

# INSPECTION REPORT

## HEATHLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bournemouth

LEA area: Bournemouth

Unique reference number: 130945

Headteacher: Mr Christopher Stuckey

Reporting inspector: Mrs Stephanie Lacey  
3764

Dates of inspection: 25 - 28 June 2001

Inspection number: 230635

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior with Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Andrews Close  
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Jackie Cross

Date of previous inspection: 23 June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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3764	Stephanie Lacey	Registered inspector	Art and special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements, How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
14756	John Lovell	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23235	Fred Riches	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language and religious education	
24019	Ken Parry	Team inspector	Mathematics and physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30618	Paul Story	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, history and equal opportunities	
23812	Carol Slade	Team inspector	Foundation stage and music	
31046	Chris Nuttall	Team inspector	Information and communication technology and geography	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Heathlands is a large community primary school with an attached nursery class. There are 325 boys and girls on roll in the main school and 71 part-time children in the nursery. The number of pupils on roll has been falling for some years. Most pupils live in West Howe, in housing authority homes, with a small minority from owner-occupied homes. Over fifty per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above average. Most families have their cultural roots in the British Isles, with almost three per cent of pupils coming from other ethnic backgrounds. Ten pupils speak English as an additional language. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. Many pupils are particularly behind in their language development. Forty per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational need, which is well above average. Six pupils currently have a statement of special educational need.

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

Heathlands is an improving school. Standards are rising and behaviour is better this year. Staff work hard in pupils' best interests. Teaching is good and most pupils achieve well in lessons. The way forward is less clear, as there is not a shared vision for the future held by staff, parents and governors. Overall the school provides a sound education for the pupils and gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Teaching and learning is good or very good in most lessons.
- The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is a strength of the school.
- Behaviour has improved considerably this year and is particularly good in younger pupils' classes and at lunchtimes.
- Work planned in history, geography, religious education and information and communication technology (ICT) is very stimulating.
- The contribution of the non-teaching staff is very good.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development.

### **What could be improved**

- Standards in mathematics, science and particularly English.
- A shared vision for the future development and direction of the school.
- The school's partnership with parents.
- A consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour.
- Planning and teaching of design and technology and music.
- The involvement of governors in planning for improvement and checking what happens in school.

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

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

In some ways the school has made good improvement since its last inspection in 1997. Standards have risen in national tests in Year 6. The quality of teaching has improved and the school has made considerable strides forward in planning for different subjects and assessing how well pupils are doing. These improvements have been brought about by the staff's enthusiasm and commitment, many of whom have served the school for many years. However the school went through a difficult patch for a couple of years. The departure of the previous headteacher coincided with a period of other staff changes and illness, which had an unsettling effect. Behaviour deteriorated and parents began to lose confidence in the school. Following the appointment of a new headteacher, the local education authority has worked with the school for the last year in order to provide extra support and help it move forward. This has been a successful initiative, although there is still some way to go. The appointment of a new chair of governors has also had a very positive impact on the work of the school. In the light of this, the school has made satisfactory improvement overall since the last inspection.

## 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	E	E	E	C
mathematics	E	E	E	C
science	E*	E	E	C

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average   E  
 very low                E\*

*Similar schools are those with over 50% entitled to free school meals*

This table shows that at the end of Year 6 in 2000, standards were well below average in national tests in English, mathematics and science, but with pupils doing as well as their peers in similar schools in all three subjects. In Year 2 national tests and assessments last year, standards were in the bottom five per cent of all schools in reading, writing & mathematics and well below average in science. Pupils were also well behind their peers in similar schools. Standards in national tests and assessments have been low for many years but with improvement over the years in mathematics and science in Year 6. This year the school was given an award in recognition of this by the Department for Education and Employment. This improvement has not been matched in Year 2, despite good teaching. Standards in reading, for example, are lower than they were four years ago. The most significant reason for low standards is the low starting point of many children when they begin school. Many have a long way to go to catch up with their peers in other schools, especially in language and communication. Even though children make good strides forward in many of the areas of learning in their first years at school, they do not catch up by age seven. By the time they are eleven the gap has narrowed between standards at Heathlands and the national average. The inspection found that standards in Year 2 have improved a little from last year. They remain well below average in English in Year 6, but have improved in mathematics and science. This overall picture masks the good achievements of some pupils. The school is likely to meet its targets for pupils' performance in Year 6 tests in English and mathematics this year. There has been improvement in history, geography and especially ICT since the last inspection and standards are now average, with older pupils sometimes doing better. Standards in religious education are good. Average standards have been maintained in art and physical education. Standards have fallen in design and technology and are well below average by Year 6. Standards remain below average in music. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when they have extra support and make slower progress when they do not. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils are not always challenged appropriately in lessons. Pupils from ethnic minority groups achieve as well as their peers. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils are happy to come to school and are generally positive about their work. Most pupils try hard in lessons. Some older pupils show less interest, but others respond well to consistent good teaching. These older pupils are the ones who have been most disrupted by staff changes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour has improved considerably this year, especially in older pupils' classes, and is now satisfactory overall. Younger pupils behave well in lessons and all pupils play sensibly at playtimes and lunchtimes. There were 32 exclusions for bad behaviour last year, but this number has been reduced significantly this year.

Personal development and relationships	Overall pupils make satisfactory strides in their personal development. There are some very good examples of pupils taking on extra responsibilities. Relationships between all members of the school community are satisfactory and sometimes better.
Attendance	Attendance levels are below the national average and need improving. A few pupils are often late for school.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged up to 5 years</b>	<b>Aged 5-7 years</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good	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.*

Good teaching ensures that most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, achieve well. In the lessons seen during the inspection, 30 per cent of the teaching was very good, 47 per cent was good, 17 per cent was satisfactory and six per cent was less than satisfactory. This is an improvement from the last inspection when 20 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and there was only a small percentage of very good teaching. This good quality is spread throughout the school, with the only less than satisfactory teaching seen in the junior classes, mostly when the pupils were not taught by a permanent class teacher. The teaching in the foundation stage and in special needs withdrawal sessions is particularly good. There are several reasons why this good teaching has not led to raised standards. Firstly some of the improvement, especially in pupil management, is fairly recent. Secondly, the teaching of English, where pupils do not do so well, is not consistently as strong as in many other subjects. Lastly, many pupils with difficulties find it hard to transfer the skills learnt in one lesson to their work in other areas. Strengths include good joint planning and teamwork, with very effective support from teaching assistants. Teaching of mathematics, science, ICT, history and geography and religious education is consistently good. Areas which need improving include planning for the activity part of the literacy hour, where tasks are sometimes too difficult for pupils. The use of homework and involving parents more in this also needs attention.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Interesting work planned for the humanities and religious education. Arrangements for design and technology do not meet statutory requirements. Good range of visits, but limited range of out-of-school clubs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Good support given in withdrawal sessions, but sometimes pupils struggle without enough help in class. The afternoon 'Give it a go gang' nurture group is a particular strength.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils are supported well by their class teachers after receiving help from the local education authority's support agency when they first arrive in school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Some interesting recent initiatives including the establishment of a School Council, where pupils can air their views. Good opportunities taken to teach pupils about a range of cultures. Arrangements for behaviour management are improving but inconsistent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff care for pupils well. The school has improved the ways in which it assesses pupils' progress.

Overall the school does not have an effective partnership with parents. Most parents are comfortable approaching their child's teacher, but some do not feel so happy about talking to the headteacher as an authority figure. Parents are not involved sufficiently in helping their children at home.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. There is now a clear focus on improvement but not a shared vision for the future. The senior management team, made up of the headteacher, deputy head and four senior staff, is new and is beginning to work closely together. Some examples of good leadership from subject managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. Excellent contribution from the sensitive and perceptive new chair. All governors are very supportive of the school, but not all are fully clear about the way forward. Most statutory requirements are met, except for design and technology.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has been working with the local education authority this year to measure how well it is doing. The next step is to put some clear school procedures in place to check what is working well and what needs improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory financial planning, with specific grants being used for the correct purposes. Financial resources sensibly targeted to providing as many staff as possible. Satisfactory application of the principles of best value.

Good staffing levels mean that classes are small. Teaching assistants and administrative staff work very hard. Lunchtime supervisors, cleaners and caretaker support the school well. The accommodation and grounds are very good. Resources are satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Thirteen parents attended a meeting held for them before the inspection and 50 of the 361 questionnaires seeking parents' views were returned.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are happy at school.(90%)</li> <li>• The teaching is good. (90%)</li> <li>• They would feel comfortable about approaching the school. (89%)</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard and do their best. (89%)</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress. (87%)</li> <li>• The school is helping their children to become more mature and responsible. (84%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons. (36%)</li> <li>• The school's partnership with parents. (31%)</li> <li>• Information about their children's progress. (28%)</li> <li>• Behaviour. (23%)</li> <li>• The amount of homework given. (21%)</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school. (18%)</li> </ul>

The inspection supports parents' positive views. Inspectors looked carefully into parents' concerns. They found that the leadership and management of the school and behaviour have improved this year and are now largely satisfactory. They found that whilst the range of clubs and school-based activities was narrower than in many schools, the good range of visits made the overall provision of out-of-school activities satisfactory. Inspection findings confirm that homework arrangements and the school's links with parents are not good enough. Information given to parents about their children's progress is also unsatisfactory at present, but the school's new report format for the end of this term will go some way towards improving this area.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

##### *The foundation stage: the reception and nursery years*

1 Children bring a wide variety of learning experiences with them to the nursery, but their knowledge, skills and understanding are generally well below average when they start at Heathlands. Many pupils' language and communication skills are not well developed. This impedes all other aspects of their learning. Many are unable to express their thoughts and feelings confidently and in some instances cannot maintain concentration for sufficiently long for learning to be achieved. Children make good progress in language and communication, enabling them to make good progress in their learning across all areas of the foundation stage. A few children achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1, but a significant proportion are still below average in communication, language and literacy, personal, social, emotional, creative and mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Most make very good progress in their physical development and achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave their reception year.

##### *Standards in last year's national tests and assessments*

2 Standards in national tests and assessments have been low for many years. In Year 2 national tests and assessments last year, standards were in the bottom five per cent of all schools and were very low in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards were well below average in science. Pupils were performing well below their peers in similar schools. There has been no significant improvement for the last three years and in fact standards last year slipped back in reading.

3 At the end of Year 6 in 2000, standards were well below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils did as well as their peers in similar schools in all three subjects. Standards have risen slightly in English since the last inspection and have risen faster than the national trend in mathematics and science over the last four years. This year the school was given a Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) improvement award in recognition of this.

##### *Reasons for low standards*

4 There are several reasons for low standards. The most significant is the low starting point of many of the children when they join the school in the nursery or reception classes. Many have a long way to go to catch up with their peers in other schools. They have most difficulty with language and communication. Many have limited vocabularies and so find it hard to grasp new ideas. This means that even though children make good strides forward in many of the areas of learning in their first years at school, they do not catch up by age seven. In junior classes pupils continue to make good overall progress, especially in mathematics and science and by the time they are eleven the gap has narrowed between standards at Heathlands and the national average.

5 There are other factors that have also had an impact on the slower improvement in Year 2 standards and English in Year 6. These include the high proportion of pupils with identified problems in English, who are receiving extra help. Teaching is good overall, but not so strong in English and in some lessons it is apparent that the work set for pupils is sometimes too difficult for them. This also has slowed the progress of some. Staff changes and illness has also had a negative impact on raising standards and in some older pupils' classes inattentive and disruptive behaviour have affected learning badly in the recent past.

##### *Inspection findings*

6 The inspection found that standards in Years 2 and 6 have improved a little from last year. They are now well below average in Year 2 in English, mathematics and science.

They remain well below average in English in Year 6, but have improved in mathematics and science. This bleak picture masks the good achievements of some pupils. In Years 5 and 6, for example, some pupils reach high standards and their work is above average.

#### *Standards in literacy*

7 Very few pupils are confident and competent speakers. In many sessions pupils spend too long listening to their teacher and are often only required to give one-word or short answers. Pupils develop phonic skills well, but many find it hard to relate what they have been taught to their own reading. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' reading diet is largely limited to 'scheme' books, although teachers introduce stories to fire their enthusiasm. In junior classes a few higher attainers read fluently and with expression. They enjoy fiction, have favourite authors and read regularly. They use information books, using contents page, index and glossary appropriately. Many pupils do not read regularly at home and this has a negative impact on their progress. Pupils write for a range of purposes and many of the displays around the school reflect the imaginative work undertaken. The school focuses effectively on the development of pupils' active, written vocabulary for a wide variety of purposes. Standards in handwriting on display are mainly satisfactory, but work in pupils' books is not generally well presented. Pupils do not transfer their knowledge of spelling patterns to their independent writing.

#### *Standards in numeracy*

8 Standards have risen in mathematics this year because there is improved planning as a result of the introduction of the national numeracy strategy. Also careful tracking of pupils' progress is being developed and this is enabling the school and individual teachers to focus specific teaching and support where it is most needed. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. This is particularly true in Year 3 and Year 4, where almost all pupils are make satisfactory or even good progress. However in some lessons, for example with the lower attaining set in Year 2, the rate of progress is slowed by the lack of a teaching assistant. In Years 2 and 6 pupils are taught in sets of similar ability, which has a very positive effect on their achievements, as teachers are better able to plan for their particular needs. The school's assessment procedures show that boys often make better progress than girls do. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics, and number in particular, is stronger than their skills in solving real life situations and problems. Frequently difficulties arise as a result of limited literacy skills that hinder their ability to solve word problems and to discuss the strategies they use to solve number problems. Evidence was seen of several good, but isolated, examples of pupils practising their mathematical skills in other subjects and many opportunities to enhance pupils' mathematical understanding are missed. There was little evidence of the use of computers to support pupils' learning.

#### *Standards in science*

9 Standards have improved in science, although they remain below average. Generally pupils do not spend enough time on experimental and investigative work.

#### *Targets*

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

#### *Standards in other subjects*

11 There has been very good improvement in ICT since the last inspection and standards are now average. Standards in history, geography and religious education have also improved; they are broadly average, with older pupils sometimes doing better. Average standards have been maintained in art and physical education. Pupils are not doing as well as they did at the time of the last inspection in design and technology, with standards well below average by Year 6. Music has not moved forward at all and standards remain below average.

