

INSPECTION REPORT

ST FRANCIS CE (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Eastleigh

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116402

Headteacher: Mr S Shepherd

Reporting inspector: Dr Colin Lee
21854

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th January 2003

Inspection number: 247651

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Infant and Junior |
| School category: | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Pilgrims Close Valley Park Chandler's Ford Eastleigh |
| Postcode: | SO53 4ST |
| Telephone number: | 023 8027 1178 |
| Fax number: | 023 8025 1988 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs F Grove |
| Date of previous inspection: | 28 th March 2001 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 21854 | Dr C Lee | Registered inspector | Physical education | The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further |
| 9086 | Mrs R Watkins | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents Educational inclusion |
| 22856 | Mrs K Campbell | Team inspector | Music Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage | |
| 22805 | Mrs J Greer | Team inspector | Science Geography | Special educational needs |
| 10611 | Mr M James | Team inspector | Mathematics Information and communication technology | |
| 21581 | Mrs M Speakman | Team inspector | Art and design History English as an additional language | The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils |
| 20846 | Mr A Wilson | Team inspector | English Design and technology | |

The inspection contractor was:

*Criterion School Inspections
Juniper House
23 Abbots View
Abbotswood
Cinderford
Gloucestershire
GL14 3EG*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

6-9

Information about the school
How good the school is
What the school does well
What could be improved
How the school has improved since its last inspection
Standards
Pupils' attitudes and values
Teaching and learning
Other aspects of the school
How well the school is led and managed
Parents' and carers' views of the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

10-12

The school's results and pupils' achievements
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12-13

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

13-16

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

16-17

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

17-18

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

18-21

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

21

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

22-25

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

26-43

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Francis Church of England Primary School is larger than the average primary school. There are 400 pupils on roll, between the ages of 4 and 11, with slightly more girls than boys. Numbers are a little lower than at the time of the last inspection. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about the same as in most primary schools. The special needs are wide-ranging but, for most of the pupils concerned, are related to some form of learning difficulty. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is also average, but very few of these pupils need additional support. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average and this reflects the generally favourable socio-economic backgrounds of many of the pupils. The school is a very stable community with only a small percentage of pupils either joining or leaving the school during a school year. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is above the expected levels. The inspection of collective worship and religious education has been carried out separately by the Diocese.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with some significant strengths. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and standards have improved steadily since the last inspection. Standards in English, science, art and design, and information and communication technology are consistently above average and, in reading and mathematics, are well above average. The main reason for pupils' good levels of achievement is the consistently good teaching. All adults show high levels of care and concern for pupils' welfare. The excellent leadership and management by the headteacher and the very good leadership of other key staff play a central role in the school's success, as does the strong sense of teamwork between governors, teachers, learning support staff and non-teaching staff. Together they ensure that the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils in the infants and juniors achieve high standards in speaking, listening, reading and mathematics and above average standards in art and design and information and communication technology. By the end of Year 6, standards are also above expectations in history and music.
- Pupils' personal development is very good, as a result of the very good provision, overall, for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, being very good in the junior classes.
- The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs is a particularly strong feature of the very good educational support and guidance that is provided for all pupils.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership of the school.
- There is very good leadership and management by key staff and the governing body.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in writing*.
- Learning opportunities at the Foundation Stage¹ could be better planned to meet the needs of all children.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to the parents and carers of all pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement is judged on the progress the school has made since both the September 1999 inspection and the subsequent inspection in March 2001. The latter reviewed how successfully the school had addressed the major shortcomings found in 1999, and judged progress to be good, with special measures no longer being required. This progress was seen in leadership and management, standards in mathematics, science and information and communication technology, the quality of teaching and in the efficiency of the governing body. Further good progress in these areas, particularly leadership and the quality of teaching, shows that the school has made very good improvement overall. Additional aspects in which the school has made significant progress are pupils' attitudes and behaviour, their standards in art and design, and in history, in junior classes. There has been improvement in

¹ The Foundation Stage relates to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

*The areas for improvement marked with an asterisk * have been identified as priorities in the current school development plan.*

curriculum provision for infants and juniors and in provision for personal development for pupils of all ages. By developing good procedures for monitoring and evaluating pupils' standards and the quality of teaching, the school is now in a strong position to succeed still further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|------------------------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools ² |
| | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2002 |
| English | A | A | A | B |
| Mathematics | B | A | A | B |
| Science | A | A | B | C |

| Key | |
|--------------------|----|
| very high | A* |
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |
| very low | E* |

Test results overall show a rising trend that matches that occurring nationally, although 2002 saw a slight fall in all subjects compared with the previous year. In 2002, pupils came close to the challenging targets set for them and higher-attaining pupils achieved particularly well with the percentages of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 being well above the national averages in all tests. The test results of pupils at the end of Year 2 also show a consistently good level of achievement. In 2002, results were well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics while teachers assessed pupils' attainment in science to be above average. The higher attainers in Year 2 also did well, and the percentages attaining levels higher than expected were well above average overall.

Inspection evidence confirms this generally positive picture of standards, with many successes and a few areas for development. When children start in reception, their attainment is generally above the expectations for their age. They maintain this comparative standard and are above the expectations at the end of the reception year in all areas of learning except their creative development, which is in line with expectations. This means that children make satisfactory progress in this first year at the school. From Year 1 onwards, the rate of pupils' progress increases. The inspection found standards attained by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 to be well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing, science, art and design and information and communication technology. Pupils at the end of Year 6 also achieve above expected standards in history and music. Standards in design and technology, geography, and physical education, meet expected standards.

