend. There has been very good improvement in writing since 1997, when standards were in line with the national average. Standards in reading were already well above average in 1997 and have been maintained. Since 1999, standards in both reading and writing have risen faster than nationally. Standards in mathematics have improved from average at the time of the last inspection to well above in 2001. However, the pattern has been inconsistent in this subject, with standards average in 1999 and below average in 2000. The following year came a dramatic rise to well above average. Science standards were average at the last inspection. Improvements following those findings have been maintained since 1999, with a very high proportion attaining the higher level 3 each year since.

###### *How well the school has extended gifted and talented children*

3 Statistics from 2001 show that the school has extended higher attainers very successfully in science, successfully in reading and mathematics, and satisfactorily in writing:

- the proportion of seven-year-olds reaching the higher level 3 in reading was well above the national average and above that of similar schools;
- the proportion reaching level 3 in writing was above the national average and in line with similar schools;
- the proportion reaching level 3 in mathematics was well above the national average and above that of similar schools;
- the proportion reaching level 3 in science (60 per cent) was in the top five per cent of schools nationally and well above that of similar schools.

###### *How well the school has challenged children of broadly average ability*

4 Judged by the proportion of children reaching level 2B or higher in reading (91 per cent), writing (85 per cent) and maths (91 per cent), the school has challenged these pupils very effectively. These proportions are all well above the national average. The proportion in reading and writing is well above the average in similar schools. The proportion in mathematics is above that of similar schools.

###### *How well the school has supported children of lower ability or with special educational needs*

5 In reading, writing and mathematics tests in 2001, a very small proportion of children attained level 1 or level 2C. All of these children were on the school's register of special educational need, received additional support and made good progress towards the targets set for them. The school and county tracking systems show that the school has supported children of all abilities well over the past two years. Children achieve at least as high as predicted from their baseline test results on entry to the school and often higher.

*Is there any difference in the way the school supports and challenges boys and girls?*

6 National statistical data show no significant difference in any particular year over the past five years in reading, writing or mathematics. Over the past three years, both boys' and girls' performance in these tests has been above average overall. Closer analysis by the school, using data provided by the local education authority about 14 similar local schools, showed some gender difference in results in writing in 2001. While the few most able Year 2 children in 2001 were boys; most children of above average ability were girls and most of below average ability were boys. The school has therefore made boys' writing a main focus for improvement over the current academic year.

### ***Evidence from inspection observations***

7 Inspection findings confirm that the school is maintaining the well above average standards achieved in 2001 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Children of all abilities, including the few from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning English as an additional language, are achieving well throughout the school in all aspects of English, mathematics and science. Children in Year 2 are on course to meet the targets the school has set for reading, writing and mathematics.

### ***Foundation Stage***

8 Children in the reception classes make a very good start to their school life in all areas of learning. They achieve very well in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in personal, social and emotional development, the areas that received particular focus during the inspection. By the end of the reception year almost all are already working at early stages of the National Curriculum in English and mathematics. This maintains the standards found at the last inspection in language and literacy and shows considerable improvement in mathematical development. Children recognise initial sounds, build three-letter words by combining the sounds, form letters neatly and express their thoughts and ideas well in early attempts at writing. They use their own phonetic spelling very successfully, to create humorous rhymes and retell well-known stories for instance. Children are developing their mathematical knowledge and skills equally successfully. They use dice and board games to consolidate their understanding of counting on and counting back, using numbers up to 100. They recognise numbers to ten and most to twenty. They understand the concepts of adding, taking away and sharing, using numbers mainly up to ten, but sometimes higher.

### ***Key Stage 1***

9 Children in Years 1 and 2 continue to achieve well in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. A high proportion attain above the standard expected for their age. This is because teachers challenge them to do their best and set work matched to each group's ability. Children with special educational needs are very well supported and make very good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The few pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those speaking English as an additional language, make progress equally as well as their peers, as a result of their class teachers' warm encouragement and careful deployment of assistance.