#### *Pupils with special educational needs*

12 About forty per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational need. Most have particular problems with reading and writing. One in ten pupils have more significant learning problems. Overall, pupils achieve well when they have extra support and slower progress when they do not. In some withdrawal sessions, when pupils work with very experienced special needs teachers they do very well. They find it difficult to transfer the skills taught in these small group sessions to their other work. Pupils with statements of special educational need make steady progress overall towards the targets set for them.

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

13 The small number of pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress. A few, who came to the school with very little knowledge of English, have made very good progress, as a result of caring support and positive encouragement.

#### *Gifted and talented pupils*

14 The school does not identify gifted and talented pupils, although individual teachers are aware of the higher attaining pupils in their classes. In Years 2 and 6 pupils work with others of similar abilities, but no other provision is made specifically for these pupils. They are not always sufficiently challenged in lessons.

#### *Pupils from ethnic minority groups*

15 Almost three 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.

#### *Achievements of boys and girls*

16 There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls except in Year 2, where school analysis shows boys do better than girls in reading and mathematics but not so well in writing.

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

17 Pupils' attitudes to school and lessons are generally satisfactory. Their behaviour is usually satisfactory and often good in younger classes. Relationships are satisfactory and outside lessons are often good or very good. Attendance is unsatisfactory. This is broadly similar to the last inspection. It is apparent that behaviour deteriorated for a while since then, but is now improving again.

#### *Starting school*

18 The nursery and reception classes provide a secure, caring environment for children who have a happy start to school life. All children are sensitively supported by staff, who build caring relationships with them. Most children quickly absorb themselves in the many available exciting activities. Children usually listen carefully to adults and are familiar with the routines of both the nursery and reception. They gain an appropriate understanding of right and wrong behaviour.

#### *Attitudes*

19 Most pupils are happy to come to school and are generally positive about their work. Most pupils try hard in lessons, although some of the older pupils are not as enthusiastic as younger pupils.

#### *Behaviour*

20 Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally satisfactory and is broadly similar to the previous inspection. However, during the previous year, there have been 32 fixed term exclusions, which shows a considerable increase from the last inspection. These are now decreasing, but staff and parental concerns about behaviour have caused the school to focus on strategies to improve behaviour overall. Behaviour at lunchtime and during breaks has improved and is often very good.

21 The behaviour of infant pupils is generally better than that of older pupils. The behaviour of reception children is very good, for example, and their personal and social development benefits from their very good relationships and willingness to share and take turns. This was evident in a magnetic fishing game, for example, which involved counting and sharing fishing rods, and in the 'beach shop', where pupils sold a hat to the inspector, and insisted that he wear it throughout the lesson. By contrast, Year 5 pupils in a history lesson were disinterested and on occasions were defiant towards the teacher. To some extent pupils' behaviour is related closely to the management skills of the teacher. When the pace and challenge of lessons is good and when pupils' interest is captured, their attitudes are good, but on the few occasions where their interest is not engaged, a significant minority of pupils in some classes behave in a poor manner and disrupt the learning of others.

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

22 About six per cent of pupils are identified on the school's register of special educational need as having emotional and behavioural problems. Overall their behaviour has improved this year because of the staff's more positive approach to supporting their difficulties. It is pupils from this group who have been excluded from school for bad behaviour, mostly boys, and one of these boys was absent because of exclusion during the inspection. Last July the special unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties closed and pupils were placed into main stream classes. Staff note that some of these pupils have found it hard to cope on occasions and this has manifested itself in disruptive behaviour. Many of the pupils with special educational needs enjoy the art club organised for them at lunchtimes and their behaviour is very good in the 'Give it a go gang' sessions that run in the afternoons.

#### *Relationships*

23 Relationships within the school are generally satisfactory between pupils and between pupils and adults and there is no evidence of any systematic bullying or oppressive behaviour. Pupils are usually courteous, respectful and helpful to each other, to staff and to visitors. Pupils usually listen attentively to their teachers, support assistants and other adults working or helping within the school if the teacher's enthusiasm engages their interest and the task challenges them. Outside the classroom, at lunchtime in particular, they show respect for other pupils' feelings, beliefs and values and are sympathetic and kind when helping each other. For example, pupils acting as buddies and those in charge of the play equipment readily support younger pupils with great sensitivity and responsibility. Children are trustworthy, take care of school equipment and resources and keep their school clean and tidy.

#### *Personal development*

24 The personal development of pupils is satisfactory and, although there are limited opportunities for them to show initiative in their work, they are involved in the daily routines of the school from an early age, generally undertaking class responsibilities with enthusiasm and pride. Pupils up to the age of six co-operate and collaborate well but older pupils sometimes fail to share ideas and resources appropriately, such as in a Year 3 design technology lesson in which pupils were making a simple pneumatic system to power a feature of a monster. Members of the School Council take great pride in the way they have positively influenced areas of the school's work. These include improved relationships at lunchtime and the involvement of all pupils in activities, the provision of 'buddies' to help pupils resolve problems and the improvement of the school environment by developing the pond area and considering ways in which a quiet garden area can be created.

#### *Attendance and punctuality*

25 Overall, attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. Absence levels remain broadly similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection, although there has been a small improvement in the previous year, for which there is no national comparison. The school is working to reduce the high levels of absence and poor punctuality of some pupils and recognises the impact which attendance levels have on pupils' progress. Almost half

of the pupils on the special needs register, for example, have attendance levels below 94 per cent.

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

26 In the lessons seen, good teaching ensured that most pupils achieved well. Thirty per cent of the teaching was very good, 47 per cent was good, 17 per cent was satisfactory and six per cent was less than satisfactory. This is an improvement from the last inspection, when 20 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and there was only a small percentage of very good teaching.

27 The immediate question that this positive picture poses is why, if the teaching is so good, are pupils not doing better and reaching higher standards? There are several answers to this. Firstly, while many lessons seen were good in themselves, the cumulative effect of this has not necessarily been positive because of timetabling arrangements. In English particularly, many pupils who struggle are taught by several staff. While they manage well in individual sessions they find it hard to transfer new skills learnt to other areas. Secondly, this good quality teaching has only been consistently in evidence fairly recently. Before Christmas, for example, as a result of staff illness and inexperienced staff, the quality of teaching in some junior classes was not so strong, with teachers having problems with behaviour management. Thirdly the teaching of English, where pupils do not do so well, is not as strong as it is in other subjects.

### *Teaching in the reception and nursery classes*

28 The quality of teaching is good overall with some very good features. Fifty per cent of lessons seen were very good and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Staff work as an effective team to make activities enjoyable for children. Consequently children usually settle into their nursery and reception environments happily and generally make good progress in all aspects of their learning and very good progress in their physical development. Teachers use a variety of strategies to ensure that they develop children's communication and language skills. They emphasise children's personal, social and emotional development consistently. They plan for and teach children well in the outdoor play areas.

### *Teaching in Years 1 and 2*

29 Teaching is good overall. A quarter of lessons seen were very good, half were good and the remaining quarter were satisfactory. Teachers have an enthusiastic and positive approach. They obviously enjoy pupils' company and as a result pupils feel valued and that their efforts are appreciated. Teachers also have high expectations of pupils. In one literacy session, for example, pupils worked very sensibly on independent tasks, while their teacher taught a small group. On occasions teachers' expectations are too high, the tasks set are too challenging and so pupils do not move forward as quickly as they should. Teachers plan interesting work and this engages pupils' interest and helps them to succeed. In a history session, for example, Year 1 pupils gathered together to question an older visitor about her childhood. They concentrated for a long period and were fascinated by her stories. Good teamwork is another strength in Years 1 and 2, with teachers working together well in parallel classes to plan work. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution, working sensitively with small groups and individuals.

### *Teaching in Years 3 to 6*

30 Teaching is good overall. A quarter of lessons seen were very good and almost a half good. The remainder were predominantly satisfactory, although ten per cent were unsatisfactory or poor. This is concerning, but in all but one instance these lessons were not given by a permanent class teacher. All teachers, including those who had unsuccessful sessions, demonstrated good skills in some lessons. Planning is generally very good and sometimes teachers plan together. However, in some of the unsatisfactory lessons problems arose because the work had been planned by another teacher and was not sufficiently adapted by the person taking the lesson. In some classes teachers manage pupils very well. This is particularly the case in one of the Year 5 classes, where a new

teacher has turned the behaviour and attitudes of the pupils around in a relatively short time. In some sessions seen, teachers had problems in managing behaviour well and because of this pupils did not move forward as fast as they should have done. Again the sensitive support of teaching assistants has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

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

31 Overall the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. It is sometimes better than this when pupils are withdrawn for special help. This because the special needs teachers know the pupils very well and are fully aware of their learning needs. Two of the staff are particularly experienced and well qualified. They make the sessions interesting and lively and give very good encouragement and support. Consequently pupils are caught up in the activities and make good strides forward in the short term. In one session, for example, a small group of Year 2 pupils were blindfolded and had to guess which wooden letter the teacher had taken away from the alphabet. They managed this very quickly and consolidated their letter recognition skills in an engaging activity.

32 Within the classroom pupils are sometimes supported by teachers and learning assistants. They generally do well at these times because the member of staff adapts the class activity to their particular needs. Support assistants are very encouraging. Teachers generally plan suitable tasks for pupils, although occasionally they are too difficult.

#### *Teaching of pupils learning English as an additional language*

33 Teachers give very good support to pupils learning English as an additional language. This, together with positive parental support, enables pupils who arrive at the school fluent in their home language, but new to English, to make rapid progress and achieve well in all subjects.

#### *Teaching of literacy*

34 Teaching is satisfactory overall. In all lessons, the whole class part of the lesson was consistently more effective than the activity part. This is because many of the tasks teachers set for pupils to tackle independently are too complicated or not sufficiently clearly explained. Consequently pupils learn well while the teacher is talking with them, but their concentration and effort falls away as they struggle with difficult tasks. Strengths include teachers' thorough planning, preparation and use of resources. The use of texts and teachers' clear enthusiasm for story are good in some classes. The main areas for development are the appropriate matching of independent tasks to pupils' abilities, teaching them to follow verbal and written instructions, and the development of teachers' questioning and listening skills.

#### *Teaching of numeracy*

35 The quality of teaching is now consistently good throughout the school. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is frequently the key to successful teaching at Heathlands and in the best lessons teachers managed challenging behaviour well. Teachers throughout the school demonstrate good knowledge of mathematics. Weaknesses include occasionally uninteresting introductions to lessons. Sometimes teachers do not allow sufficient thinking time in question-and-answer sessions and often miss opportunities to build constructively on pupils' errors. Overall pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to explain the thinking behind their calculations and teachers do not routinely require the rest of the class to follow and comment on pupils' mathematical explanations.

#### *Teaching of other subjects*

36 Science is taught well, with the strongest teaching in oldest pupils' classes. Teachers plan well together in parallel classes. They make good use of a range of carefully prepared resources to illustrate teaching points and capture pupils' interest and of questioning to challenge and direct pupils' thinking and to check their understanding. Teaching of the humanities and religious education is particularly strong. Stimulating programmes of work provide a very firm base for teachers to use their imaginations and flair to capture pupils'

interest. Art is taught well. Physical education is taught well in infant classes and satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. In music and particularly design and technology, many teachers lack subject expertise and do not approach these areas confidently. Very few lessons were seen in either of these subjects.

#### *Assessing how well pupils are doing*

37 Most teachers mark work regularly. There are some very good examples of positive marking, with comments to help pupils to improve. This is not consistently so from class to class. Teachers give pupils feedback on their progress and set them targets to improve in literacy and numeracy.

#### *Homework*

38 There is a clear expectation that pupils undertake homework and some pupils do so conscientiously. Teachers do not sufficiently monitor what pupils have achieved. In Years 3 to 6 the arrangements for pupils' reading homework are unsatisfactory and do not encourage a love of literature or foster a good relationship with parents. A positive initiative has been the introduction of a homework club for Year 6 pupils in the spring and autumn terms. Some pupils are involved in a homework club at the local library and there is room for more liaison between the library and the school.

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

39 The school provides a satisfactory range of curriculum and other opportunities to promote pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. The curriculum is broad and balanced, although weaknesses in the provision for design and technology mean that it is not meeting fully the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Religious education is taught in accordance with the Dorset Agreed Syllabus. Good progress has been made in addressing the key issues concerned with deficiencies in planning that arose from the last inspection. The amount of time spent on each subject in each class is not monitored closely enough. As a result there are weaknesses in some subjects that inhibit the development of a well-rounded curriculum. In design and technology pupils are not provided with the full range of experiences required by the National Curriculum while the continuity of pupils' learning in music is interrupted as it is taught for only two terms in each year.

#### *Curriculum planning*

40 The school has worked hard to deal with the considerable weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Teachers' planning is now a strength. In English and mathematics it is based on the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, which also determine the level of work to be expected from each year group. They are being implemented consistently in all classes and this is making a significant contribution to the better teaching seen now in these subjects. In addition, nationally approved guidelines for all other subjects have been adopted. They provide clear guidance on the systematic development of knowledge, skills and understanding and are followed by all teachers. In science these documents are further supported by local authority guidelines.

41 A particular strength is the level of co-operative planning that is undertaken by teachers to ensure that pupils within the same age group have similar learning experiences. This is evident in all subjects and throughout the school.

#### *Equal opportunities*

42 The school's commitment to equal opportunities is good and is embedded in its stated intention to recognise the achievements of all pupils and ensure that they each reach their full potential. An illustration of the value it places on this is the recent work it has undertaken in conjunction with the local authority to ensure that the school's inclusive philosophy is reflected in its practice. The outcomes of a detailed parental survey are now forming the basis of detailed discussions by the inclusion committee.

43 The school seeks to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of opportunities that it provides through monitoring and assessing pupils' progress. The school makes good use of this analysis to identify and address areas of concern, for example the recent focus on raising standards in writing.

44 Very occasionally the actions of a small group of pupils limits access for the remainder. An example of this is the domination of the nursery outside play area by boys rushing round the roadway on wheeled toys. Teachers and other staff are aware of the need to address these situations.

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

45 The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs has changed since the last inspection and is set to change still further as a consequence of the authority's emphasis on inclusion. The special unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties closed at the end of the last school year and these pupils are now integrated into classes and follow the same curriculum as their peers. There is some withdrawal of groups and individuals for help in literacy. This will finish at the end of term and from September onwards most support will be in class, with the exception of the additional literacy support project and the early intervention project in Year 1. This is an appropriate move forward for most pupils. There are a few pupils with more severe learning difficulties, who will continue to need a more individually planned programme.