Different groups of pupils are making at least good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Those with English as an additional language are supported very well and this helps them to make good progress in a comparatively short period of time. The specific learning difficulties of pupils with special educational needs are successfully overcome, again as a result of very good support, and their progress is good. Higher-attaining pupils are challenged well by their work at all ages and the percentages achieving higher-than-expected levels for their age gradually increase with time. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to get close to the challenging targets that have been set for them in the 2003 national tests.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils' very good attitudes are reflected in their obvious enthusiasm for the school and the work they do. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour is very good overall in lessons, around the school, and during recreation. |
| Personal development and relationships | Excellent relationships exist among pupils and between pupils and staff, contributing to pupils' very good overall personal development. The care that older pupils show for younger ones is exceptional. Those pupils with specific responsibilities carry them |

² 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

| | |
|------------|---|
| | out very conscientiously and pupils of all ages are quick to show initiative. |
| Attendance | Very good. Attendance figures are well above national averages while unauthorised absence is below average. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Quality of teaching | Satisfactory | Good | Very good |

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

Variations in teaching and learning between the key stages are primarily the result of the differences in the expectations that teachers have of pupils and the extent to which teachers successfully match learning activities to the needs of pupils of different abilities. These qualities are very good in Years 3 to 6. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily in reception. In the other classes, English as a whole and literacy in particular are taught well and mathematics and numeracy are taught very well. Lessons in other subjects are used well as opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The same is true of information and communication technology, with many subjects being used as opportunities for pupils' to practise and improve their information and communication technology skills. The needs of different groups of pupils are generally met well in infant and junior classes. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. Work is generally carefully planned and the good quality of teaching by specialist teaching and support staff enables these pupils to make good progress. There is good provision for higher-attaining pupils, with work being well planned. All teachers use support staff well, briefing them thoroughly on the objectives of learning activities. The work of support staff throughout the school is of good quality and they match the very effective behaviour management that is achieved by teachers which is very good in reception and junior classes and good in infant classes.

Pupils generally work hard and show very good levels of concentration and interest. In the case of pupils in the juniors, their quality of learning is very good, whether working under supervision or independently. The quality of learning is not as high in younger pupils, being satisfactory in reception and good overall in infants.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The breadth and balance of learning opportunities are satisfactory at the Foundation Stage and good for all other years. For all pupils the curriculum is enhanced well by educational visits and a good number of visitors who make valuable contributions to lessons. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Provision is very good overall and the Code of Practice is implemented fully. There is early identification, good liaison with parents and regular review of pupils' progress towards the targets that are set for them. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Very good provision that meets individual pupils' needs very successfully. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good overall with strong emphasis and good provision for spiritual development and very good provision for moral, social and cultural development that encourages respect for others. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school provides very good support and guidance and attends well to all aspects of pupils' welfare. This includes very good procedures for child protection. The clear, detailed policy on race equality is implemented very rigorously and successfully. There is very good monitoring of all aspects of pupils' development, especially through detailed assessment of their learning. The information from assessment is used practically and successfully to guide curriculum planning and for setting targets for pupils. |

Parents play a very important role in the life of the school and a strong partnership exists. The school works hard to promote links, providing a very good variety of information and involving parents very well in their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is supported very well by the very good deputy headteacher and subject and other leaders. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well and provides very constructive guidance. Governors have a very clear vision of the school's strengths and weaknesses. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good self-evaluation procedures and analysis of relevant data enable the school to identify priorities, set itself targets and pursue effective courses of action for future improvement. |
| The strategic use of resources | Very good use of physical and human resources and very efficient management of finances. |

Staffing levels are good and both the accommodation and the quantity and quality of learning resources are very good. The school applies the principles of best value very well, placing very good emphasis on consultation of all members of the school community as part of the ongoing process of school improvement.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The good progress their children make. • Their children's good behaviour. • The good standard of teaching. • How the school deals with their questions or problems. • That the school has high expectations of its pupils. • The good leadership and management. • Their children are being helped to become mature and responsible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information provided about their children's progress. • The homework set. • The range of activities outside lessons. |