10 By the time they are seven, many children show very good speaking and listening skills, responding thoughtfully to questions asked and expressing themselves fluently. Children involved in the dramatised assembly version of the boy who cried wolf too often showed high ability, for instance, as they responded spontaneously in role to explain assertively to the boy, played by the acting deputy headteacher, the error of his ways. Children show very good reading and comprehension skills, scanning texts quickly for information. They use well-developed ICT research skills to log onto the correct programs independently and access information about minibests in order to report back to the class. Children throughout Years 1 and 2 write for a very wide range of purposes and enjoy their writing. Teachers ensure that children's writing has a purpose and often make writing fun, by encouraging children to see the humour in rhyme for example, and by using popular authors' writing as a stimulus for their work.

Among the wide range of writing seen, the Year 1 children's accounts of the recent Music Week and their Hedge End Brochures contain several fine examples of information writing. Year 2 children have also written informatively, creating a set of clear instructions for using the Roamer and Dazzle Plus, for example, and giving a full report on their visit to The Victory, as well as some information researched about the life of Nelson. They develop good story-writing skills, planning carefully the setting, characters and events. They make very good use of adjectives, describing Little Red Riding Hood, for instance, with 'deep, dark, glittery eyes'. Many higher attainers use speech marks and paragraphs well in their story-writing, as in the three stories of 'The Magician's Egg' seen. Children's enjoyment of popular authors and their use of their knowledge of books as a stimulus to enjoy playing humorously with rhyme is exemplified well in their versions of well-known tales and several limerick-style poems.

11 In mathematics, a high proportion of children in Year 2 work competently beyond the expectations for their age at level 3 of the National Curriculum. They solve mathematical problems, working out the cost of various toppings in an ice-cream parlour and how much change they will receive. They use a range of mental strategies to help them, adding, counting in groups, multiplying and subtracting, as they explain how they reach their solutions.

12 In science, children show very good levels of knowledge and understanding in each of the topics they have covered. They use their writing and numeracy skills well in their recording in science books, which are mainly very well presented. Year 2 children understand what is needed to create a fair test, varying just one factor as they set up tests for forces for example. They know what is required for seeds to grow, testing the importance of water, soil and sunlight as they grow cress from seed. Higher attainers understand the effects of a break in a circuit as they learn about flashing Christmas Tree lights.

### ***Reasons for the school's success***

13 Writing is a strength because of a strong school focus on this area over the past few years. After the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, the school soon recognised that its results followed the national picture, showing reading standards much stronger than writing. The resultant focus on staff training and the development of children's planning of their writing and thought about content, as well as improved handwriting and spelling skills, have brought about this improvement. The current very good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is continuing to raise standards in reading and writing.

14 The school's recognition of a fall in results in mathematics in 1999 and 2000 stimulated close focus on the use of the National Numeracy strategy. The mathematics co-ordinator is giving a very strong lead to ensure that the rise in standards, instigated by the previous co-ordinator last year, is maintained.

15 Joint planning is highly effective in both subjects, with year group leaders and subject co-ordinators making effective use of their expertise to support other staff, especially those new to the school.

16 A major reason behind the school's success in all aspects of English, mathematics and science is the use of target setting based on careful assessment. Measurable targets for attainment in English and mathematics in summer 2002 (from the school's strategic plan) include:

- increasing the proportion of children reaching level 3 in reading to 45 per cent;
- increasing the proportion of boys reaching level 2A in reading to 75 per cent;
- increasing the proportion of children reaching level 2B in writing to 85 per cent;
- exceeding national average in spelling at both levels 2 & 3;
- increasing the proportion of children reaching level 3 in mathematics to 40 per cent.

17 In summary, the school's success in raising standards, especially in writing and mathematics, two of the focal areas for this inspection, is due to:

- careful analysis of strengths and weaknesses in test results;
- setting English and mathematics as priorities for improvement;
- focused training of teachers and assistants;
- effective implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies;
- high expectations agreed by the whole staff;
- a close focus on teaching quality under the headteacher's and subject co-ordinators' leadership;
- very good joint planning;
- very good use of assessment and target setting.