46 All pupils currently on the register of special educational need have individual targets. These are generally appropriate. The specialist teachers and special needs co-ordinator have the most significant input into writing the education plans for pupils with problems in literacy, while class teachers undertake plans for pupils with behavioural problems. Fewer plans include targets for numeracy.

47 There are some unsatisfactory elements in the current provision. One is the programme for Year 2 pupils who, for one morning a week, spend the literacy hour with their own class and then spend another hour working with a specialist teacher on developing phonic skills. This means that they have an unbalanced morning and miss their numeracy lesson.

48 A strength of the work with pupils who have special educational needs is an afternoon session organised by a teaching assistant in which pupils select from a range of practical activities. This very well organised session provides the opportunity for these pupils to excel in a warm and supportive environment.

#### *Curriculum for pupils learning English as an additional language*

49 The school adapts the curriculum appropriately for pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. It receives good support from the local education authority's support service.

#### *Extra-curricular and other activities, including educational visits*

50 There is a limited range of activities to enhance the basic curriculum. Apart from an after-school sports club for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 and a netball club for junior pupils, there are few opportunities accessible to pupils throughout the school that allow them to develop their intellectual, artistic and sporting interests outside normal school hours. This not only restricts their chances to extend their learning but also their ability to work with and support pupils of other ages and from other classes.

51 However, a good range of visits and visitors is carefully planned to support their learning in subjects such as geography, history, religious education and science. Recent venues for educational visits have included seaside locations, Corfe Castle, the Tutankhamun exhibition and a synagogue. Visitors to school have included theatre and puppet groups contributing to pupils' cultural development.

### *Links with the community*

52 The most positive feature of the school's community links is its partnership with local businesses and other agencies. This has resulted in cash donations as well as computer equipment and assistance with the production of the school's prospectus. A local D-I-Y supermarket has pledged financial support and expert planning to improve the quality of the learning opportunities provided by the school's environmental area. Close links exist also with local support agencies. Many of these are involved in the 'Sure Start' project that is based on the school premises and is dedicated to improving the facilities for young children and families in the local area.

### *Links with the partner institutions*

53 Relationships with partner institutions are satisfactory. Networks of teachers provide an effective forum for the sharing and exchange of ideas and many of the subject managers have established valuable links in this way with colleagues in other local schools. In order to assist with the smooth transition of pupils from Year 6 to their secondary schools there is effective communication between teachers and arrangements are made for pupils to visit their new schools. Also, ex-Heathlands pupils return to talk about their own experiences of the transfer procedures.

### *Personal, social and health education*

54 Arrangements for personal, social and health education are satisfactory. They include teaching on health, sex and drug awareness and make use of outside agencies including visits to younger classes by the school nurse. Each class is allocated a regular session on the timetable that teachers use in a variety of ways. On some occasions they deal with situations that crop up during the week, while at other times they follow a structured theme. While these arrangements are adequate, the school does not yet provide teachers with sufficient detailed information about exactly what should be covered each year. However, with the good support of the local adviser this aspect of the curriculum is developing well. The policy and action plan reflect a strong commitment to a personal, social and health education scheme which will be delivered largely within the context of religious education, science and physical education.

### *Personal education*

55 The school's arrangements for pupils' personal education are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and cultural development was good at the time of the last inspection, with social development satisfactory. This positive overall picture has been maintained. Provision for pupils' social development has improved and is now good. Arrangements for pupils' moral development, following a period where behaviour deteriorated and the school recognised the need for a change of approach, is currently satisfactory. All staff promote the use of the school's golden rules, which are displayed throughout the school in corridors and all classes. Teachers issue reward points in recognition of pupils' effort, behaviour and achievements. Pupils are eager to amass these and receive certificates and privileges, awarded in weekly sharing assemblies. Strengths outweigh weaknesses, but the emphasis on rewards and sanctions varies between classes and the school needs to overcome these inconsistencies.

### *Provision for pupils' spiritual development*

56 The headteacher and staff plan a wide range of opportunities to encourage pupils' spiritual development through collective worship, in religious education lessons and occasionally in lessons in other subjects. Collective worship is very well planned and regularly includes opportunity for reflection. The school's worship theme for the week is displayed prominently throughout the school and has a positive impact on the school's ethos. In a 'sharing assembly', junior pupils experienced a sense of something special as they watched a girl proudly show her Nigerian national costume made by her mother for her to wear at her brother's baptism. They reflected quietly while a teacher used sentences about peace, written by Year 5 pupils, as prayer. Teachers also promote very good opportunities in religious education lessons for pupils to appreciate and experience the significance and deep meaning of celebrations and religious practices. Pupils in Year 2 participated reverently in a role play of a Shabbat meal, for example, and Year 6 pupils

showed mature understanding of the significance of wedding vows and ceremonial as they compared Christian and Hindu weddings. Visitors from local churches lead collective worship from time to time and class visits to a synagogue, a church and the Islamic Centre in Bournemouth also contribute strongly to pupils' awareness of the importance of a spiritual dimension in many people's lives. Pupils' religious education books show considerable depth of understanding of world faiths and the written observations of many pupils clearly express empathy and respect. A prominent entrance hall display includes artefacts 'special' to members of staff. Teachers also give pupils opportunity in other subjects to share a sense of joy, as in the re-enactment of a World War 2 VE Day party, and wonder, as in Year 4 pupils' astonishment at the saffron colour of a cotton sheet they had boiled in onion dye.

#### *Provision for pupils' social development*

57 Arrangements for promoting pupils' social development are good. The introduction of a School Council, playtime and lunchtime monitors, and the effective use of a 'buddy' system, where Year 6 pupils support younger pupils, have had a major impact on the whole ethos of the school. Playtimes and lunchtimes are pleasant occasions, with Year 6 pupils responding extremely well to the considerable responsibility invested in them. The success of these strategies owes much to the teacher co-ordinating the School Council, who has encouraged pupils to use their initiative within the agreed, carefully organised procedures. At a meeting of the council attended by inspectors, it was clearly apparent that pupil representatives from Years 3 to 6 all play their roles seriously and purposefully. Teachers throughout the school organise pupils well to carry out classroom responsibilities which contribute to efficient routine organisation. They also offer good opportunities for pupils to collaborate in pairs and small groups in activities. Residential visits for pupils in Years 4 and 5 also make a significant positive contribution to pupils' social development. Experimental work with passports in Year 5 is also having a very positive effect on previously reluctant learners' attitudes to school.

#### *Provision for pupils' moral development*

58 Within the school's arrangements for pupils' moral development, there are some inconsistencies. These result from the school's behaviour policy and practice being in a process of change. The school introduced strategies last September to combat increasingly antisocial behaviour and an unacceptably high number of exclusions during the previous year. The new ideas and procedures have focused on recognising and reinforcing pupils' good behaviour. Previous systems emphasised punishment for misbehaviour. With support from the local education authority, the school has developed its emphasis on positive reward strategies. This has lowered the detention and exclusion rate considerably, but lines and detentions are still used, and they sit uncomfortably alongside a changing ethos, where pupils are seen as wanting to behave and do well, rather than needing correction. The staff as a whole have not yet subscribed to a common position on how to set expectations and how to make appropriate use of agreed rewards and sanctions. The school has not yet canvassed parents' or pupils' views. This vital process of review is under way and needs to remain near the top of the school's agenda until the new policy is agreed.

#### *Provision for pupils' cultural development*

59 The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development. A display of photographs and paintings, showing the families of some of the youngest children in school, from a variety of ethnic origins, sets a positive tone, recognising the rich heritage present within the school's community. Studies in history, geography, music, art and religious education give pupils insight into a variety of ancient and modern world cultures. A display of work by Year 6, stemming from an expressive arts week, shows pupils have been involved in researching Ancient Greek art and literature as well as life in 21<sup>st</sup> century Greece. During the inspection, the same pupils were learning about Brazil, in preparation for an e-mail link with a school. Year 5 pupils use stories from around the world to create powerful writing, most recently in the form of a newspaper article based on their imagined experience of living through the eruption of an African volcano. Pupils discover about British heritage through their studies of historical periods. They learn about Eastern and

Western cultures in music, with reception pupils singing German folksongs, a percussionist visiting from the Bournemouth Sinfonietta and the use of African drum rhythms. Each Year 6 classroom has a corner transformed into a rain forest, linking art and geographical studies.

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

60 This area of the school's work has been developed well since the last inspection. It is sound overall, with some good features. Staff know pupils well and provide good care overall. The relationships between pupils and support staff within the classrooms and involved in midday supervision are good and this benefits the support provided for pupils. The provision of play equipment and the development of activities at breaks and lunchtime, assisted by pupils and in particular the School Council, have been very effective in raising standards of behaviour and relationships at these times. Pupils respond positively to being valued.

### *Promoting and monitoring pupils' personal development*

61 The monitoring of pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall with some inconsistencies. It is good for children in the nursery and reception classes and for pupils with special educational needs, but variable in other classes.

62 The development of the School Council for pupils in Years 3 to 6 has given these pupils an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the community of the school. Opportunities are provided for pupils in Years 4 and 5 to participate in residential visits. These not only enhance the curriculum but also provide good opportunities for pupils' personal and social development.

### *Monitoring and promoting good behaviour*

63 Current practices for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. These were considered to be a strength of the school at the time of the last inspection. However problems with the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils have led to changes in behaviour management. A new policy is being developed. Currently there are some inconsistencies in practice between teachers in their application of positive praise and the use of sanctions such as detentions and lines at the same time. The strategies developed are satisfactory and include training for teaching assistants in counselling, a lunchtime club for vulnerable children and nurture groups to develop the social skills of targeted children.

### *Monitoring and promoting good attendance*

64 The school has good procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality. The new education welfare officer is working very closely with the school and parents to try to improve attendance levels and reduce the number of pupils who arrive after the start of the school day.

### *Child protection*

65 Child protection procedures are satisfactory and have been formally approved by the school since the previous inspection. The school uses the local area child protection committee procedures, which comply with requirements. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and is supported in this role by the deputy headteacher and the co-ordinator for special educational needs. They have all undertaken appropriate training. All staff are reminded regularly of the procedures and child protection arrangements are incorporated into the induction arrangements for new and supply staff. Staff are aware of the procedures to be followed in the case of any concerns and of the child protection arrangements. There are good liaison arrangements with outside agencies. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities.

### *Health and safety*

66 The procedures for promoting and monitoring health and safety are generally satisfactory, although they have not been applied sufficiently rigorously. Teachers are successful in ensuring that pupils understand the need to behave and act sensibly for the safety of themselves and others and safety is promoted well in lessons and on visits.

However there are shortcomings, for example, the annual testing of physical education apparatus was not completed last year. Fire exits are sometimes obstructed. The senior member of staff with responsibility for health and safety has begun to complete a portfolio of formal, documented risk assessments, but has had insufficient training to enable him to fulfil all aspects of his role. The arrangements for providing first aid are satisfactory. The absence of some details in the recording of accidents precludes the opportunity to review accidents to identify potential risks.

#### *Outside agencies*

67 Outside agencies, including education welfare officer, social services, the school nurse and education specialists provide good support and advice for pupils, including those with special educational needs.

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

68 Staff assess pupils' learning needs carefully and in most cases give appropriate support. Pupils' progress is regularly reviewed.

#### *Monitoring pupils' progress*

69 Overall the school has sound procedures for assessing pupils' progress and performance and providing them with support and guidance. The assessment co-ordinator, senior management team and teachers have worked hard since the 1997 inspection to improve assessment procedures and to address a major area of concern. Since then assessment has featured prominently in the school development plan and staff training.

#### *Assessment procedures*

70 Good use is made of the voluntary standard assessments in English and mathematics to check pupils' progress. Outcomes of these tests have recently been well used by the school to develop detailed analysis of pupils' progress in English and mathematics in the form of scatter graphs. Information from these about pupils' progress and attainment is already being well used by the school and governors to inform the process of setting the required targets for the local authority. There is now an agreed programme of regular reading tests and half-termly assessments in English, mathematics and science. These provide a wealth of data that is stored in pupils' individual assessment files. The school monitors the progress of pupils learning English as an additional language appropriately to ensure that they are making progress.

#### *Need for a more cohesive approach*

71 The programme of regular assessments provides a good indication of how well individual pupils are doing at a given point in time. However, data from these is not immediately compatible with the annual test results and does not provide a clear picture of how pupils are progressing through the year and whether targets are therefore attainable. In science, where there are no annual tests there is no clear view of how pupils are progressing or what might be appropriate targets for improvement.

#### *Assessment in the foundation subjects*

72 Assessment procedures in history, geography, information technology and physical education are at differing stages of development. In the other curriculum areas of design technology, music, art and religious education there are currently no formal arrangements and the school is planning to review the position. This lack of regular assessment means that the school does not have a clear view of standards in these subjects and can lead to situations, such as that in design technology, where standards are below those expected.

#### *Using assessment information*

73 The school has reviewed how information is shared with pupils and parents as part of the process of improving assessment arrangements. A new format has been prepared for the annual report that will indicate not only what pupils have studied and know, but also how well they are doing in comparison with others and identify targets for improvement. Assessment is being used as a basis for the setting of group targets for literacy and

numeracy, but procedures for sharing these with pupils and bringing them to their attention varies from class to class and there is a need to ensure a common approach.

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

74 The school's partnership with many parents is unsatisfactory and has deteriorated since the last inspection.

### *Parents' views*

75 Only a small number of parents attended the meeting held for them before the inspection and about a sixth returned the questionnaire seeking their views. Views were mixed. Most were pleased with children's attitudes towards school, the quality of teaching and the ease with which they feel that they can approach the school with any concerns. They also felt that the school expects their children to work hard and do their best and that their children are making good progress. Many felt that the school is helping their children to become more mature and responsible. A significant minority were not so happy. They expressed concerns about the range of activities outside lessons, the school's partnership with parents, the information that they receive on their child's progress, the arrangements for homework, standards of behaviour and the leadership and management of the school.

### *Inspection findings*

76 The inspection findings support the positive views of parents. Inspectors found that the leadership and management of the school and behaviour has improved this year and is now satisfactory overall and that, whilst the range of clubs and school based activities was unsatisfactory, the good range of visits made the overall provision of activities outside lessons satisfactory. The inspection agreed with parents that the information given to them about their children's progress, homework arrangements and the school's links with parents are not good enough.

### *Learning at home*

77 As at the time of the previous inspection, a limited number of parents are fully involved and committed to their children's learning at home, and this helps their children to make good progress. The school has identified the need to develop its partnership with parents further to increase confidence and involvement in the school and pupils' learning. At present, parents are not given sufficient guidance about how they can help their children at home.