Inspectors endorse all the positive views of parents and, in the inspection team's judgement, parental concerns are largely unfounded. The type and amount of homework set for pupils are suitable and consistent with the school's policy. The school provides both good information about pupils' progress and a good range of opportunities for consultation with teachers. The range of activities that supplement the curriculum is extensive and the clubs and activities outside lesson time are similar in number to that provided in most primary schools. These clubs, however, are confined to music and sport for older pupils only, and there is scope to increase the breadth and the age-range of provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children in the reception classes vary considerably in their attainment when they start school at the age four but, on average, the formal assessment that is carried out soon after children enter the school shows overall attainment to be above expectations in all areas of learning except creative development, which is in line with expectations. This is the same as at the time of the previous inspection in 1999. By the time children join Year 1, they have made satisfactory progress and exceed the expectations for their age in most aspects of their development. This is the case in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Children remain in line with expectations in their creative development and this is partly due to there being insufficient opportunities to develop creativity and imagination through exploration and experiment with different media. In their language development, children achieve good standards in speaking, listening and reading skills, but their writing skills are less well developed in the majority. Children with special educational needs make good progress, often achieving well in relation to their past levels of attainment, due to the good support that they receive and the good attention to their needs. Although the needs of more able children are not met as successfully, with insufficient attention being paid to assessing their learning and planning, their progress over the year is satisfactory, however, they could achieve more than they do.
2. Children start Year 1 with attainment above the expected levels, and their rate of progress increases during their time in the infants. By the end of Year 2, the school's results in national tests are consistently well above national averages. Results have been at this level in reading and writing since 1999, although there was a drop in writing in 2002, compared with the previous year. Attainment in mathematics has shown good improvement, from being average in 1999 to well above average in 2002. Standards in science, as assessed by class teachers, were above average in 2002 although, when compared with similar schools, standards were average. When compared with similar schools results in reading were well above average, and writing and mathematics were above average. One other feature of the 2002 results is the good level of achievement by more able pupils. This is shown by the percentages achieving the higher-than-expected Level 3 in the tests. The results were well above the national average in all the tests and very high in science assessments, with 67 per cent attaining the higher Level 3, which placed the school in the top five per cent nationally.
3. Results in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 show good improvement over time. In 2002, English and mathematics results were well above the national averages and science was above average. Although there was a drop from the very high levels of the previous year in all tests, results were a good achievement in relation to the pupils' past attainment. The more able pupils did well and the percentage achieving the higher Level 5 were well above the national averages in all tests. In comparison with similar schools, results in English and mathematics were generally above average and those in science were average. Pupils did not quite achieve the very challenging targets that had been set for them.
4. Test results reflect pupils' good levels of achievement in infant and junior classes and inspection evidence confirms this, although standards of pupils' work in lessons are not quite as high as past test results, Looking at pupils' work towards the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are currently above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. Targets set for the pupils currently Year 6 to attain in the 2003 national tests are, again, challenging but pupils are on track to achieve the mathematics target and get close to that for English. Within English there is a consistency of standards being well above average in speaking, listening and reading, but standards in writing are not as high as they should be. Writing is above average and pupils are making satisfactory progress, however, standards are held back by weaknesses in extended writing, in terms of both quantity and quality. Standards of handwriting are very inconsistent and generally not high enough. Standards in mathematics are being maintained at the high levels seen in national tests. Science standards are secure and pupils in Year 6 have very good science

enquiry skills, as is seen in the quality of their planning of investigations and the good use they make of existing knowledge when thinking about possible outcomes of these investigations.

5. The good quality of learning opportunities in infant and junior classes is contributing to the good overall achievement of pupils. This is seen particularly in art and design, and information and communication technology, where standards exceed expectations at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Pupils in the juniors make good progress in history and music, resulting in standards exceeding expectations by the end of Year 6. Overall, the general levels of standards and achievement have improved since the school was last inspected.
6. Specific groups of pupils all make consistently good progress. In the case of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, this good progress is due to a combination of very good support, clear targets and well-planned learning activities. More able pupils are identified from an early age and, while those in reception need more attention, there is good provision in infant and junior classes, especially in literacy and numeracy, which helps these pupils to maintain their progress. There are no significant differences between the standards achieved by boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils come to school very willing to learn. The good attitudes noted in the 2001 inspection report are now even more apparent and other aspects of pupils' personal development have also continued to improve. Their behaviour is now very good, and helped by the expectations of staff, they show a very good capacity to use their initiative and to cope with responsibilities. Pupils of differing ages, abilities and backgrounds are all very friendly and co-operate with each other and adults in the school community. Their attendance remains very good, as at the previous inspection.
8. In lessons, pupils' response is rarely less than good and in the junior classes it is often very good. Pupils' high level of interest and their willingness to co-operate with their teachers make an important contribution to their learning. Even the youngest children arrive happily in the reception classes in the morning, readily get involved in activities, and enjoy what they do. This reflects the children's very good personal, social and emotional development. These children, like those in all the older age groups, usually concentrate well and persevere with their tasks. Throughout the school, pupils generally show most interest when teaching is really stimulating. For instance, in a history lesson pupils in Year 3 were enthralled when their teacher presented herself as the Roman Emperor Claudius. This helped them become really absorbed in their task of considering reasons for and against an invasion of Britain from the emperor's viewpoint, so they learnt a great deal. Pupils work together very amicably when required to. For instance, older pupils cheerfully co-operated to evaluate each other's work, as in a Year 5 dance lesson, when pupils' initiative in putting forward ideas for others' improvement, coupled with their willingness to use each other's suggestions, made an important contribution to their progress. A well-developed sense of responsibility is apparent, not only in lessons, but also in the way pupils of all ages take homework seriously. On nearly every occasion they meet the deadline set for completing it.
9. Pupils focus so well on their work that there is rarely any sign of misbehaviour in lessons. Occasionally, a few of the oldest boys lapse into distracting behaviour but the effective strategies used for managing such situations mean that order is soon restored and there is little interruption to learning. Behaviour around the school and in the playgrounds is just as good as in lessons. Pupils work and play in an environment that is free from oppressive behaviour, such as sexism and racism. Bullying and other unkindness rarely occur because pupils understand that they should consider others' feelings. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
10. Pupils' attitudes to others contribute to the very pleasant and orderly nature of the school community as well as to pupils' progress in lessons. For instance in Year 6, pupils are very willing and helpful as they perform their duties in the office at lunchtime. Other older pupils readily carry out responsibilities for helping younger ones in the dining hall and playground. As well as care and consideration for each other, pupils recognise the needs of others in the wider community, and with support from their families raise considerable funds for a range of charities. Older pupils begin to understand important issues, such as the impact of human activities on the world about us and the conflicts that may arise between financial interests and the protection of features they value in the

natural environment. All respond reflectively to the varied opportunities for prayer that they are given in assembly and at other times during the school day.