### **Children's attitudes and behaviour are excellent**

18 Children throughout the school enjoy their learning and want to do their best for their teachers. They enjoy responding thoughtfully and actively to the imaginative teaching. They settle calmly and quickly at the start of the day and after each break. They know the class routines and are eager to take turns with daily responsibilities, such as taking the register. Each week, two children in each year group enjoy special responsibilities. They take turns as members of the 'friendship squad', making sure that no-one feels lonely at break times. The children also help organise the use of outdoor equipment at break times, taking it out and collecting it in.

19 Behaviour during morning, lunchtime and afternoon breaks is excellent. During the inspection, on warm spring days, children made full use of the extensive field. There was a distinct absence of aggression in their play, with many children playing together in groups, using balls and other play equipment, and others chatting as they sat or strolled. Children benefit from good levels of supervision and lunchtime supervisors have positive relationships with children, talking happily with them and joining in games.

20 In lessons, children know how their teachers expect them to behave. They know what to do at the start of the day and during the various daily routines. They listen extremely attentively to their teachers' instructions and explanations when working as a whole class. They concentrate fully when working independently or as a group. They act sensibly when moving around the class or school. Teachers have established an atmosphere of trust, so that, for example, a group of Year 2 children can move from a mobile classroom to the library area, taking a set of instructions with them, and independently access the micropedia on the computers.

21 The excellent attitudes and behaviour are evident throughout the school. Children's enthusiasm for school is clear in the reception classes, where the teachers' planning for their personal, social and emotional development ensures that they feel happy and secure. Children aged four and five choose and use equipment carefully. They know where things belong and return books and resources to the right place. They keep their classrooms and cloakrooms tidy. They show good levels of independence in changing for physical education and very mature attitudes, as they learn the rules of a game on the playground for instance, and take turns, bowling the ball, being goalie, scorer and retriever. Children in these classes and in Years 1 and 2 know that their teachers care for them individually. They use 'bubbles', for example, to jot their name if there is anything worrying them that they want to talk to a teacher about. Children in all classes show confidence, as they volunteer ideas readily in discussion. They thrive on the praise given by their teachers, who build each child's self-esteem by welcoming their contributions and ensuring that all have the opportunity to take part.

### **Teaching is good overall and very good in reception classes, promoting successful achievement by children of all abilities**

22 Teaching is of very good quality in the reception year and of good quality overall in Years 1 and 2. Children throughout the school enjoy their learning and want to do their best for their teachers. They enjoy responding thoughtfully and actively to the imaginative teaching. Of the 22 lessons seen, two were excellent, ten very good, six good and four satisfactory. In the three reception classes, six of the eight lessons seen were very good, one good and one satisfactory. In the six Key Stage 1 classes, two lessons were excellent, four very good, five good and three satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. At the last inspection, while just over half of the lessons seen were of good quality or better, just eight per cent were very good and nine per cent were unsatisfactory. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

### *Strengths*

23 Teachers have high expectations and together with classroom assistants they establish very positive relationships with the children. Teachers and assistants use praise effectively to build children's self-esteem and promoting a confident approach to work. This was evident in classes throughout the school, but particularly effective in several reception class lessons, where children beamed as they responded to the expressive praise given by their teachers.

24 Teachers plan as teams, ensuring equality of opportunity for children in each year group. The joint year group planning also allows teachers to share their individual subject strengths. Both planning and preparation are of high quality throughout the school. This ensures a clear focus to learning in all lessons. Another outcome of the shared planning is the choice of imaginative activities, as teachers review what goes well, rejecting less successful approaches and building on what goes well.