### *Early links*

78 However, staff try hard to build good relationship with parents and carers. Home visits are arranged and induction meetings organised for children and parents before children attend the nursery regularly. The six areas of the foundation stage curriculum are explained in displays for parents and carers in each of the nursery and reception entrances in user-friendly photographic style. Staff welcome parents daily at the open and close of sessions and maintain a regular dialogue with them. This year the foundation stage will have parent interviews for the first time. A useful home-school shared reading diary establishes worthwhile contact for some parents, as children become more and more interested in books. Language targets are set for children in reception and parents are asked to help in the achievement of these.

### *Communicating with parents*

79 The relationship between most teachers and the parents of pupils in their class is a positive one, especially in the younger pupils' classes, where parents come up to school on a daily basis. Sometimes, teaching staff do not deal with queries and complaints as well as they should. This has led to some parents feeling dissatisfied about the way they have been treated. The school is aware that it needs to improve rapidly in this area, and parents should be able to see improvement both in practice and through the school's action plan they will receive.

#### *Information about children's progress*

80 The information provided for parents about pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. At the time of the previous inspection, reports were said to 'provide useful information about pupils' learning, although written comments are not always sufficiently clear and detailed.' The school has recently prepared a new format for its annual reports, which will be used for the first time in July of this year. The new reports will include levels of attainment against national expectations and targets for development in each subject as well as information about how parents can support their child's learning. This is an improvement on current practice, which contains insufficient evaluative comment and insufficient information about progress or focus on targets for improvement, which could help parents support their children's learning at home. The timing of meetings for parents, in October and late in the summer term, means that parents do not receive sufficient information about how well their children are doing to give them effective support. The October meeting is an introductory meeting and by the end of the summer term it is too late.

#### *Links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs*

81 This area is unsatisfactory. Generally parents are not sufficiently involved in discussing their child's progress towards the learning or behaviour targets that have been set with a teacher. The school organised a meeting to explain the changes in the new code of practice to parents and about twenty parents attended the meeting. This shows the school's willingness to address areas that need improvement.

#### *Information about the curriculum*

82 Each half term, parents receive an overview of the topics planned for that period. However, although these overviews follow a broadly similar format, they are inconsistent in their quality of content and frequently do not provide sufficient information to enable parents to understand the work to be covered or what they can do to help.

#### *Information about school*

83 Newsletters are produced regularly and the new format introduced earlier this year is an improvement on that used previously. Newsletters provide satisfactory information about term dates and important events in the life of the school. They also include information about concerns that parents have raised in response to consultation exercises and details about workshops, such as those for parents of children taking national tests and a mathematics workshop which was attended by over 50 parents. A new prospectus and brochure provide clear information about the school and the draft annual governors' report for parents gives a very interesting and lively account of the school's work. Again, this shows the desire to develop and refine practices.

#### *Governors' surgeries*

84 The school has recently introduced weekly surgeries, at which parents may, without an appointment, meet with a member of the senior management team and a governor, to discuss any issue of concern. Attendance at these surgeries is variable, particularly if the date or time is changed at short notice, but they do provide a good opportunity for parents to make their views known and to seek information.

#### *Parent Teacher Association*

85 The school's Parent Teacher Association is run by a small but very hardworking group of parents who organise fundraising events such as cake sales and a Christmas raffle to provide additional resources and equipment, such as that which all of the children enjoy daily in the playground. About four parents help regularly in classrooms and other parents volunteer to accompany pupils on visits. The support of parents is appreciated by pupils and staff.

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

#### *A challenging time*

86 Heathlands has been through a difficult time since its last inspection in 1997. The appointment of the current headteacher two years ago coincided with other senior staff changes and extended periods of senior staff illness. Consequently, the energies of the headteacher were focused on managing staff absence, with little support available from senior colleagues. Pupils' behaviour had deteriorated before the new headteacher took up his appointment and the partnership with many parents, which was not strong in the first place, declined further.

#### *Focus on improvement*

87 A year ago, the local education authority was invited by staff and governors to work with the school to improve the situation. During the summer holidays the head teacher and local education authority drew up the current school improvement plan outlining key priorities which are very appropriate to the school's needs. For the last three terms the local education authority has continued to provide extra support as part of the 'schools causing concern' initiative and this has been effective in improving provision for the pupils, lifting standards and improving behaviour.

#### *Improvement since the last inspection*

88 Overall the school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. In some areas it has made good improvement. Standards have risen at the top of the school in mathematics and science, the quality of teaching has improved and the school has made great strides forward in planning for different subjects and assessing how well pupils are doing. These improvements have been brought about by the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff, many of whom have served the school for many years. However, standards have not improved fast enough in Years 1 and 2, as indicated by statutory tests and assessments over the last few years, the school's partnership with parents has not improved and governors are not consistently involved in checking how well the school is doing. One of the main reasons for slower improvements in these areas is insufficiently focused improvement planning which resulted in the lack of a shared long-term vision.

#### *Leadership by the headteacher and key staff*

89 The headteacher and senior management team provide satisfactory leadership overall. The headteacher's appointment coincided with a period of staff change and illness, which made management difficult. He now has more opportunity to look to the future, rather than coping with the day to day challenges of managing the school. He is beginning to develop an effective working relationship with the deputy headteacher. He is beginning to develop a more positive approach to working with parents, although his relationship with some parents remains fragile. He is clear about what he expects staff to do, in terms of keeping records of their subject manager work, for example. Sometimes the amount of paperwork generated is an obstacle to evaluating what is working well and what needs to be improved. He monitors teaching systematically and has a clear picture of the strengths within his staff.

90 The deputy headteacher has been in post for just over a year and like the headteacher has had to deal with many challenges. She is responsible for the foundation stage and the liaison with parents and the community. However since her appointment she has had to step in to cover for staff absence and, as a result, her role is only now starting to develop.

91 Three senior staff, with responsibility for two year groups each are also part of the senior management team. They effectively support colleagues and pupils. The teacher with responsibility for Years 5 and 6 has been particularly successful in improving behaviour in this part of the school. He has spent a good deal of time with the pupils out of lessons, which has left him less time to work with other staff. The subject manager for Years 3 and 4 has been at the school for many years and knows the Heathlands families well. He also has responsibility for health and safety. The third senior teacher leads a united Year 1 and 2 team.

92 The fifth member of the senior management team has responsibility for the management of work with pupils who have special educational needs (SENCO). She

makes a satisfactory contribution to this area. All statutory requirements in relation to pupils with statements of special educational need are met. One area for development is the liaison between the SENCO and the English subject manager in the provision for pupils needing extra help with literacy. Currently the SENCO manages support for pupils with significant difficulties, but does not get involved in arrangements for pupils on the special needs register who have additional literacy help as part of the Additional Literacy Strategy and the Year 1 intervention project. The local education authority has worked closely with the school this year to help them to review their arrangements and this has been very beneficial.

#### *Subject managers*

93 Most subject managers are enthusiastic about their work and give an effective lead to staff. The work of the teachers who co-ordinate humanities and religious education has been particularly effective and has made a significant contribution to the good work in these areas.

#### *The governors' contribution*

94 The work of the governors has improved this year and overall they offer sound support to the school. Much of this improvement is due to the excellent leadership of the new chair. She is supportive and understanding, while at the same time challenging and questioning the work of the school, in order that important issues are tackled with rigour. She is trusted by the headteacher and staff and provides a listening ear as well as a sharp focus on improvement.

95 Some governors have served the school loyally for many years and many are staff members. One new governor, for example, had been a support assistant for many years and brings her expertise to bear on her responsibility for the area of special educational need. The school has some parent governors and has recently recruited a governor from the business community, who is offering a fresh and invigorating perception of the school. The governing body has some vacancies of fairly long standing and this limits its work. Most of the work of the governors is carried out through committees and full meetings. Most governors visit the school regularly to share in its life. One governor, for example, helps pupils make models in the 'Give it a go gang' afternoon session.

96 Most governors work very hard for the school, but there is not a sufficiently clear common vision to help them to all pull in the same direction. While governors overall are supportive of the school, many do not have a clear enough picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The school has been working with the local education authority this year to measure how well it is doing. There is no clear school mechanism for governors to evaluate what is going well and what needs to be improved.

#### *Statutory requirements*

97 In the main statutory requirements are met, although the school does not fully implement the National Curriculum in relation to design and technology. The draft for the forthcoming annual governors' report is very good and clearly sets out the work at Heathlands over the last year.

#### *Equal opportunities*

98 The school's strong commitment to equal opportunities is embodied in its aims and values. This can be seen in the way that it has monitored pupils' progress and identified the need to improve writing skills to raise standards in English. It has recently conducted a detailed survey of parental views, as part of its work on inclusion, in partnership with the local authority and is now looking through its committee structure to address areas identified as needing development.

#### *Financial planning*

99 Satisfactory financial planning and review by the headteacher and the finance committee enables expenditure to be monitored against the school development plan. The

finances are well managed and administered. All funds received for specific purposes, such as those for pupils with special educational needs and the standards fund, are appropriately applied and managed. Specific policy decisions, such as those to maintain small class sizes and provide a high level of classroom support, ensure that all pupils, including those with special education needs, receive a good level of support.

100 The school improvement plan, which covers the current year, is appropriately costed with clear success criteria linked to raising standards and improving pupils' progress. A particular strength of the plan is the clear identification of sources of funding, such as that provided by the 'National grid for learning' to support development in ICT and the application of funds for 'schools causing concern.' The school improvement plan satisfactorily links priorities to spending. The plan is regularly reviewed to take into account the implications of new or changing priorities. The governing body is regularly informed about the school's financial position but some governors have insufficient understanding of the school's priorities and the need to exercise strategic financial management. Although the headteacher and some governors apply the principles of best value satisfactorily, they recognise that improvements are needed in this area. Some governors do not fully understand this aspect of their work and are unable to challenge proposals as 'critical friends' or to assist in planning and identifying areas that could be improved. The school has developed strategies for consulting and communicating with parents and, despite the low level of response, seeks to involve them in shaping the direction of the school. The school seeks to obtain value for money in securing goods and services such as the purchase of improved surveillance equipment.

101 The 1997 inspection identified that a substantial deficit was being carried forward from the previous two schools and although financial planning is attempting to eliminate the deficit, there is a projected deficit for the current year. This includes contingencies to cover job re-evaluation costs and a notional adjustment for a reduction in pupil numbers. In order to reduce the deficit there are some staff redundancies this year.

102 The school is making satisfactory use of new technology to support its work by, for example, using computers to assist with key stage analysis, analysis of attendance data and in the general administration of the school.

103 Taking account of the levels of income and expenditure, the quality of teaching, the progress which pupils make and the standards that they achieve, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### *Staffing and forthcoming changes*

104 There is currently a good level of appropriately qualified and experienced teachers for all year groups. There are two parallel classes in each year group (apart from the nursery) and most of these are small, which means that pupils receive more attention than in many schools. The class structure will change in September, as a result of the falling role. The school is to lose two classes and pupils will be organised in mixed aged classes in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4. Several staff are being made redundant, including the school's music specialist. There is also a lack of staff with design and technology expertise.

#### *Staffing in the reception and nursery classes*

105 At present, given the level of language support required, the provision of staffing for the foundation stage is satisfactory. All staff are very experienced in their work with young children. As well as three knowledgeable teachers there are three, able, well-qualified nursery nurses, who provide very good support in all aspects of the curriculum, though one is employed as a teaching assistant in reception. The school has identified the need to provide more support for both classes in reception and another learning support assistant is to be recruited for September.

#### *Staffing to support pupils with special educational needs.*

106 The organisation of the staff working with pupils who have special educational needs is due to change in September. Two very experienced specialist teachers are being made redundant. This will be a great loss to the school because although their expertise has not always been used to full advantage, they have offered very good practical support to staff. The SENCO is also leaving, but being replaced by a new member of staff. This means that there will be no long-serving member of staff with an overview of work in this area. The school will need to manage this change carefully. There is an adequate number of teaching assistants who give very good support to pupils with special educational needs.

#### *New staff and training*

107 Induction procedures for new staff are rather informal at present and these do need to be reviewed in order to provide a consistent provision. Performance management procedures are in place and these are linked to the School Improvement Plan. Teachers' own professional development needs are not sufficiently clearly identified to ensure that their development is matched to the school's need.

#### *Non-teaching staff*

108 The provision of support staff is good and they work mostly with pupils with special educational needs. They work closely with teachers to ensure effective support and contribute very well to the quality of pupils' learning. Administrative staff, lunchtime staff, caretaker and cleaners all contribute very well to the smooth running of the school and the care of the pupils.

#### *Accommodation*

109 Accommodation is generally good with spacious rooms and shared areas. Rooms are clean, light and airy. Accommodation for the foundation stage is very good. A purpose-built wing was added to the building four years ago. It is spacious and attractive and makes a very good contribution to the quality of provision for the foundation stage. Whilst the outdoor play space attached to the nursery is of a good size, is well developed and fully used, the outdoor provision for reception has potential for more imaginative development.

110 Displays of pupils' work help to make the environment stimulating and pleasant as well as celebrating pupils' achievements. The grounds are also spacious with a hard surface play area, large field and specific learning areas like the wild area. The change of location for the ICT suite since the last inspection has enhanced the provision for ICT particularly well, although ventilation in the ICT suite on hot days can be a problem. Although the caretaker and cleaning staff work hard and are thorough in their duties, there is a major problem with the state of the boys' toilets in the older part of the building. These need some urgent attention to eliminate the overpowering and extremely unpleasant odour that has built up over the years. The library is in a central position, making it easily accessible to all. It is not used to its full potential.

#### *Learning resources*

111 Learning resources are generally adequate and, in the majority of subjects, they are of good quality. There are insufficient practical resources in science and a limited range in design and technology. Computers are well used. Although many resources for ICT have been acquired since the last inspection the school is aware that the addition of an interactive whiteboard would greatly enhance learning. The library offers a collection of fiction and non-fiction books that present positive images of different genders and cultures. Very good use is made of resources in the community, including visits to places of historical and geographical interest. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Overall the school makes effective use of its resources.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

112 In order to build on the strengths of the school, the headteacher, staff and governors need to:

- **Raise standards in mathematics, science and particularly English by:**

### **In English**

- Planning rigorously for pupils to develop their speaking skills;
- Improving the explanation and match of tasks for pupils working independently;
- Teaching pupils to follow verbal and written instructions precisely;
- Ensuring reading books are not too difficult for pupils to read and enjoy;
- Setting consistent expectations in handwriting and spelling;
- Involving parents more fully in supporting their children's reading through the consistent use of reading logs;
- Developing the school library as a teaching resource;
- Monitoring pupils' progress more closely in reading and writing;
- Ensuring more flexibility to literacy hours so that pupils' needs are fully met.