11. Attendance and punctuality are very good and contribute to the good progress that pupils make. It is rare for any pupil to miss school without good reason.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. The qualities of teaching and learning are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, good in Years 1 and 2, and very good in Years 3 to 6. The good improvement in the overall quality that was found by the inspection in 2001 has continued, and this is particularly noticeable in the junior classes, where the high standard of teaching is having a very positive impact on pupils' progress.
13. Teaching in the reception classes has strengths such as very good management of children by teachers and teaching assistants alike. Thorough planning of well-chosen experiences for children's personal, social and emotional development contributes to the very good teaching of this area of the curriculum. However, there is greater variability in the teaching of other aspects of learning. This is due to a lack of purpose in some of the activities provided for children, particularly those where children work independently of adults. There is insufficient attention, at the planning stage, to the specific learning to be developed by these activities. The needs of children of different abilities are not always considered sufficiently with the consequence that higher-attaining children are not always challenged enough by the tasks they are given. The lack of detailed attention to planning for individual children's needs arises from a corresponding lack of day-to-day assessment of children's achievements. Daily planning is therefore not driven by a clear enough picture of how well children are doing. Over the longer term, teachers assess children's progress more satisfactorily.
14. In the infant classes, the qualities of teaching that are consistently good are the depth and breadth of teachers' subject knowledge, the teaching of basic skills, behaviour management, and the variety of methods used to develop pupils' learning. Many of the good qualities present in teaching in the infant classes are, correspondingly, very good in the junior classes. One of the most significant features of teaching in the juniors is the level of teachers' expectations. This is consistently very high, yet the degree of challenge in learning activities is always carefully matched to pupils' differing abilities. This results in pupils who are highly motivated learners, often making very good progress in the course of a lesson. This was evident in a very good geography lesson seen in Years 4 and 5, an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 6, and an equally excellent information and communication technology lesson in Year 3. The two examples of excellent teaching shared the quality of constant ongoing assessment of how well pupils were learning. This led to carefully controlled increases in the pace of the lessons and in the relative difficulty of the learning activities. Pupils of all abilities were helped to be successful and this raised interest and motivation. The effect on learning was excellent and, in both lessons, all pupils felt a great sense of accomplishment.
15. Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall. The teaching of basic literacy skills is good. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy Strategy very effectively by providing a good range of activities that are matched well to the needs of groups of pupils of different abilities. Teachers are successful at using lessons in subjects, other than English, to develop pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills but not all relevant learning activities in other subjects are consistently used as opportunities to develop writing skills. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented very well. Teachers are confident and promote number work strongly. Teachers have a good overall knowledge of information and communication technology and they use this successfully to plan appropriate learning opportunities to support pupils' learning in other subjects, although this could be developed more fully in science.
16. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well in lessons through planned tasks, which are carefully matched to their individual needs. Both teachers and learning support assistants ensure that pupils understand their tasks in all lessons across the curriculum. Most pupils with special needs have regular time working individually or in very small groups with a learning support assistant. During this time they work on tasks that are specific to the targets on their individual education plans. There is a similarly good level of support for the few pupils who

have English as an additional language and are at an early stage of learning to speak English. There is good planning of specific provision for more able pupils in junior classes, but this is more variable in the infant classes, where some teachers pay insufficient attention to the need for these pupils to be given really challenging learning activities in subjects other than English and mathematics.

17. The quality of learning is good overall, being highest in the junior classes and indicating the effort that pupils in these classes are putting into trying to reach the high expectations that their teachers have of them. In these classes, all pupils respond very well to teachers and other adults and work conscientiously and co-operatively. Pupils maintain good levels of concentration and interest in their work at all times, including occasions when they are required to work independently. Here they show commendable maturity in their attitudes. The pace at which they work, and the amount of work produced are good overall, although these vary according to the expectations laid down by individual teachers. Generally, where the teacher's delivery is brisk and expectations are high, the pupils respond by working quicker and achieving more. These many good features of pupils' learning are consistently highest in the Year 4 classes. Conversely, in the infants, pupils do not generally achieve the qualities of learning of older pupils, because teachers' expectations are not consistently high enough. Pupils generally have a good knowledge of their own learning, because teachers provide daily opportunities for self-evaluation, encouraging pupils to reflect on their work during the day. Within lessons, teachers provide clear indications of what is to be learned during a lesson and re-visit these intentions as part of lesson conclusions. However, there is inconsistency in the extent to which teachers use their marking of pupils' work as a source of feedback to pupils about the work's strengths and weaknesses. While some teachers provide clear indications of what is successful and what needs attention, others confine marking to a series of ticks. This is confirming what has been learned from work sampling carried out by several subject leaders, resulting in the use of marking being a priority within the current school strategic plan.
18. Some parents have expressed concern about homework provision, but inspectors do not share this concern. Provision is in line with the expectations printed inside pupils' homework diaries. It is regular and relates well to what is being taught and learned in class lessons. In addition to literacy and numeracy tasks, pupils in the juniors are given occasional work in other subjects that ensures a good variety in what is being done at home and encourages the development of their research skills.