25 Teaching in reception classes is of very good quality overall. In several effective lessons, teachers presented children with opportunities to enjoy their learning through active pursuits. Role play, in the poodle parlour and animal hospital during the inspection, encourages children to collaborate with each other and develop their speaking and listening skills. In one phonics session, the teacher took children outside to play a matching game, so that the reading of three-letter words became a fun activity as the child with the word sought the partner with the picture. The reception teachers have planned the daily curriculum thoughtfully, so that sessions are short and children do not spend too long sitting listening. When teachers do address children as a class, they use their voices, facial expression and body language very well to ensure that all children listen and through their questioning and the way they welcome answers, they involve children in active listening and comment. This high quality teaching produces highly motivated children who develop extremely positive attitudes to learning during their first year at school.

26 Another strength, particularly notable in reception classes, but also in Years 1 and 2 where assistants are present, is the excellent deployment of support staff. Assistants are fully briefed and readily lead small groups, following the careful planning and guidance of the teacher. The school has used funds effectively to train support staff and teaching staff have planned thoroughly together to ensure that assistants play an effective role. For example, during the teacher's input at the start of literacy and numeracy lessons, assistants are usefully deployed either supporting children with special educational needs, sitting alongside them and ensuring they follow the points under discussion, or jotting observational assessments about various children's contributions during discussion. Parents and other volunteers also make a useful contribution in lessons, again under the thoughtful guidance of teachers. One or two parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt unsure about working in class with children of below average ability, feeling they did not have the knowledge or experience to be effective. The acting deputy headteacher has organised three training sessions for parents and volunteers during the past year and these have been well received. The school is eager to ensure that all volunteers working in school are comfortable in their roles. The year leaders and headteacher are in an

excellent position to support volunteers informally because of the school's thorough joint planning system.

27 A further strength of teaching is teachers' organisation. Classrooms are orderly, rooms and corridors are attractively displayed with a range of children's work from all curriculum subjects. Resources are well organised and accessible to children. All teachers have developed rotas and systems that ensure children are involved in daily routine organisation and management of resources. Children also learn successfully because they have been a part of establishing the rules by which the school and each class functions. These are displayed and children received recognition of their positive attitudes and successful effort through the regular award of stickers. The headteacher issues individual and class certificates, which show the school's recognition of children's excellent behaviour, following visits to the local church and to HMS Victory, for instance.

28 All aspects of English are taught very well. Of the literacy hours or parts of literacy hours observed in Years 1 and 2, two lessons were very good and two good. The success of the focus on writing shows in the quality and range of children's work in classes throughout the school. Teachers use well-chosen texts, which hold the children's interest, are appropriate for their age and ability and offer good opportunities to highlight the associated teaching points. Year 2 children thoroughly enjoyed reading 'Christine Crump' and suggesting their own additional flavours of crisps to be crunched in one alliterative session. In a Year 1 lesson, 'The Mungle Flap' offered an exciting opportunity to look at settings, as the teacher caught the children's imaginations through her questions about the lively use of vocabulary in the text. Again, children read very expressively, especially when the door 'shut', with an exclamation mark. When the teacher asked why they had read the word 'shut' so loudly, a child explained that the exclamation mark meant that it was as if it 'slammed'. Teachers' use of questioning and their careful choice of group tasks well matched to pupils' abilities the brisk pace of lessons lead to successful involvement of children. Children of all abilities learn effectively because their teachers involve them in interesting activities that help move their understanding on. As in all other lessons, class teachers' and assistants' relationships with children are excellent. Class control is therefore fully secure and no time is wasted. Lessons proceed briskly and children organise themselves very quickly and quietly when they move to and from group tasks. They concentrate fully both in whole class sessions and when working in groups, either independently or under the guidance of the teacher or assistant.

29 Teachers' planning is of high quality in all subjects. Each year group plans to meet the needs of all pupils. Gifted and talented children are identified and challenged. Children with special educational needs receive very good support, both from the co-ordinator, who has a very good overview and sees the children regularly to keep a check on their progress, and from the class teachers and assistants, who ensure that these children focus on the targets in their individual education plans. The few children from minority ethnic groups, mainly learning English as an additional language, receive positive, warm support from teachers and assistants. Teachers ensure that boys and girls are equally involved in discussions and all pursuits, especially as boys' attainment was found in the comparison with similar Hampshire schools, to be not as good as girls' last year.