*(Reference paragraphs: 5, 7, 34, 38 & 123 - 140)*

### **In mathematics:**

- Improving the opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum, including more effective use of ICT;
- Improving older pupils' attitudes to learning;
- Refining the approach to the numeracy strategy by defining more specific objectives for each lesson;
- Giving pupils more time to explain their mathematical thinking and developing the use of the review phase of lessons;
- Developing assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning.

*(Reference paragraphs: 8, 35, 73 & 141 - 152)*

### **In science:**

- Improving the presentation of work;
- Reducing reliance on worksheets in some year groups;
- Putting a greater emphasis on investigative and observational tasks to develop pupils' scientific understanding;
- Refining assessment procedures to provide a clearer picture of pupils' progress and set targets for improvement;
- Monitoring pupils' work to give a clearer picture of standards and coverage in the subject;
- Maintaining records of coverage to ensure that there is no repetition or lack of challenge;
- Using ICT more regularly;
- Ensuring pupils record their work in a systematic manner appropriate for their age.

*(Reference paragraphs: 9, 71 & 153 - 163)*

- **Develop a shared vision for the direction of the school by:**

- Discussing with parents, governors, children and staff how they want the school to move forward;
- Drafting a clear plan for the way forward;
- Enabling the headteacher to support and encourage staff, parents, governors and children.

*(Reference paragraphs: 88, 96 & 100)*

- **Improve the school's partnership with parents by:**

- Valuing parents as co-educators;
- Providing parents with better information about their children's progress;
- Working more closely with the parents of pupils with special educational needs;
- Dealing with complaints and concerns in a more conciliatory manner.

*(Reference paragraphs: 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81 & 82)*

- **Establish a more consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour** by:
  - Building on the good practice evident in most lessons;
  - Establishing an agreed policy for encouraging good behaviour based on a positive approach.  
(Reference paragraphs: 20 - 22, 30, 55, 58 & 63)
  
- **Improve the planning and teaching of design and technology and music** by:
  - Ensuring that sufficient time is spent on these subjects;
  - Providing staff training to develop teachers' subject expertise.  
(Reference paragraphs: 11, 36, 39, 97, 170 - 173 & 194 - 199)
  
- **Increase the involvement of governors in planning for improvement and monitoring what happens in school** by:
  - Involving governors in planning for improvement;
  - Establishing procedures to help governors to check on improvement.  
(Reference paragraphs: 88, 96 & 100)

113 The headteacher, staff and governors should also consider the following minor areas for improvement for inclusion in its improvement plan:

- Improving attendance (Reference paragraph: 25)
- Health and safety issues (Reference paragraph: 66)
- Cutting down on excessive paperwork (Reference paragraph: 89)
- Patterns of withdrawal from lessons for pupils with special educational needs (Reference paragraphs: 43 & 47)
- Liaison between staff planning support for pupils with special educational needs (Reference paragraph: 92)
- The state of the boys' lavatories. (Reference paragraph: 110)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	86
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	58

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	30%	47%	17%	5%	1%	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

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	36	361
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	147

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	131

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	61

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6
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 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	24	25	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	16
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	28	28	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	57 (63)	57 (53)	63 (74)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	21	18
	Girls	17	21	20
	Total	32	42	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65 (61)	86 (77)	78 (68)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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	25	23	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	21
	Girls	13	11	16
	Total	26	26	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (62)	53 (54)	78 (67)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	18
	Girls	14	9	17
	Total	30	24	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (63)	51 (52)	73 (56)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	2
White	280
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*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	32	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: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	23

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

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	316

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	36

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	930445
Total expenditure	886731
Expenditure per pupil	2245
Balance brought forward from previous year	-7778
Balance carried forward to next year	35936

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	361
Number of questionnaires returned	61

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	33	10	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	44	5	5	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	36	21	2	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	48	11	10	7
The teaching is good.	51	39	5	3	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	49	26	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	36	7	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	43	7	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	23	46	23	8	0
The school is well led and managed.	25	49	11	7	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	26	57	8	2	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	38	23	13	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**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

114 There are currently 68 children attending part time in the nursery and 37 full time in reception. Children enter the foundation stage in the nursery at the beginning of the term after their third birthday and move into reception in the September after their fourth birthday. Few children have previously experienced playgroup or pre-nursery and a large majority of them enter the foundation stage at well below average levels in all aspects of their development. They make good progress overall as a result of the good provision but only a small majority of children achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

115 There has been a significant improvement in provision for children in the nursery and reception classes since the previous inspection. They now regularly experience good quality teaching overall, with a significant minority of teaching being very good. Planning is securely based on the new national guidance for the foundation stage. Assessment in the nursery is thorough and used appropriately to plan the next learning step. Children with special needs are quickly identified and rapid steps are taken to focus support on specific individual learning targets. There is similarly thorough support for a statemented child in the foundation stage. Effective assessment measures continue to be used in reception, where the local education authority's baseline assessment is used diagnostically. Assessment data is used successfully to organise ability groups for communication, language and literacy as well as for mathematical development.

116 Three well-qualified, able assistants complement staff support in the foundation stage and make a major contribution. The foundation stage is housed in spacious, well-resourced, purpose-built, modern accommodation. Whilst there is good provision for secure outdoor play in the nursery, the outdoor play area for reception is less well developed. Unfortunately both areas suffer from frequent vandalism outside of school hours. Good links are established between home and the foundation stage. Home visits are made as part of a successful induction programme. The curriculum is explained through user-friendly photographs in the entrance. A home-school reading log, in which parents and carers are encouraged to comment on their children's responses to books, establishes a useful, regular link with some homes. Individual language targets are set for children in reception and parents are asked to help in achieving these.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

117 The teaching of this aspect of children's development is good. Staff work inventively to make activities enjoyable for children and to raise their confidence and feelings of self worth. They have supportive, caring relationships with the children and are good role models for them in collaborative working. Activities are well designed to give children wide, independent choices in their practical learning through play. There is a generally effective balance between this and well-led group and class sessions, where calmer, more formal patterns of learning are developed. All are helpful in increasing children's social awareness and skills, such as sharing, taking turns and respecting the feelings and ideas of others. They are also helpful in developing prerequisites for learning, such as using the senses to observe the surrounding world, concentration and independent thought. Despite the good quality of provision and the good progress made by children generally in this area of their learning, a relatively small majority fully achieve the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development by the end of the reception year. Overall, pupils' attainment is below average.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

118 All staff are good teachers, with a wide knowledge of language teaching. They successfully create rich informal and structured situations where children can converse with

each other. They capitalise fully on opportunities for children's vocabulary extension. They excite children's interest in stories and books generally, with the result that children are eager to choose, listen to and talk about stories they enjoy. In the nursery, children begin to understand how books work, turning pages correctly and showing an increasing awareness of the differences in appearance between print and illustrations. In reception, children extend their interpretation of meaning. In one session, for example, they listened with rapt concentration and later discussed a story about prejudice. Good quality teaching of reading is evident as children are introduced to an increasing variety of skills. In reception, many children learn an accurate sight vocabulary of key words. Some already associate letter sounds and names, helped by an effective published scheme, which combines lively signing actions with phonics. A few older children begin to use phonic strategies successfully to read unfamiliar words. Helpful writing corners enable children to make marks on paper informally. Over time these become increasingly conventional and readable. Children draw and write in their 'first of the month book'. These books establish an informative guide to the development of children's drawing and writing skills. In reception, children develop their own successful, eventful 'fairy tales' using illustrations, in the first instance to sequence their own creative stories. The quality of language provision ensures that the children make good progress in their learning. However, by the time they reach the end of the reception year, only a small majority of children have achieved the early learning goals and overall attainment is below average.

### **Mathematical development**

119 The teaching of mathematical understanding is very good. In a valuable multicultural experience, for example, children gathered sets of model animals around an African wild life 'reserve'. In the nursery they counted people and animals illustrated in a beautiful book about life in rural Africa. Practical activities such as regular play with water and sand enable children to gain an understanding of volume and capacity. Similarly in role play areas such as 'The Beach Shop' in reception, children are thoughtfully introduced to coin values and further develop their learning about sets, counting and written forms of numbers through play activities, as they purchase such items as flip flops and sun hats. Good use is made of the outside play area in the nursery for a motivating counting game, such as one involving plastic bottles hanging in a row. In one session, children took turns to throw a giant die and match the numbers on the bottles to the dots shown on it. More able children played variations of this game using two dice and adding two numbers together. Teachers provide children with appropriate opportunities to refine their use of the language of position such as 'next to' and 'under'. However, they use illustrations for this purpose where practical activities would have a greater impact on young children's learning. Most children name basic shapes and took great pleasure in using cardboard cylinders and boxes to construct a three-dimensional model of the forest and house where characters from the fairy tale Hansel and Gretel lived. By the time they come to the end of the reception year, although some children reach the early learning goals, overall attainment is below average.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

120 The quality of teaching is good. Children are exposed to interesting, well-planned learning opportunities, in which they learn to use their senses fully and increase their vocabulary to gain a fuller understanding of the world about them. Through sand and water play children know that there are different materials. From the pleasure of pushing and pulling wheeled vehicles children experience the practical effect of forces at first hand. In one session in the nursery, for example, they patiently dug a hole in the ground and observed the varied components of soil with fascination. In reception, children germinate seeds and watch them grow with interest into varied plants with different leaf shapes and flowers. They carefully plant colourful petunias in car tyre pots to successfully decorate their outdoor play spaces and understand that plants require regular watering in the summer heat to keep them alive. Children use a variety of dried seeds such as beans and lentils to make exciting shaking musical instruments. In reception, they begin to understand how the world is divided up into distinct countries and that cultures vary. They enjoyed hearing a traditional German fairy tale, for example, and learnt songs with apparent ease in

the German language. They have an appropriate understanding of how maps represent countries on the earth and make authentic flags which they proudly sell in their role play shop. Whilst there is evidence of some computer use by children, software resources of activities designed for this age group are relatively underdeveloped. Despite the varied, interesting experiences children have in this area of the curriculum, attainment is below average at the end of the reception year.

### **Creative development**

121 All staff nurture children's creativity and this area is taught well. Role-play corners are well resourced and fully used with 'The Beach Shop' in reception proving a particularly rich source for creative play ideas. Painting and drawing materials are popular. In the nursery one child put much thought and effort, as well as pleasure, into mixing red and yellow paint to create a vivid image of a rocket 'blasting off'. Children enjoy modelling play dough to construct three-dimensional forms. A witch's house and woodcutter's cottage were imaginatively constructed, for example, to look like those in the story of 'Hansel and Gretel'. The witch's house was then enticingly and creatively decorated with many eye-catching materials. Music is used effectively for the most part to stimulate children's creativity. Recorded African drum rhythms are used inventively as a background for children to use their self-made shaker percussion boxes with great delight. Children in reception also sing and dance with obvious enjoyment. A relatively small majority of children achieve the early learning goals for creativity by the time they reach the end of the reception year. Attainment overall is below average.

### **Physical development**

122 The quality of teaching is good overall and is sometimes very good. Many tools are available to help children develop their handling skills. They use pencils, pens and crayons for drawing pictures and in developing more standard forms of writing. Paints are in constant use and children are well pleased with the pictures they form. Scissors, glue and modelling materials, such as play dough, are in constant use and make a significant contribution to the generally good development of hand-to-eye skills seen. Good use is made of a variety of adventure play apparatus in the nursery, though there is sometimes some over-vigorous activity, particularly by boys, whilst girls have insufficient opportunities to use wheeled vehicles. Very good use is made by reception children of the hall space and large apparatus for the development of more formal physical activity and bodily control. It enables most children to meet the early learning goals for physical development by the time they reach the end of the reception year.

## **ENGLISH**

123 Standards in English have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection. Results from national tests over the last four years at ages seven and 11 show the school's performance remaining well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, the performance of seven-year-olds in 2000 remains well below that of their peers, but there are better signs at age 11, where results were in line with those of similar schools last summer. Inspection findings show clear signs of improvement in writing in all year groups throughout the school, but these are not yet sufficient to have a significant impact on results in national tests. Standards in the current Years 2 and 6 continue to be well below average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. There is no significant difference in boys' and girls' attainment in either infant or junior classes. Higher attainers achieve well, with pupils of average and below average ability, the majority, working well and achieving satisfactorily when they fully understand the tasks set.

124 Reasons for underachievement by different groups of pupils in different aspects of English are complex. Firstly, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing when they enter school is poor. Secondly, pupils are not given sufficient, regularly planned opportunities to develop their speaking skills. Thirdly, there is clear evidence that a significant minority of pupils in junior classes do not enjoy reading and writing. Fourthly, the school has not done enough to engage parents in a partnership that addresses pupils'

poor communication and literacy skills. Finally, the quality of pupils' learning during independent activities is significantly worse than when they are receiving direct teaching or support from a teacher or assistant. This is mainly because teachers overestimate pupils' ability to follow and interpret verbal and written instructions.

125 This last point is particularly significant in the light of the contrast between the many examples of high quality writing on display in the school and poor results in standardised tests. The school's focus on writing is having a positive effect, but pupils produce their best writing in response to their teachers' enthusiastic motivation in a very supportive context. In a test situation, they must rely on their own ability to read and understand the instructions and generate their responses without any teaching support. The skills of reading and comprehension remain underdeveloped and in a majority of the literacy hours observed, pupils participated willingly during the whole class sessions, but struggled once left to tackle tasks independently.

### *Speaking and listening*

126 Given pupils' poor communication skills on entry, the school does not plan sufficiently rigorously to ensure that pupils develop speaking and listening skills. Very few pupils in each year groups are confident and competent speakers, yet pupils spend by far the majority of their time listening to their teacher and giving one-word or short answers. The few pupils who do express themselves well tend to be offered greater opportunity to speak, as teachers are aware that they will respond and choose them to speak. In several lessons, the spoken contribution of the large majority of pupils was insignificant.