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

19. There has been very good improvement in curriculum provision since the 1999 inspection, when overall provision was judged to be unsatisfactory. The curriculum is good in Years 1 to 6. At the time of the 2001 inspection, the pace of improvement was judged to be good. All staff have been instrumental in achieving this improvement. The deputy headteacher is responsible for leading curriculum development and she is assisted well by a deputy curriculum leader. Considerable emphasis has been put on defining and developing the role of the subject leaders, so that all are clear about what they have to do to improve subject provision and they are given the time and resources to do it. Initiatives that were in progress at the time of the 2001 inspection, such as the improving of provision for information and communication technology, are now having a considerable impact on standards. The school now provides its pupils with a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum with interesting and relevant links being made between the different subjects. The school's curriculum fully meets statutory requirements.
20. The curriculum provision for children in reception was found to be satisfactory at the time of the 1999 inspection. It remains satisfactory, with planning covering all the areas of learning, but further work still needs to be done to ensure that the activities provided for the children are always appropriately matched to their learning and personal needs.
21. As was noted at the time of the 2001 inspection, curriculum planning is now thorough and comprehensive and the improving provision in English, mathematics and science has been maintained. The content of the curriculum is clearly outlined in the useful curriculum overview for each year group. Information about what is to be taught is given in more detailed subject plans that take account of the recommendations of the nationally published curriculum guidelines and are

tailored to the particular needs of the school. This planning is then used to inform teachers' lesson planning. All this information is recorded electronically and curriculum leaders are able to download planning, and make adjustments readily when necessary.

22. Since the 2001 inspection, provision for information and communication technology has improved. Full use is made of the school's computer suite. Pupils acquire new skills in information and communication technology and they then are able to apply these to support their learning in other subjects. The teaching of information and communication technology also draws on pupils' current learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 learnt how to import digital photographs and graphs from other programs in order to devise a poster that supports their work on the school's outdoor environment in geography.
23. There is good provision for the teaching of literacy skills. The reorganisation of the timetable, for instance the arrangements for teaching literacy and numeracy in Years 5 and 6, in three classes grouped according to prior attainment, was noted during the 2001 inspection as having a positive impact on pupils' attainment. This arrangement continues to work well. Although appropriate use is made of some subjects, other than English, to promote literacy, there are generally insufficient opportunities for pupils to write independently.
24. The provision for teaching numeracy is very good. As in literacy, pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from the arrangements for three classes organised by prior attainment. Teachers plan together in year groups and this ensures that pupils in different classes within the same year group have similar learning experiences. Teachers indicate in their planning where work is to be modified for the lower-attaining pupils, or extended for those who are higher attaining.
25. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Since the inspection in 1999, when provision was judged to be unsatisfactory, there have been very significant improvements. Class teachers quickly identify pupils for whom they have concerns. These pupils are monitored and assessed by the co-ordinator for special needs provision. Pupils' individual education plans are well structured with very detailed, achievable targets for development. The targets are reviewed informally at regular intervals and formally each term. Progress against the targets is then recorded and new targets set. These are shared with parents, who are invited to the review meetings. Pupils are made aware of their targets.
26. The arrangements for supporting pupils who speak English as an additional language are good. The school has clear systems in place to provide support when it is necessary with arrangements in place for accessing the local education authority's provision and assessing pupils' progress in acquiring English. At the time of the inspection, the very great majority of these pupils were confidently bi-lingual and required no additional support in order to make similar progress to their classmates. Those very few pupils who needed additional support were recognised and curriculum provision was adjusted appropriately.
27. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. This represents an improvement since the 1999 inspection when personal, social and health education was judged to be satisfactory. The school recognises the importance of pupils' personal, social and health education and, since last Easter, there has been a leader for this aspect in place. Since then, she has established a drugs education policy and an anti-bullying policy to support the personal, social and health education scheme of work that was already in place. Personal, social and health education is included in each year groups subject overview and taught throughout the school. The content of each term's work is further amplified in a detailed planning document. Issues are taught in a context that links them closely with the pupils' daily experiences. For example, at the beginning of Year 3 pupils consider how to face new challenges positively. Issues concerning relationships are tackled appropriately with all ages and those related to emotional, physical and sexual development are addressed in Years 5 and 6. The careful promotion of drug awareness starts at an early age, when, in reception, children talk about medicines, through to Year 6 when, as part of wider personal, social and health education covering personal responsibility and safety, pupils discuss the risks and effects of legal and illegal drugs. The personal, social and health education course is further enhanced by involving representatives of local services, such as the police and fire brigade.

28. A good level of attention is paid to ensuring that pupils have equality of access to all the school has to offer. There are clear and relevant statements on equal opportunities and on racial equality which reflect the school's aim, which is:

'to value everyone and recognise their abilities, needs and contributions so that they can continually achieve their best.'