30 Teaching is good in mathematics, with some excellent features. Of the six lessons observed in Years 1 and 2, two were excellent, one very good, one good and two satisfactory. What distinguished the excellent lessons, was the pace and focus of the teaching. The introductory mental and oral sessions were brisk and challenging, with questions aimed appropriately at children of different abilities. The main teaching points were made clear at the outset of the lessons and activities chosen were very well suited to enable children to build their understanding of the concepts and skills. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher encouraged children to explain clearly a variety of strategies to count on from one amount of money to another, as when giving change. Children of all abilities were highly motivated and fully involved, as the teacher

accepted and congratulated each child on his or her individual method, underlining the message that there are a number of ways to tackle mathematical problems. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher briskly reviewed the learning from the previous two lessons in the third of a series of five, before explaining each group task clearly and gaining one hundred per cent effort from all as they worked out number patterns on a number line.

31 In both literacy and numeracy lessons, children of all abilities are challenged and supported very well as a result of joint planning in each year group, together with careful assessment and use of group and individual targets. There has also been improvement in the teaching of ICT since the last inspection, when limited resources and a lack of teacher confidence left room for improvement.

32 Improvements in teaching quality throughout the school stem from well-organised staff training, following careful identification of annual priorities for action. The systematic monitoring of teaching, especially in writing, mathematics, and the foundation stage curriculum, by subject co-ordinators, the headteacher and the local education authority's advisory and inspection service, has also contributed very positively to improvements. Teachers are confident about reflecting on their strengths and on the few areas for improvement.

#### *Two areas for attention*

33 Amid the many strengths, one major and one minor area are identified for attention:

- The first constitutes part of the main issue to be addressed and is covered in a later section. This concerns consistency among teachers in each year group about their expectations of the way children's work is presented and the way teachers and/or children will collate and keep their work. At present there is inconsistency between classes and work in some subjects is kept in a way that does not encourage children to take a pride in it.
- The other area is the pace of mental and oral sessions in some numeracy lessons. In contrast to the brisk and successful sessions observed in the excellent lessons, the mental and oral elements of some numeracy lessons lasted too long and lacked urgency. The children therefore did not benefit from the sense of a swift challenge of their mental mathematical skills. In these sessions, time was wasted, as questioning was slow and children were ready to move on to group activities long before they were allowed to. This results partly from the use of a full hour for some numeracy lessons, but mainly from the teachers' lack of attention to the need to be brisk and focused.

#### **The headteacher has established a strong sense of teamwork, where all staff, especially those with management responsibilities, contribute to raising standards and improving the quality of education provided**

34 Very good teamwork lies at the heart of the school's success. The headteacher has developed successful structures to enable staff to share in planning and assessment and has delegated leadership of year group teams very successfully. Alongside the strong year group teams, the school's management systems include delegated responsibility for the development and monitoring of National Curriculum subjects and religious education. One teacher also has overall management of the development of the foundation stage curriculum in the three reception classes. Inspectors interviewed literacy and mathematics co-ordinators and the foundation stage co-ordinator. The leadership and management skills exercised by staff in these positions have resulted in focused work on improving planning and on focused training for teachers on improving teaching. The staff concerned liaise very closely with local education authority inspectors, who give very helpful support and advice. The teachers have shared responsibility with the headteacher and deputy for monitoring the quality of planning and the quality of teaching for each subject and for the six areas of learning for children in the reception year. These processes have contributed effectively to improving the quality of teaching and to raising standards.

35 The Foundation Stage co-ordinator's file shows excellent progress in the development of curriculum planning for each of the six areas of learning and very good development of assessment. A carefully prepared file of photographic evidence shows examples of children working in all areas of learning alongside an explanation of the activity linked to the statements in the new foundation stage curriculum. This offers a very useful resource for further developing the effective partnership with parents. A series of letters explaining the curriculum and involving parents in supporting their children shows good emphasis by staff on working together with parents. Well-organised assessment information shows the progress of children from entry to the school through to the end of the reception year, with predictions for each child's attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at age seven.