### *Reading*

127 The school gives additional time to the teaching of reading, because teachers are aware that many pupils read very little at home. Pupils read both from sets of books they share in literacy lessons and at other class reading times, and from books selected from a graded scheme. Older and more able readers choose from a wider variety of fiction, but this breadth of choice is underdeveloped. Teachers' records in Years 1 and 2 show consistent attention to the development of pupils' reading strategies and pupils aged 6 and 7 enjoy reading from the scheme chosen by the school. Because the proportion of pupils who find reading difficult is high, teachers at this stage limit pupils' reading to the agreed scheme and this puts unnecessary restrictions on higher attainers. In one junior and one infant lesson observed, the books being used were too difficult for the pupils. It is vital that teachers select appropriately matched sets of books, which do not result in frustrating pupils' attempts to read.

128 A change of format in teachers' reading records from Year 3 onwards does not assist continuity. Another factor that may serve to depress the reading levels of lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, is the large amount of extra time given to teaching them English. To give too much time to an area of learning at which a child is experiencing failure is counter-productive to building the self-esteem needed for confident learning. In junior classes a few higher attainers read fluently and with expression. They enjoy fiction and are happy to discuss the plot and characters. They have favourite authors and read regularly at home and at school. They know how to use information books, using contents page, index and glossary appropriately. The school library is underdeveloped as a teaching resource. It is currently a lending library only. The school is missing opportunities to use it for the teaching of research skills.

129 A further major gap in the school's strategy to improve reading standards is its comparatively weak involvement of parents in supporting their children with reading. The youngest pupils take their reading book home regularly to share with a parent, but some of the oldest pupils could not remember using a home-school reading log since they were infants until the start of Year 6. Even their current logs showed large gaps. With such a high proportion of pupils experiencing difficulties with reading, the school is not involving parents sufficiently, in order to develop a shared approach to helping their children enjoy reading.

### *Writing*

130 The quality of writing on display throughout the school shows that teachers have put considerable effort into developing pupils' vocabulary in the context of composing poetry, plays, diaries, letters, newspaper reports and stories. The main strength in the school's teaching of writing is the focus on the development of pupils' active, written vocabulary for a wide variety of purposes. Classrooms and corridors throughout the school contain displays of writing by pupils of all abilities, showing how purposeful the teachers' focus has been and how successfully many teachers have motivated their classes.

131 Pupils throughout the school have clearly put considerable effort into their original writing, with several samples on display showing work of above average ability. Teachers in all year groups are extending higher attainers appropriately in writing and giving good support to those of average and below average ability, so that all gain a sense of achievement through their writing being displayed or made into books. Pupils in Year 1 write quite detailed accounts of their visits to Moors Valley and Hengistbury Head. Year 2 pupils create Haiku poems, explain why they like Jill Murphy's stories and write their own dinosaur adventures. Year 3 pupils make particularly good use of vocabulary in their scary stories and in their evacuees' newspaper report. Some of the most effective marking was seen in work completed by this year group, especially that recognising and challenging higher attainers. Year 4 pupils' individual letters to Laura, based on those from Billy, her twin brother, show pupils' ability to recognise and reproduce an author's style. They have taken this further in letters after the manner of Tacitus, during their history studies. Vivid descriptions of imaginary creatures, based on Harry Potter stories, give Year 5 pupils scope to use similes and metaphors and these skills are developed further in Year 6, where pupils have used an expressive arts week to create story retellings and play scripts about Theseus and the Minotaur.

### *Handwriting and spelling*

132 Standards in handwriting on display are mainly satisfactory, but it is clear that the school does not have high expectations for pupils' handwriting in exercise books or for their presentation as a whole. The current practice of teaching handwriting through weekly sessions in Years 1 and 2 is clearly not setting the required standards. Standards in spelling also remain a weakness. Although pupils use the look-cover-write-check pattern, they do not transfer their knowledge of spelling patterns to their original writing.

### *Quality of teaching*

133 In class lessons observed, the quality of teaching was almost entirely satisfactory or good in equal measure, with just a small amount of very good teaching and an equally small amount that was unsatisfactory. In addition, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs in groups or small sets was always good or very good. In both infant and junior lessons, the class teaching sessions are consistently more effective than the group activity sessions. This is because many of the tasks teachers set for pupils to tackle independently are too complicated, too difficult or not sufficiently clearly explained. In some lessons, the quality of learning is good and pupils are attentive and involved while the teacher is talking with them, but pupils' concentration and effort falls away as they struggle to read and follow instructions they only half-understand.

134 Common strengths include teachers' thorough planning, preparation and use of resources. The choice of texts is usually appropriate and wins pupils' interest. Teachers made particularly good use of texts in Years 1, 4 and 5, in lessons where pupils' caught their teachers' enthusiasm. Year 1 pupils learned especially successfully by spotting their teacher's deliberate mistakes in reading. The use of literacy partners was a strength in many classes, with pupils very well organised to sit and work in pairs, so that no time is wasted. Teachers are also clearly making good use of assessment information to organise groups and sets according to ability, though the setting in Year 2 has not proved effective in raising standards and deserves careful reconsideration.

135 In the most successful lesson seen, pupils were strongly motivated by their teacher's clear enthusiasm for the story being shared and obvious belief in the pupils' ability to write equally powerfully. In this Year 5 lesson, the teacher gave very good support to pupils of lowest ability and set challenging, but manageable tasks for those of average ability and above. As a result, pupils continued to work hard and successfully throughout the lesson and all pupils were able to share in the pride of the pupils who read out excerpts from their writing in the final session.

136 The main areas for attention are the appropriate matching of independent tasks to pupils' abilities, teaching them to follow verbal and written instructions, and the development of teachers' questioning and listening skills, so that many more pupils gain regular opportunities to express their thinking in full sentences. The match of sets of reading books to the group's ability is a further area. Also, teachers' expectations, in terms of handwriting and presentation are inconsistent.

#### *Other aspects of the school's provision*

137 The subject manager is knowledgeable and gives appropriate support to staff in planning. The school has not yet developed its monitoring systems sufficiently to enable the subject manager or senior management staff to pick up inconsistencies in spelling, presentation and marking practices, or to highlight the very clear strengths apparent in some of the teaching. Assessment procedures have improved considerably, however, and the school is now in a position to track pupils' progress very clearly on an annual basis. Writing samples are well annotated and teachers note the National Curriculum levels shown by each sample. These samples are kept in different forms by different year groups, however, and the use of different genres creates unnecessary complications for parents, pupils, teachers and subject manager, when trying to check whether pupils are progressing as well as they should.

138 The current statistical charts show very clearly that almost all pupils are currently making at least satisfactory progress and that higher attainers in Year 3 and Year 5 have made particularly good progress over the last year. The statistics continue to show no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment. The school's analysis also shows that pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress. These pupils are doing particularly well because they receive good support from both teachers and their parents.

139 In general, the school has not made sufficient effort to ensure that pupils catch the reading habit by hearing and reading interesting stories regularly both at home and at school. Home-school diaries are not used consistently well. Teachers have begun to make better use of group and individual targets to focus on what it is that pupils need to learn. However, these objectives are not always couched in language understandable to the pupils. Also, in some planning for the literacy hour, there are still too many objectives and this blurs the teachers' and pupils' focus.

140 Overall, many teachers show a very good understanding of the subject and of the pupils' learning needs. Individual teachers are making good use of the literacy hour stories and other texts. The subject manager and senior management team have drawn up an action plan for the current year. They now need to continue to set a clear educational direction, improving effectiveness in all aspects of teaching and learning, making sure pupils catch teachers' enthusiasm, involving parents fully and checking rigorously on pupils' progress.

## **MATHEMATICS**

### *Standards*

141 National test results at the end of Year 2 in 2000 were very low in comparison with the national average. While results were better in 1999 there has been no significant change in relation to national averages over the past four years since the last inspection.

Inspection findings show that there has been a significant improvement this year in the proportion of pupils gaining both average and above average levels. Standards currently are still well below average.

142 Test results in Year 6 in 2000 were well below the national average. However, pupils at Heathlands did just as well as their peers in similar schools. These results were considerably depressed by the fact that no pupils attained above the average level 4. Inspection findings, including the school's internal assessment data, show that standards in the present Year 6 are on the borderline of below and well below expected levels. Along with a bigger proportion of pupils attaining expected levels, a significant minority of pupils is set to attain the higher level 5 this year. Standards in Year 6 have risen faster than the national average trend over the past four years.

143 There are several factors contributing to these improvements. These include better teaching resulting from the introduction of the national numeracy strategy, which has helped teachers to improve their planning. In addition, careful tracking of pupils' progress is being developed and this is enabling the school and individual teachers to focus specific teaching and support where it is most needed. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in the tests.

#### *Achievement shown in lessons and work samples*

144 The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. This is particularly true in Year 3 and Year 4 where almost all pupils are making at least satisfactory progress and many are making good progress. Teaching sessions for pupils with special educational needs are well organised and support assistants are well briefed to develop their confidence and understanding. However in some lessons, for example with the lower attaining set in Year 2, the rate of progress is slowed by the lack of a teaching assistant. In Years 2 and 6 pupils are taught in sets of similar ability. This has a very positive effect on their achievements, as teachers are better able to plan for their particular needs. Both higher and lower attaining pupils benefit from the appropriate tasks set by teachers. Because of the success of this arrangement it is being extended to other years in September.

145 However, it is not having sufficient impact on the motivation and self-esteem of a significant minority of pupils whose attitudes to work are unsatisfactory. This is particularly true among the older pupils, where the desire to improve is not always evident. The school's assessment procedures show that boys often make better progress than girls do. Teachers explain this by saying that boys tend to dominate classroom discussions, although there was no evidence of teachers allowing this to happen during the inspection.

#### *Examples of what pupils know, understand and can do*

146 By the time they are seven, most pupils demonstrate a secure knowledge of the place value of each digit in numbers to 99, confidently adding and subtracting numbers to 20 and beyond. They estimate and measure length and are developing a sound understanding of the need for standardised metric measurements in real life situations. They identify the particular features of common two and three-dimensional shapes. However, about one quarter of pupils are attaining lower levels and are still, for example, working with single-digit numbers. By Year 6, most have acquired a range of methods to add, subtract, multiply and divide and show a sound understanding of the relationships between these operations. They calculate area and perimeter and construct and interpret a variety of graphs. Higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged and deal confidently, for example, with negative numbers and the use of brackets.

147 Pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics, and number in particular, is stronger than their use of this knowledge to solve real life situations and problems. Frequently difficulties arise as a result of limited literacy skills that hinder their ability to solve word problems and to discuss the strategies they use to solve number problems.

### *Use of mathematics in other subjects*

148 Evidence was seen of several good but isolated examples of pupils practising their mathematical skills in other subjects. For instance, in Year 2 they buy sun hats and ice cream from the seaside shop set up as part of their geography study. In a Year 4 science topic they measure accurately and use tables and block graphs to record the growth of plants. However, teachers generally do not plan systematically for these activities across the curriculum and many opportunities to enhance pupils' mathematical understanding are missed. There was little evidence of the use of computers to support pupils' learning.

### *Implementation of the numeracy strategy*

149 Teachers have been well supported in their adoption and implementation of the national numeracy strategy. They use it consistently to guide their planning and in this way ensure that pupils' learning builds progressively. This has been a major factor in the improvements to the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. However, there are relative weaknesses in the ways that teachers are implementing the strategy. For example, the objectives identified for each lesson are often not specific enough to ensure clearly focused teaching. In addition the subject manager has quite correctly identified the review phase of the lesson as an area that requires further development.

### *The quality of teaching and learning*

150 The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably from the time of the last inspection, when it was judged to be variable, but satisfactory overall. It is now consistently good throughout the school. In lessons seen it was never less than satisfactory and was good or better in eighty per cent of them. The quality of relationships established within the classroom is frequently the key to successful teaching. In the best lessons teachers managed challenging behaviour effectively. In Year 5, for example, the teacher consistently applied a variety of positive strategies within clearly defined limits, so that unsatisfactory behaviour by any pupil had little impact on the learning of others. His friendly and encouraging manner ensured that both he and the pupils enjoyed the session and as a result pupils made good gains in their understanding of subtraction processes. Teachers throughout the school demonstrate good knowledge of mathematics. In a successful lesson in Year 3 this was evident in the teacher's continuous monitoring and assessment of pupils' learning, in her confident approach and in her strong emphasis on the accurate use of data handling vocabulary. Alongside the numeracy strategy this good subject knowledge enables teachers to plan thoroughly for each lesson. Based on their improving knowledge of pupils' particular needs a further refinement would be to plan work that is even more closely matched to individuals and groups within classes and teaching sets.

151 Weaknesses occur in lessons where the introductory part of the lesson does not capture and hold pupils' interest and attention. On other occasions teachers do not allow sufficient thinking time in question and answer sessions and often miss opportunities to build constructively on pupils' errors. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to explain the thinking behind their calculations and teachers do not routinely require the rest of the class to follow and comment on pupils' mathematical explanations.

152 Mathematics is well managed and this has contributed to the good improvements since the last inspection. Teaching has improved and standards attained by pupils have risen. Good whole school procedures for assessing attainment and tracking pupils' progress have been introduced, although they are not yet firmly embedded in the teaching and learning process. Nevertheless the school recognises that they will form the basis of its continuing drive to raise standards.

## **SCIENCE**

153 In 2000, teachers assessed standards attained by seven-year-olds to be well below those of other schools nationally, with no pupils achieving the higher levels. In the Year 6 tests, eleven-year-olds attained standards that were well below average when compared

with other schools nationally and also in the proportion attaining the higher levels. In comparison with their peers in similar schools seven-year-olds did not do as well, whereas eleven-year-olds achieved similar results. Since the 1997 inspection the results of eleven-year-olds have been steadily improving at a faster rate than the national picture. Each year proportionally more pupils have attained the higher levels and current indications are that they will do so again this year. However, the results of the seven-year-olds have not shown the same rate of improvement and indications are that this year's results will be similar to last, with no pupils again achieving the higher levels.

154 The school monitors the performance of boys and girls and there are no significant variations in performance between the two groups. Within their lessons all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound or better progress, but because of the low starting point they do not make sufficient progress to catch up with the national average. In the juniors pupils are making progress that is good or better in their lessons. By age eleven, pupils have made sufficient progress for their results to be average when compared with those of similar schools and for an increasing proportion to attain higher levels. The progress made by pupils in the infants is slower and by age seven pupils' attainment does not match that of their peers in similar schools and currently none achieve level 3, showing that there is often insufficient challenge in their work. This is confirmed by analysing pupils' work during the inspection.