29. Overall, lessons are planned with appropriate attention to the learning needs of pupils of all attainments and there is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and generally make good progress. However, a few pupils do not have their full entitlement to attendance at school assemblies because they are withdrawn regularly for additional literacy practise. Staff have recently been considering issues of racial equality and how they impact on the school.
30. There are good links with partner institutions, notably the close liaison with a local special school. The school makes good use of its links with the community to extend pupils' learning. A wide range of visits and visitors to the school enhance the curriculum further. For example, visiting specialists, such as musicians, widen pupils' experience. A school governor works with the most able mathematicians in Year 6. Visits to places of interest are carefully linked with aspects of the pupils' current learning. For example, in Year 4, pupils visit the 'Mary Rose' as part of their studies about the Tudor dynasty. The school is currently in the process of devising a system, whereby staff and pupils can evaluate the success of these activities and an annual programme is to be produced.
31. The school provides a limited range of activities outside the classroom, for older pupils. These activities include football, netball, cricket, athletics, choir, recorders and orchestra. Whilst this provision is satisfactory, no activities are provided by the school other than in sport and music, and nothing is provided for younger pupils. Inspectors, therefore, have some sympathy with parents' concerns about the narrowness of provision, although recognise that a good number of teaching staff are involved in what is currently provided.
32. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is very good, overall, and the school has achieved good improvement since the last inspection.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. There is a clear set of values underpinning the work of the school, securely based on the value and importance of the individual and supported by a strong and caring Christian ethos. These are reflected clearly, for example, in the use of the 'value board', a feature of many classrooms, whereby pupils often, quite independently, write down the good qualities shown to them by a friend. These are also reinforced in school assemblies, where the headteacher and colleagues continually seek to emphasise the notion of each child's individuality by, for example, asking pupils to set personal goals and resolutions for themselves. Many class assemblies include similar moments for reflection, although on a minority of occasions pupils take a more passive role and such opportunities are missed. In personal, social and health education lessons, on the other hand, the teachers consistently encourage pupils to contemplate issues, such as pride, courage, or fear, and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Additionally, teachers make good use of 'quiet time', during which pupils discuss issues such as caring for the world or read out prayers to the rest of the class, which they have written themselves.
34. The strategies for promoting pupils' moral and social awareness are very good and make a significant contribution to the positive relationships, which flourish throughout the school. Pupils' moral understanding and their sense of right and wrong are developed very successfully throughout the whole curriculum. Teachers foster cooperation with others and expect the pupils to take responsibility for their own actions, with frequent reminders of the need to respect the rights and feelings of others. This is clearly reflected in the very good standards of behaviour observed in lessons and around the school, and the politeness with which pupils treat adults and each other. The recent appointment of a pastoral leader is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and response to moral issues. This is because pupils are actively involved in discussion about matters affecting their day-to-day lives and are instrumental in shaping the moral code by which the school operates. The school is currently in the process of establishing a school council, which has the potential for developing this corporate sense of responsibility still further. The school's scheme for personal, social and health education enables pupils to explore wider moral issues. During the

week of the inspection, for example, a local police officer visited the school and led an excellent discussion with pupils in Year 4 about drugs awareness. The class involved demonstrated a mature and extremely responsible attitude to this complex topic, typical of pupils throughout the school.

35. The school's promotion of pupils' social development is very good. The very positive examples set by all adults make a significant contribution to the very good relationships that permeate the school. At every opportunity, staff demonstrate that they value the contribution of all members of their class equally, and the vast majority of pupils respond by doing the same. The teachers also create regular opportunities for pupils to work in groups and pairs. In the numerous lessons seen, where this was the case, pupils almost invariably worked harmoniously and were willing to listen to what their friends had to say. Out-of-school visits to places of interest provide opportunities for pupils to develop good social skills. Residential trips, to the Isle of Wight in particular, promote strong relationships, independence and teamwork through activities, such as orienteering. Moreover, older pupils are encouraged to take on responsibility for looking after others through a 'buddy' system, or by acting as reading partners. They also show initiative by electing officers in the school's house system and make decisions independently about the charities they will support through fund-raising activities.
36. Pupils' cultural development is very good. The school has recently appointed an intercultural leader who has worked hard and successfully to make pupils aware of the rich cultural diversity of the world in which they live. As a result of staff training sessions, teachers throughout the school seek to include in their planning opportunities to promote positive images of modern worldwide cultures. Consequently, teaching embraces topics such as toys from around the world, soldiers of differing nationalities involved in World War Two, the lives of fairground travellers, or the nursing careers of Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale. The music curriculum encourages pupils to listen to and appraise music from many countries and, similarly, art lessons enable them to appreciate and emulate the work and styles of British, European and world-wide artists. Pupils also appreciate the similarities and differences between modern religious faiths, through their work in religious education. However, more could be done to celebrate the richness and diversity of people from the various ethnic backgrounds within the school itself and in the local community and this is an area for further development. The school ensures that pupils gain very good insight into their British cultural heritage through teaching in subjects such as history and geography and through the wide range of visits to places of interest. The residential trip to London for pupils in Year 6, including visits to the Globe Theatre and The Houses of Parliament, makes a particularly strong contribution to this aspect of pupils' cultural education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school makes very good provision for the care and guidance of its pupils. Parents are very satisfied that their children like school and are happy there. Staff have a very good understanding of each pupil's personal and academic needs and combine this with warm care for each individual. The high quality of personal support has been maintained since it was praised in the 1999 inspection report, and other aspects of care and guidance, previously criticised, have improved considerably. Arrangements for measuring pupils' academic achievements are now very good because improvements noted in the 2001 report have continued. Good use is now made of the information gained, to plan for pupils' further progress.
38. The personal guidance and support given to pupils is consistently very good, because of the careful planning and organisation given to maintaining the school as a very happy and hard-working community. Much consideration is given to helping children settle in contentedly and enjoy the activities when they join the reception class. Given children's very happy response to the caring atmosphere, the 'settling in' period of part-time attendance is rather lengthy but this arrangement is in line with local education authority practice. It is more extended than often seen in other schools. Throughout the school, staff have a very good understanding of any specific individual needs, arising for instance from ongoing medical conditions or particular difficulties with behaviour or attendance.
39. The management of pupils' behaviour is very good. All adults in the school use the same good approach to help pupils understand and live up to the high expectations. Good attitudes and behaviour

are recognised and encouraged. Pupils are motivated by the awards they can gain for helpfulness, good efforts and achievements in their work. The response is also effective when, occasionally, behaviour lapses. Pupils are helped to take responsibility for improving their own behaviour. For instance they value their Friday afternoon 'privilege time' and if they lose it through misbehaviour they can agree a contract with their teacher for earning it back. Arrangements to prevent bullying and other types of oppressive behaviour are outstanding. Such unkindness is almost unknown because good relationships are promoted so consistently and successfully, with much prompting for pupils to consider each other's needs and feelings. The school charter, that has a high profile around the school, reminds pupils that if they are unhappy they should tell an adult. Staff are always ready to listen and help and the headteacher makes sure that the rare instances of bullying or harassment are quickly resolved. He tells parents of any concerns and they are very happy with his effective management of such problems. As part of this very good promotion of high quality relationships, the school implements its policy on race equality very successfully.