36 The headteacher has managed the school improvement planning process very successfully. All staff and governors are involved in deciding priorities. The headteacher also canvasses the views of parents. As a result, the school sets a manageable number of areas for focus each year and has efficient procedures for maintaining the quality of educational provision and reviewing standards in other subjects. The school's success in raising standards in English and mathematics is a direct result of the agreed focus on areas for improvement over the past two years.

37 While maintaining these standards, the school will now be able to review more closely the balance of time given to all National Curriculum subjects in Years 1 and 2. During the current year, staff have used blocks of time to organise focused projects based on design and technology, geography and history. These have been very successful in motivating children and developing their skills and knowledge within the duration of the project, usually one or two weeks. The school has yet to review the success of this approach in building children's knowledge, understanding and skills, so that they retain and develop these further in the different projects during their time in the school. Teachers have also organised successful, short, focused project weeks in other subjects, which do have regular weekly timetable slots. One example of this is the recent music week, which was very effective in raising children's awareness of instruments and experience of listening to and making music. Visiting musicians during the week included parents and professionals from Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and older pupils from the neighbouring junior and local secondary school. Children had clearly understood and enjoyed the way Prokofiev uses various instruments to portray characters and moods in 'Peter and the Wolf'.

38 The children's recorded work currently on display is of good quality. Work on previous projects in design and technology, geography and history, together with work in religious education and odd pieces from other subjects, is kept in folders. This work is mainly not of such high quality as that seen in English, mathematics and science books. Standards of children's presentation vary from class to class within each year group and teachers do not take sufficient care in checking the quality of work and the way it is organised in the folders. The current system makes it difficult for children, parents and teachers to look through the work in each subject and take pride in it. It also makes it difficult for co-ordinators and the headteacher to check the quality of work by each class and child in each subject.

39 The headteacher and acting deputy have used in-service training effectively to develop the skills of newly-appointed year group leaders, again using the expertise of local education authority staff. Recognising the need for a review of roles after a period of considerable staff change, the headteacher set up training for new postholders to re-establish priorities and roles. The success of the school's leadership, with the headteacher, previous deputy and current acting deputy headteacher working closely together, is apparent in the way the school has not just maintained, but raised standards at a time of considerable staff turnover.

40 The headteacher has made very good use of statistical information to set priorities. She has kept the governing body fully informed and this has enabled governors to play a supportive

role. The governing body has few experienced members, but the more experienced provide helpful mentoring for new members. Governors keep fully abreast of the school's finances and through the committee structure they monitor standards and curriculum development. Each governor is linked to a subject and teachers liaise comfortably with governors to keep them informed about developments. The chair of governors is an enthusiastic supporter of the school and works closely with the headteacher to maintain a clear overview of all aspects of the school's work.

41 Day-to-day administrative and financial management by office staff is very good, enabling the headteacher to focus on educational developments. Overall, the headteacher's democratic but purposeful leadership style ensures that the school has a positive ethos and a clear educational direction.

### **Arrangements for assessment, care and guidance are very good**

42 While care and guidance were already strengths at the time of the last inspection, assessment procedures were a weakness. The development of a more manageable and useful system for recording children's attainment and progress was a key issue to be addressed. The school has transformed this weakness into a considerable strength. The staff have worked extremely hard to set up effective and manageable assessment procedures. These enable the school to track the progress of individuals and year groups against their progress in the reception year through stepping stones towards the early learning goals and in Years 1 and 2 through National Curriculum levels in all subjects.

43 Each class teacher has a file containing the agreed schedule for assessment procedures throughout the year in each subject. Every class teacher keeps this up to date, so that year leaders and subject co-ordinators may check the progress of each year group within each subject. The assessment procedures for reading, writing and mathematics are rigorous and those for other subjects sensible and manageable. At the end of each unit of work, teachers assess whether children have met the learning intentions, exceeded them or need further support in order to meet them.