155 Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to raise standards in the subject by:

- beginning to monitor the quality of teaching and learning
- implementing a more structured curriculum based on recent national guidance
- beginning to use pupils' existing knowledge as the starting point for learning
- staff training to improve teachers' subject knowledge
- focusing on pupils' acquisition of subject knowledge

156 Analysis of pupils' work confirms that they do not have sufficient opportunities to make and record their observations and to design, undertake and reach conclusions about their own investigations. That the improvement is not greater is due to the fact that pupils are not given sufficient opportunities for practical activities and are not therefore developing their reasoning skills and scientific understanding at the expected rate. The repetition of the same type of investigations does not help to move learning forward, as for example when two different year groups test whether materials are waterproof or observe ice cubes melt.

157 In the current Year 2, pupils are working at well below the level expected for their age. Although their subject knowledge is developing, their scientific understanding and recording skills have not developed at the same rate. In an investigation into the effect of different surfaces on a rolling car it is only with the guidance of their teacher and after initial observation that pupils make predictions about the likely outcomes. They are not sufficiently experienced in carrying out their own investigations and only have limited understanding of how to approach the task. It is only with support that they complete the investigation, keep the test fair and record what they did. Most pupils are only able to record their results in a very limited manner on a prompt sheet.

158 Pupils in Year 6 are working at below the level expected for their age. They have made considerable progress since the infants and although they have developed their scientific knowledge, their scientific understanding is not yet sufficiently secure for them to draw on it to hypothesise and reach conclusions. They have not had the necessary experience of practical activities to design and manage their own investigations or to develop their measuring and recording skills to the expected levels. Year 6 pupils investigate the properties of yeast and why it is important in bread making. They observe how warmth makes dough expand before investigating which ingredient activates yeast. With the guidance of their teacher they separately test each of the ingredients to identify which is the activator and recall that to make the test fair they will need to ensure the same

quantities of yeast and water are used in each plastic cup. They are reminded how to record their work in a recognised format. That pupils are not secure or developed in this process is clearly shown by the need for careful explanation by their teacher, coupled with constant checking and prompting, and that pupils are not yet recording the outcomes of test with precise measurements.

159 Overall the quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good. In all lessons seen in the infant classes it was good, whilst in the junior classes it was very good in the majority and good in the remainder. Teachers are beginning to introduce pupils to an increasing range of methods for presenting data and the results of observations. However, this is insufficiently established and pupils, particularly younger ones, often find difficulty recording their work and ideas in a written form because of their limited literacy skills. Teachers often therefore make good use of pictorial representations and observations to overcome this. In a Year 1 class, pupils listen carefully to the sound made by different instruments before drawing pictures of the sounds they like and dislike. Whilst in a Year 3 class close observational drawing of the crystal formations in rock samples developed pupils' skills and understanding of the way in which what appears to be a solid object is often comprised of a number of components. Similarly, where teachers carefully choose practical demonstrations to illustrate complex ideas, pupils can quickly gain knowledge and understanding. In a Year 5 class, pupils watching a revolving globe illuminated by a torch quickly appreciated how the rotation of the earth in the relation to the sun creates night and day and that the transitional stages of this are dusk and dawn. However, analysis of pupils' work illustrates that these approaches are variable. Pupils often copy pieces of information that do not improve or develop their understanding and many find difficulty in recording their work in written form, which hampers their progress.

160 Throughout the school there is a good focus on pupils using the correct scientific language as teachers introduce pupils to the correct terminology and encourage them to repeat it in both their responses to questions and their work. In Year 1 pupils learn that what they feel in their throat as they make a sound is vibration, in Year 3 that the three main types of rock are igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic and in Year 5 that earth spins on an axis.

161 The quality of teaching in the infant classes in all the lessons seen was good. In the junior classes it was very good in the majority and good in the remainder. It is this quality of teaching that accounts for the sound progress that pupils make in the infants and the good progress in the juniors. Teachers are careful to collaboratively plan their lessons to the agreed topics with the other class in the year group. Those who have attended the local authority's extended training make good use of their approach. They make good use of a range of carefully prepared resources to illustrate teaching points and capture pupils' interest. In a Year 3 class, a sponge was very well used to illustrate how an investigation into the absorbency of rocks could be made. A visiting astrodome was similarly very well used in Year 5 as the starting point for study of the earth in space. As a result pupils enjoy their science lessons, enthusiastically share their knowledge and ideas, and use materials and equipment carefully.

162 Teachers are careful to draw on what pupils already know in their clear explanations, to ensure that they know what is expected of them and to guide and support them in successfully completing the task. They make good use of questioning to challenge and direct pupils' thinking and to check their understanding. For example, in a Year 3 class pupils' are carefully led to the realisation of how to make their investigation into the absorbency of rocks fair by the well-structured questions of their teacher. Teachers also make good use of pupils' responses to gauge what they already know and how much they understand about what they are doing. Marking is variable, usually in the form of ticks coupled with praise to encourage, but does not often indicate to pupils what they could do to improve. This pattern of informal assessment is well supplemented by half-termly assessments. However, this is not yet in a format that provides information on how pupils are progressing within the subject or that will inform the setting of targets for improvement.

Teachers have good expectations of their pupils, who on the whole respond well with good behaviour and enthusiasm for the subject. They co-operate with one another well on completing tasks and taking turns and discussing ideas.

163 The enthusiastic subject manager has regularly monitored lessons, analysed test results and led staff training to raise standards in the subject. Teachers' planning and pupils' work are reviewed to identify areas requiring development and to inform a view of standards in the subject. Good use is made of the well-cared-for environmental area to support work in the subject and shortages in resources have been addressed, although there are not always sufficient for whole class practical activities. The use of ICT within the subject is underdeveloped.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

164 Standards have been maintained well since the last inspection and remain broadly average throughout the school, with some examples of good quality work. Generally pupils enjoy art and their enthusiasm, together with good teaching overall, helps them to achieve well.

165 There have been some improvements since the last inspection, the most notable being the development of clear planning guidelines for staff, which clearly chart the development of skills in areas like drawing, painting and printing. The school has maintained its use of art as a means of raising pupils' self-esteem and the newly formed lunchtime club and afternoon nurture group are good examples of this.

166 Work on display and that seen in lessons shows that pupils are developing skills systematically using a range of media. There were not many examples of sketching on display, but some sensitive drawings of owls by Year 5 pupils welcome visitors in the entrance hall. Good attention is paid to painting and pupils have opportunities to develop their skills in all but Year 4. Good links are made with other subjects and in Year 2, for example, pupils have painted illustrations for some of Jill Murphy's stories. In Year 5, pupils' work shows good use of brushwork in their paintings of sea scenes and generally pupils throughout the school use colour well. Pupils experiment with other media too. During the inspection pupils in Year 1 used paper and sand to make a seaside collage in connection with their history topic. Pupils in Year 4 experimented with dyes and those in Year 5 made three-dimensional models of a planet surface with papier mache.

167 Pupils also learn about famous artists and use their work as a starting point for their own. In Year 2, for example, pupils looked at some pictures by Matisse and used these very successfully to make their own paper collages in the same style. Displays in Year 2 also show that pupils have looked at Lowry's work and used this as a basis for pencil sketches. Older pupils, in Year 6, used their understanding of impressionism to develop their painted jungle scene.

168 In the lessons seen, the quality of the teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good and was predominantly good. Strengths include the very good subject knowledge and expertise of some teachers and good organisation of pupils and equipment. In one very good lesson, the teacher provided time for pupils to evaluate their work and to think how they could improve it another time. Areas for improvement include further attention to the development of skills and expecting pupils to take more responsibility for organising and selecting materials and equipment.

169 The current subject manager is on a year's temporary contract. She has worked hard to improve resources. Many of these are stored centrally, but some specialist resources are kept in teachers' cupboards and are not easily accessible to all.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

170 During the inspection little teaching of the subject was taking place and only two lessons were seen. Evidence has therefore also been drawn from talking to teachers and pupils, viewing work and teachers' planning. It is evident from this that apart from the use of recent national guidance to allocate and plan topics for each class little has been done since the 1997 inspection to develop teaching and learning in the subject. Standards have fallen. Then they were average for Year 2 pupils and below average for Year 6. Now they are below average in Year 2 and well below in Year 6. Although pupils in the infants make sound progress in learning to design and plan their work, they do not have sufficient opportunities to work with a range of materials, tools and techniques and therefore their range of skills and knowledge is not being sufficiently developed. In Years 3 and 4 the picture is similar. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 only have limited opportunities to design and make artefacts other than through work linked to other areas of the curriculum. These tasks in themselves do not allow for the necessary development of subject specific skills. Overall the requirements of the national curriculum programme of study are not being met.

171 In Years 1 and 2 teachers encourage pupils to think about the intended use of their products and to incorporate this in their design drawings. They often start by looking at examples of products such as storybooks that have moving parts to help them with their designs. Year 1 pupils plan and make models of playground equipment whilst those in Year 2 make wheeled vehicles that can move. Both groups make progress in designing and planning their products. Year 2 pupils begin to think about how they might improve their vehicles, although few extend this beyond changing the colour. Pupils do not make sufficient progress in improving their making skills as both years work with thin card and use sellotape as a joining medium. They need to work with a wider range of materials and learn different techniques for cutting, joining or fixing in order to improve.

172 In Years 3 and 4, teachers introduce pupils to an increasing range of methods for powering the products they design and make. Following good guidance and demonstration by their teachers, Year 3 pupils try to use pneumatics to make a part of their card monster move. Pupils' limited ability to measure and cut accurately and their continued use of sellotape to join parts hampers progress. In Year 4 pupils study ballistas for their work in history and make models of them powered by rubber bands. It is evident from the few examples of work available that pupils in both Years 5 and 6 have not followed the planned curriculum and therefore their skills of designing and making are not being adequately developed. For example, cake making in Year 5 is linked to the scientific study of change and the design and decoration of pottery vases in Year 6 to an historical study of the Greeks. In both cases, as in the other examples seen, the focus has been on the subject and pupils have not had the opportunity to plan, make and evaluate as required by the National Curriculum. As a result, by Year 6 standards are well below those expected. Throughout the school pupils often find difficulty in recording their ideas and work in written format because of their limited literacy skills. The use of ICT in the subject is undeveloped.

173 Younger pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and describe in detail how they have carried out their work. Older pupils are unsure about what they have learnt, how their skills and knowledge have improved and what constitutes the subject. Teachers are often not confident in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. The lack of procedures for monitoring teaching and learning in the subject and assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding has meant that the school has not formed a clear view of standards or of weaknesses in provision. Overall resources are adequate but the range of materials available is insufficient and there are few construction kits to support the design process.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

174 By the ages of seven and eleven pupils are achieving standards in line with the National Curriculum levels relevant to their age. There are some examples of achievement

slightly above average at the end of Year 6. Standards are gradually improving and there has been progress since the last inspection. It was not possible to see geography being taught in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection but the analysis of pupils' written work shows standards in line with national expectations.

175 In Year 1 pupils produced a 'play trail' map based on first-hand experience during a local visit to Moors Valley. This work showed good use of mapping symbols and map-making skills. In Year 2 the pupils had learned about maps and symbols before taking part in a visit to Hengistbury Head, where they walked from Christchurch harbour to the sea, producing their own maps of the journey. This work reflected the various abilities within the year group and demonstrated a good understanding of map-making from direct evidence. Additional information from displays and the scrutiny of work indicates that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good understanding of the local environment. By the end of Year 2 they express views and opinions on features of the environment of a locality they find attractive or unattractive. Pupils describe physical and human features of different places when comparing their local environment with other areas. They have a sound understanding, for example, of the effects of weather on the environment. Simple mapping skills are developed and pupils can draw maps of routes around school and identify well-known features on local maps.

176 By the end of Year 6, pupils have maintained good knowledge of their locality. They were able to talk about their visit to Turbary Common and how they were creating web pages to encourage people to care for their local environment. Pupils in Year 6 have good opportunities to develop geographical skills on their visits to places of local interest. Geography makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development by raising their awareness of some of the effects of human activity on the environment and also of the distinctiveness of different cultures. Year 5 pupils built on their experience of fieldwork undertaken on their visit to Osborne House to investigate Britain's links with India as part of the British Empire. A study of the village of Chembakolli and how it compared with Kinson produced a lively display of map work, weather, environment and different homes, indicating good research skills. Older pupils are responsive in their lessons and show that they work with thought and care.

177 Overall, the quality of teaching is good, with one lesson observed in Year 5 being very good. There are some good features that contribute well to pupils' learning, for example the use of ICT to enhance the study of other countries. A strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers use the local environment to stimulate pupils' interest and to heighten their awareness of environmental issues. In this way, teachers ensure that the subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' social development and sense of citizenship. Lessons are well planned and teachers establish a good learning environment. Evidence in books shows an overuse of worksheets in some classes. Pupil management is good and this enables all pupils to learn and to make progress. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies including brainstorm, investigations, teachers' direct explanations and group work. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and are confident. Pupils whose special educational needs have been identified are supported well. Their teachers and teaching assistants know them well and adapt work accordingly so that their learning takes place at appropriate levels.

178 The subject manager is knowledgeable about the subject and has a good vision for its future improvement. She gains information about what is happening in the subject by looking at teachers' planning and sampling work. There is a clear policy and scheme of work in place to guide teachers' planning and to ensure continuity in pupils' learning. She is very enthusiastic and has introduced assessment sheets for each year group. Resources are organised into topic boxes with a good range of maps, globes and aerial photographs. The use of ICT in geography is particularly well encouraged with a good range of videos and CD ROM's available.

## HISTORY

179 Work in history has developed well since the last inspection, when standards were broadly average. These have been maintained, with some older pupils doing better. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work because of the interesting way in which different topics are tackled. This helps them to achieve well in lessons.

180 Planning for the subject has improved and the school now has detailed guidelines to help teachers in their preparation. Staff have done well to provide an interesting and lively approach to the subject when they have had to prioritise the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies.

181 All the work planned is rooted in first hand experiences and this helps pupils to develop their research skills well. In a Year 1 session, for example, pupils interviewed an older lady from the local area about her childhood. They clearly understood that it is possible to develop a deeper understanding about past times by talking to someone who has been alive a long time. The questions posed reflected pupils' previous studies about seaside holidays. Pupils often go on visits as part of their work. A banquet at Corfe Castle for Year 6 brought the medieval times to life and a trip to Osborne House helped Year 5 pupils to learn more about the Victorians.