40. Good routines are applied for monitoring and promoting attendance. Staff have concerns about the way family holidays taken in term time occasionally interrupt pupils' progress, and the school is careful not to authorise over-long absences for such holidays.
41. Other aspects of pupils' welfare are catered for very effectively. Child protection procedures are very good. The headteacher ensures that all staff know how they should respond to any emerging issues. There are good whole-school procedures for ensuring safe use of the Internet. At the time of the inspection in 1999, health and safety arrangements were found to be unsatisfactory, but now very good attention is given to maintaining the school as a safe learning environment and to ensuring the safe conduct of lessons and other activities. Trained first-aiders are always at hand to care for any pupils who become unwell. All parts of the school are accessible to all pupils.

Assessment

42. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. They have improved significantly since the time of the school's previous inspection although there is room for further development of the day-to-day assessment of the progress made by children in reception. The overall use made of the information gained from these procedures is generally good. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, assessments are undertaken at the end of suitable topics of work, and teachers keep detailed records of pupils' current attainment. This assessment information is used effectively to ensure that pupils are provided with work that is suited to their particular needs, with pupils regularly being presented with a varying range of activities. Particularly good use is made of this information in Years 5 and 6, where it is used successfully to place pupils in different teaching groups for English and mathematics.
43. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress through the school in English and mathematics are very good. The school possesses considerable evidence about the attainment of pupils, both from its own procedures and through the information provided by the national and optional tests. This information is carefully used to plot the progress that pupils have made. It is also used most effectively to set targets for pupils in English and mathematics, relating to future improvement.
44. Assessment procedures are good in other subjects of the curriculum. Assessment opportunities are listed in teachers' planning, and suitable activities are undertaken to test pupils' present knowledge and understanding relating to key skills and knowledge. Detailed records are kept to judge both pupils' present attainment and to illustrate their progress. As with the core subjects³, the information is generally used well in providing work that is particularly suited to the needs of individual pupils. The information is also used effectively in the preparation and completion of pupils' annual reports.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The school gives very good attention to working in partnership with parents and successfully fosters their interest and involvement in their children's education. The flow of information for parents has improved in recent years and is now very good. Many more parents expressed

³ The core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

positive views of the school through their response to the pre-inspection questionnaires and, overall, they are happy with the way the school functions. They appreciate especially the way that the needs of more able pupils are now met effectively. High proportions of parents agree that their children like school, that their progress, behaviour and general personal development are all good. There is also a strong consensus that aspects such as the quality of teaching, expectations of pupils and especially the school's leadership and management are a high standard. Over one in four questionnaires, however, showed discontent with the extra-curricular provision and there was also some lack of satisfaction with homework and with information about pupils' progress.

46. The welcoming atmosphere noted at the 1999 inspection has been maintained. Friendly relationships are established with parents when their children join the reception class, for instance parents are invited in at the start of every day to help their children settle to activities. Parents are mostly very confident about approaching teachers with any queries or concerns because, in nearly every instance, they receive a prompt and helpful response. For example, when parents raised a concern about how their children cope in the dining hall when they first join the school, the headteacher organised extra support for them by setting up a buddy system between older pupils and children in reception. This is proving very successful for all concerned. Currently, the headteacher is exploring ways of providing an after school childcare facility, because of the number of parents who would appreciate such provision.
47. Much useful information is sent to parents. Newsletters give regular updates about school events and concerns. A very clear, helpful summary of work to be done in the various subjects goes home from every class at the start of each term. The contents of annual reports of pupils' progress have recently been revised so that they now give parents a very good range of information. They show how children are doing in each subject in comparison with national expectations and give a very full account of pupils' personal and social development and overall progress. The picture is completed by a list of the pupil's notable achievements during the year. Good links are maintained with parents of pupils with special educational needs, They are fully informed and consulted about the provision made in pupils' individual education plans and, if applicable, in statements of special educational needs. Pupils' homework diaries not only ensure pupils and parents know about any homework set, but also serve as a means of communication between home and school about other matters. They state clearly when homework will be given and how long it should take. The homework policy however is out-of-date and the headteacher is planning to consult with parents as part of the process of producing a revised version.
48. Parents mostly give very good support for the work of the school. They nearly always come to the consultation meetings that are offered. Though a few are unhappy about the homework arrangements, they all help make sure that their children complete any that is set. The parents' association is very successful in raising funds for extra resources, such as extra computer software and books for the library. A good number of parents give useful practical support by helping in lessons or in the library.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff

49. All teaching staff have areas of specific responsibility within the management structure of the school. The successful performance of roles and responsibilities by individual staff results from a combination of their own enthusiasm and expertise, the school's very good policies and procedures and, above all else, from the example set by the headteacher who provides excellent leadership of the school.
50. The clarity of the headteacher's vision of the school's aims and values is reflected in practical terms through the emphasis on these in all the school's work. He sets high standards for all members of the school community and a shared sense of purpose and commitment enables these high standards to be realised. Parents refer very positively to the headteacher's leadership and they, like pupils and staff, are appreciative of his approachability. He has a leadership style that aims very successfully for ongoing school improvement through purposeful direction, engendering team spirit and showing respect for the views of pupils, parents and staff.