44 In English and mathematics, children work at appropriately challenging tasks because teachers make very good use of the assessment information to group children within literacy and numeracy lessons and to match tasks to children's abilities. Children with special educational needs have their progress tracked additionally by the special needs co-ordinator, who is developing a closer liaison with parents for the process of reviewing the effectiveness of children's individual education plans and agreeing targets and ways of attaining them for the following term.

45 The school's procedures for child protection, health and safety and first aid are fully in place and all staff, including lunchtime supervisors show real care for the children in the way they relate to them. The school ensures that all staff are aware of procedures and these are fully implemented.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

### **Consistency and care in the way children's recorded work in several subjects is presented, collated and kept**

46 One issue highlighted for attention at the last inspection was the way children's work was collated and stored. This was to ensure that teachers, children and parents could have a clearer overview of individual progress. The school tackled this issue immediately after the last inspection. In the context of English, mathematics and science, the methods of collation and storage in current use in Years 1 and 2 are effective. The way children's work is presented, kept and collated in reception classes is appropriate. However, in other subjects where children's recorded work is kept, the school's present systems do not facilitate easy access for checking individual children's progress.

47 A lot of the work recorded in English, mathematics and science is kept in an orderly way in exercise books, which are mainly well presented. There is, however, in these books some inconsistency between classes in the neatness of presentation. The rest of the work recorded by children is kept on paper, holed and placed in ringbinders. This covers work in design and technology, geography, history and religious education, as well as additional work in English and mathematics.

48 There are a number of weaknesses in the way work is presented and kept in the ringbinders:

- The inconsistency in the expectations of neatness between different classes in each year group is greater than in the books, with some untidy presentation;
- children do not consistently date their work, making it difficult for teachers and parents to gauge progress;
- sheets are not kept in separate subjects; it is therefore difficult for children, teachers and their parents – or for a subject co-ordinator monitoring standards – to look at both the quantity and quality of work in subjects such as design and technology, geography, history and religious education;
- In several ringbinders, occasional sheets are upside down and several larger sheets have bent or torn corners; it is therefore difficult for children or parents to take pride in the work kept in the folder or see it positively as a record of achievement.
- The occasional pieces of work in English and mathematics are not separated from work on other subjects;
- There is a lack of recorded evidence of children's work and progress in ICT.

49 From observation of children's work on display in all classrooms and the quality evident in many English, mathematics and science exercise books, it is clear that children are capable of better presentation, handwriting, labelling and illustration than that found in the ringbinders. Work of the quality displayed deserves careful storage, so that children and their parents recognise the consistent effort and quality in finished work. Children's recorded work in each National Curriculum subject and in religious education needs keeping in a way that enables easy access to teachers, subject co-ordinators and senior staff checking the quality and progress of work by individuals and groups of children in each subject.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

50 In order to build on its many strengths, improve the quality of education provided and further raise standards, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Improve the consistency of children's presentation and the way children's recorded work is collated and kept in design and technology, geography, history, ICT and religious education.  
*(paragraph references:, 38 and 46-49)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

22

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

13

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	10	6	4	0	0	0
Percentage	9	45	27	18	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than four percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y2

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	257
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y2

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	42

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3
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#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	1.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	46	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	42	45	44
	Girls	40	39	40
	Total	82	84	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (97)	98 (97)	98 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	42	44	43
	Girls	39	40	40
	Total	81	84	83
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (96)	98 (96)	97 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

*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	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	166
Any other minority ethnic group	2

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	28.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	207

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***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	1	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.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001
	£
Total income	512511
Total expenditure	516729
Expenditure per pupil	1988
Balance brought forward from previous year	9623
Balance carried forward to next year	5405

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	257
Number of questionnaires returned	130

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	34	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	36	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	55	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	56	5	2	1
The teaching is good.	52	45	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	50	9	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	29	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	37	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	52	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	51	47	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	42	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	25	22	5	37

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

### Other issues raised by parents

A few parents at the meeting and in questionnaire replies were concerned about the effect of staff changes on their children's education.