182 Pupils also develop their research skills by using books and CD Roms. The school has invested wisely in books and other resources recently and this has made it easier for teachers to organise appropriate materials for all pupils. In a Year 4 session, for example, pupils worked well in pairs to present their work on an aspect of Roman life to the rest of the class. Many had undertaken a good amount of work at home and were enthusiastic about what they were doing. Older pupils in Year 6 have undertaken some independent research on an aspect of medieval life, producing some small booklets of very high quality.

183 In some topics pupils learn through drama. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Year 3 had a 'VE Day' party in the hall, which was shared by their parents. To the skilled accompaniment of a governor pianist the pupils sang World War 2 songs, such as *'We'll Meet Again'* and *'The Lambeth Walk'*. They ate their celebration tea, which they had prepared with due note of rationing restrictions. In another session, Year 4 pupils engaged in role play to appreciate what it was like to be a soldier on Hadrian's Wall.

184 There are very good links with other subjects. The very good display of Year 6 work on Ancient Greece, for example, with fine examples of clay pots and pendants, printed tunics, extended writing and photos of pupils performing a Greek play, indicates a very rich curriculum.

185 The overall quality of the teaching in the lessons seen was good and this ensured that pupils did well. Lessons are carefully planned and prepared and so flow smoothly. In many sessions the enthusiasm of the teacher captured pupils' imaginations and fired their interest. In Year 2, for example, pupils discussed their previous work with an inspector and were obviously fascinated by the details of the Great Fire of London, because of the interesting way in which they had been taught. One lesson seen was poor. It did not go well because the teacher had not planned the lesson herself, did not have a firm grip of the subject material and had difficulty in managing the class.

186 There is no doubt that pupils do well in history because of the enthusiasm and subject knowledge of the very accomplished subject manager. She has a clear understanding of standards and provision through the school. She is clear about the next step forward. This is to improve assessment of pupils' progress, using a very good sheet currently being trialled in Year 6.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

187 Since the last inspection, the quality of the pupils' work at the end of both key stages has improved substantially and is now in line with expected levels. The school now provides many opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in using their computer skills. These encourage positive attitudes to learning and have a corresponding impact upon the standards that they achieve.

188 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing a good level of independence in their work. They know how to enter information into a computer, save it, load and retrieve the information when needed and how to shut down a computer correctly. They confidently use the computer for word-processing and they know how to use icons and menus on familiar software to create pictures and text. During an art lesson, for example, pupils in Year 1 copied a picture of a flower successfully by using 'Paint' software. Pupils in a Year 1 class showed great enthusiasm during a lesson preparing them to use the 'roamer' and their understanding of the need for specific instructions was very good. Evidence on displays shows that ICT is used in other subjects, particularly history and geography, but few more developed opportunities to incorporate ICT in other areas of the curriculum.

189 Pupils in Year 6 have followed up a visit to Turbary Common with some very good work in the ICT suite. They create web pages in order to persuade people to care for the common and look after the habitats of creatures living on the common. They extend their knowledge and understanding by exploring the Internet and viewing a variety of web sites to help them with their own designs. During the lesson the pupils learned how to use 'buttons' on their web pages and they were quick to grasp this new concept. Pupils in Year 4 confidently used Super Logo commands and extended their understanding by completing a coloured square following instructions. In Year 5 pupils enthusiastically experimented with Dazzle Plus to create symmetrical designs linked to the gardens they had seen on a visit to Osborne House. Pupils in Year 6 use a search engine to find out information about countries and good examples of this could be seen on a display about Greece.

190 Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic users of the computers. They support each other well in lessons in the computer suite. Few pupils have computers at home so all the skills they acquire are from school. They treat equipment with respect and the behaviour during lessons observed in the computer suite ranged from good to very good. Pupils collaborate well in pairs, are highly motivated and remain on task. As a consequence they make good progress in their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding.

191 The quality of teaching is now very good; it has been influential in the raising of standards and in stimulating the pupils' interests. The teachers have an agreed policy and the skills to be taught in each year group have been established. All staff have assessed their professional development needs and these are being met by training provided by the New Opportunities Fund. Teachers have a good understanding of what needs to be taught to the pupils in their classes and are developing a record of each pupil's progress. Planning is detailed and clear, although opportunities to use ICT in other subjects are sometimes missed and this is an area for future development. The levels of challenge in word processing and graphics are good and improve the pupils' skills.

192 The school has significantly improved resources and the siting of the computer suite to a more central area has had a major impact on the use of this facility. In addition to the computers in the ICT suite, the school still has Acorn machines in classrooms. It is the intention to replace these eventually with PCs that would greatly improve work that can be completed in the classroom. The subject manager has identified the need for an interactive whiteboard in the computer suite to enable teachers to demonstrate new skills and techniques.

193 The subject manager is enthusiastic about the subject, sets good examples of its application in her class teaching and leads the subject extremely well. She has been active in setting up the computer suite and in selecting suitable software. The subject manager supports staff well and monitors their training carefully to ensure effective provision. The school is now well placed to continue to improve teaching and learning, having demonstrated a good improvement since the last inspection.

## **MUSIC**

194 Only one music lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements were made on evidence gathered from a variety of other sources including the school's scheme of work, discussions with the music manager and with pupils from Years 2 and 6.

195 Pupils in the infant years make satisfactory progress in their musical learning. In the juniors progress is unsatisfactory because curriculum provision for music is sporadic. Findings are similar to those identified in the previous inspection report.

196 Music has a low profile generally in the school and at present is only timetabled for most year groups for two terms, during one of which it alternates with drama on timetables. Most musical activity is concentrated in the autumn term, when for the one term only during the last two years the music manager has been responsible for all music teaching. Currently only girls participate in out-of-lesson activities. An out-of-school choir was formed for the Christmas term only, which consisted mainly of girls. It performed for the community as part of the seasonal celebrations and some pupils from it participated in a combined Bournemouth schools choir. A small number of girls play recorders. There is no peripatetic music support from the local education authority in the school. As a consequence there is no central core of pupils' expertise in junior classes.

197 The quality of teaching was satisfactory in the only music lesson observed. The lesson has a clear objective, to 'compose some scary music'. Work efficiently recorded on audiotape from the previous week was evaluated appropriately by pupils and pertinent suggestions made for further development. Ideas were extended more during the observed composition phase with some chilling ones being developed such as creaking door noises. These were practised and sensibly performed for the class by generally productive, collaborative groups.

198 Planning guidance is in place across the school and identifies and allocates specific skills, knowledge and understanding to year groups within work for two terms. Collective listening skills are developed through 'music of the week' which is selected for introduction and conclusion of assemblies. The relevant title and composer are displayed and regularly referred to. Singing in assemblies is a daily feature of school life. Most pupils usually participate fully and have some favourite religious songs, which they sing well together, tunefully and in a lively manner. However, whilst every effort is made to ensure that singing practice is a positive experience for pupils, specific skills are not identified and developed during these sessions.

199 Some effective use of music in other subjects is made in Year 3 as part of a history topic. In the culmination of their studies of life in Britain at the time of the Second World War, pupils experienced an enjoyable community party. They invited their parents and friends to a 'victory' celebration, where they sang traditional, evocative war-time songs to the lively accompaniment from a pianist who was part of the original, historical celebrations.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

200 Standards at ages seven and eleven have been maintained since the last inspection. They are average overall. However, there was significant variation in pupils' attitudes in the lessons seen. They are good in Years 1 and 2 but elsewhere in the school are much more variable. In Years 3 to 6 they range from very good to poor, usually matching the quality of

teaching, and this affects the quality of pupils' performances. Where attitudes are less than satisfactory, including Year 6, although pupils attain expected levels of control and co-ordination in their performances, they do not demonstrate the precision and fluency that comes with a willingness to practise in order to improve. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and mostly attain similar standards to their peers. There is no difference in performance between boys and girls or other groups of pupils.

201 The school's curriculum plan includes all the essential aspects of physical education, including dance, games, gymnastics and swimming. In addition, the school has elected to include athletics activities rather than the optional outdoor and adventurous activities. Swimming is taught in Years 3 and 4 and most pupils reach the National Curriculum standards by this time as a result of the school's structured programme of teaching. Out-of-lesson activities are limited to a weekly sports club for Years 5 and 6 and a netball club for junior pupils. As a result pupils throughout the school are not provided with enough opportunities to develop their sporting interests outside normal school hours. This restricts both their physical and personal development.

202 In Years 1 and 2 teaching is good. In these lessons pupils develop good attitudes to physical education and begin to understand the need to warm up before taking part in vigorous exercise. They join in enthusiastically and this natural enthusiasm is usually channelled into effective learning. They explore a range of skills and actions demonstrating increasing control of their bodies and awareness of the space around them. In gymnastics, for example, pupils in Year 2 persevered well in response to the teacher's high expectations. They linked their movements into simple sequences co-operating successfully with their partners.

203 In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching and learning ranges from unsatisfactory to very good but is satisfactory overall. In the most effective lesson the teacher's confident, firm and knowledgeable approach was successful in enabling all pupils to be fully involved in their learning. He achieved a good balance of skills practice and the competitive games situation that everyone enjoyed. Pupils accepted his judgements readily and a clear sense of fair play is emerging.

204 A common weakness among teachers is their lack of subject knowledge and expertise. As a result many of them are unsure about how to develop and refine particular skills. When teaching throwing and jumping, for example, some teachers were unable to suggest the next steps in learning. It also limits the opportunities they provide for pupils to plan and then to evaluate their own performance and that of their friends in order to identify how to improve. In lessons throughout the school the attitudes and behaviour of a minority of boys and girls presents teachers with a considerable challenge. However, the impact is stronger in Years 3 to 6 where even in successful lessons it affects the quality of pupils' learning and limits the development of higher order skills.

205 With the school's recent focus on literacy and numeracy, physical education understandably has had a lower profile and as a result the enthusiastic subject manager's role is a developing one. There have been no opportunities for her to observe teaching and learning in order to identify weaknesses and share the examples of good practice with colleagues. Although she is able to provide individual teachers with helpful advice and support, there has not been sufficient discussion amongst the staff as a whole about the expected development of skills in the various aspects of physical education.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

206 Standards seen more than meet the requirements of the local agreed syllabus at ages seven and 11. Pupils in infant and junior classes achieve well in their studies for the most part because their teachers make lessons stimulating. Pupils throughout the school acquire a broad knowledge about religions and learn to respect and appreciate the way religion plays a key part in the way many people live their lives. Both the quality of teaching

and standards achieved by pupils have improved since the last inspection and the subject is now one of the school's strengths.

207 Teaching was satisfactory at the last inspection and pupils made sound progress as a result. In all but one of the lessons observed during the current inspection, teachers presented the subject in a way which clearly captured pupils' interest, involved them in discussion and raised their awareness of the importance of religious practices to those observing them. Work recorded in pupils' books and on displays around the school shows pupils expressing their understanding well and using appropriate vocabulary, including words specific to the religions being studied. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is good in both infant and junior classes. Although one unsatisfactory lesson was observed, where the covering teacher's uninspired reading of a story left pupils disinterested, the other five lessons seen were almost entirely of good or very good quality.

208 Teachers in Years 1 and 2 make lessons stimulating by their use of artefacts, usually accompanied by well-prepared explanation and questioning. Year 1 pupils enjoyed creating miniature shelters from a selection of greenery and fruits as they followed their learning about Moses by looking at Sukkoth. Pupils in both Year 2 classes re-enacted a Shabbat meal through role-play, making reverent use of artefacts. In each class, the teacher acted as narrator, leading pupils to express the ritual highlights through mime. The choice of story, pitched at the pupils' level of interest, made a good introduction to each lesson, and the success of both lessons reflected the strength deriving from joint planning and preparation, through the sharing of ideas. Visits also play a major part in raising pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. Year 2 pupils had created individual 'Welcome to the Synagogue' booklets as well as a class book containing carefully drawn labelled diagrams of key features seen during their recent visit. Discussions during their lesson on Shabbat showed their excellent recall of detail from the visit.

209 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to learn successfully because teachers plan equally stimulating activities and use vivid posters to help provide information and phrase questions. Pupils in Year 3 make highly successful use of their literacy skills, especially the higher attainers, as they write lively accounts of the first Pentecost, for example, and use concise bullet points to give five key points to elements of the Christmas and Easter stories. The teachers' use of titles such as 'Born in a Barn' or 'Dark Strangers from the East' helps stimulate a crisp reporting style. In a very successful Year 4 lesson, the teacher created a quiet, reflective atmosphere, in which pupils confidently shared the knowledge gained from their visit to the local Islamic Centre. Pupils showed good understanding as they compared a mosque to a church and considered the importance of the Qu'ran to Muslims and the Bible to Christians. The teacher took pupils' literacy skills carefully into account when preparing recording activities for pupils, as they expressed their understanding of the five pillars of Islam.

210 Pupils in Years 5 and 6 develop still further their ability to express their knowledge about religions and debate what they are learning from their studies. Year 5 pupils begin a study of Hinduism by looking at the many relationships and roles they have, as teachers help them understand the way Hindu gods reflect different aspects of the one God. In work on a separate theme, they write short, moving definitions of peace, again showing the teachers' careful encouragement of opportunities for reflective thought and choice of words to create powerful images. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher made effective use of video and of pupils' own experiences to compare a Hindu marriage ceremony with a Christian wedding. Pupils showed a mature readiness to think about religious practices and discuss these, responding well to their teachers' thoughtful preparation of resources and knowledgeable presentation of information.

211 During this first year of the school's use of the new scheme of work, based closely on the local agreed syllabus, teachers throughout the school are using a thoughtful approach. The subject manager is eager to weigh the strengths and weaknesses of the scheme through an early review and teachers are keen to build on the most successful elements of

work tackled, in order to make the subject even more meaningful and relevant to pupils. Amidst a mainly strong picture, there are areas for development, including greater care in presentation of work by junior pupils and clearer, agreed expectations of the quantity and regularity of recorded work for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. The choice of exercise book and the value attached to it by teachers and pupils is important in this context. Also, staff have not yet fully explored the opportunities for pupils to express their understanding through art, music and drama, as well as through written forms. The school has not yet developed a simple, manageable assessment system, but the planning format allows for this to be developed in relation to each unit of work.

212 Overall, the school encourages a lively, imaginative teaching approach which engages pupils' interest and develops their understanding very successfully. Pupils in all year groups are knowledgeable about the aspects of religions they have studied and show respect for the various religious viewpoints studied. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The subject manager gives a supportive lead and planning systems for each term in each year group offer a particularly helpful framework to help teachers prepare their lessons.