51. The very effective deputy headteacher provides excellent reinforcement of the educational direction for school development and a consistent approach to management of the school. Department, subject, and other leaders provide further very good support through their thorough knowledge of performance in their respective areas of responsibility. All have clear action plans for development of their areas, which are constantly being reviewed. At all levels, the school's leadership and management achieve considerable success due to the detailed knowledge that all personnel have of every aspect of the school's work, of the work and progress of individual pupils, and of the priority placed on the highest quality relationships between pupils and staff. One area for development, within the otherwise very good management structure, is the status of leadership of the Foundation Stage.
52. The teacher designated with responsibility for pupils with special educational needs provides excellent support for pupils and teachers. She is very well qualified and experienced in many aspects of learning, emotional and physical difficulties. Through her support, pupils with serious difficulties are successfully integrated into this mainstream school. As a result, the school has become an exemplar within the local area for managing such pupils. There are very good relationships with external agencies providing specialist support for individual pupils. Very good liaison is maintained with the local special school, pre-school providers, and the receiving secondary schools, so that transfer between different phases is smooth and avoids trauma for the pupils concerned. A governor is designated with responsibility for provision for pupils with special educational needs. She maintains close liaison with the teacher with this responsibility. She is aware of the school's local good reputation for managing these pupils and the consequent dangers of over demand from parents for places in the school.
53. Without detracting from the contribution of other staff to the rapid improvement in the school in recent years, the improvements in specific aspects of the school's work can all be tracked back to the headteacher's influence. Several experienced leaders refer to the fact that they are now empowered in a way that has not been possible in the past. This is a product of the policies of providing training, and constant encouragement, and creating time, which enable leadership to be effective in virtually all areas. The under-developed leadership for the Foundation Stage has slowed down improvement in this part of the school and senior leaders acknowledge this. Overall, school improvement since 1999 has been very good. The special measures required following the 1999 inspection were judged to be no longer necessary when the school was inspected in 2001, just six months after the headteacher's appointment. The latter inspection judged leadership to be strong and effective, a marked contrast from the very poor standard found in 1999. The continuing development of staff expertise has resulted in the overall qualities of leadership and management now being very good.

The Governing Body

54. The governing body now has a very good understanding of the school's work. It fulfils all its statutory duties. Governors' improving contribution to planning and evaluating the school's development was noted in the 2001 inspection report and, since then, they have continued to develop their role. Well-informed by the headteacher, they are knowledgeable about the impact of recent changes. For instance, they welcome the enthusiasm and success with which teachers are tackling their responsibilities under the new management structure. They are keen to keep up the momentum for improvement so that the school continues to improve even further. They make sure that suitable plans for strategic development are followed and they regularly check progress towards the agreed targets. Following a period when formal development of pastoral policies, to underpin improvements in provision, was delayed by more urgent priorities; they now follow a sensible schedule for policy review and development.

Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance

55. There has been very good improvement to the school's procedures for self-evaluation since the last inspection. Priority has been placed on developing procedures, such as the monitoring of teaching and pupils' standards in infant and junior classes, in order to address areas for development identified by that inspection. The school recognises the need to extend procedures to the Foundation Stage. Nevertheless, the school's systems for monitoring and evaluating its own performance are very good. There are high levels of rigour and consistency in its procedures for

monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work. Teaching is monitored through regular lesson observation and this has been very effective in refining teachers' skills. To date, most of this observation has been carried out by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. This is in line with a deliberate policy that subject leaders should have a manageable time frame for developing their specific managerial skills, before adding the responsibility for lesson observation. All subject leaders monitor standards of pupils' work through periodic work sampling. Further monitoring of standards occurs through analysis of National Curriculum test results and work sampling. Test results are analysed in commendable detail in terms of performance by different groups of pupils such as minority ethnic groups, gender or ability as shown by past performance. The data is used very constructively to predict pupils' future performance and set specific learning targets for pupils.

56. The school has policies for subject leadership, monitoring and review and performance management and these are having a strong impact on school improvement. Subject co-ordinator's reviews of annual developments in their subjects are detailed and are used well to identify clear targets for the following year. The arrangements for performance management set clear targets for teachers to work towards within their own professional development. Information from all forms of monitoring and evaluation is reviewed by the governing body, enabling it to have a very good understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas that need developing.

Strategic use of resources and the application of the principles of best value

57. The school has very good procedures for ensuring that the financial resources available to it support the educational needs of its pupils. There is very good identification of priorities related to improving the quality of education and raising standards. There is a clear cycle of financial planning, linked to the school's strategic plan, and the monitoring of expenditure by the administrative officer, headteacher and governors is rigorous.
58. Financial balances, the amount of money the school holds in reserve to protect it against unexpected happenings or to support planned projects, are at a relatively high level. However, there are clear plans to release monies that have been accumulated in the past, to directly benefit pupils' attainment and progress through making improvements to the buildings and grounds. The specific funds element of the school's finances, including the money received to provide support for pupils with special learning or behaviour needs, is used well.
59. The school's overall administration arrangements, and the day-to-day control of its finances, are excellent. The school office works smoothly and effectively. The recommendations of the school's most recent audit have been implemented. There is very good use made of new technology to support the work of the school and future plans include electronic mailing of letters and other communications to those parents equipped to receive them. Very good use is made of the information available from the school's computerised management system and there are financial and administrative procedures in place that allow the administrative staff to make a very positive contribution to the efficient day-to-day running of the school.
60. Governors use principles of best value very well to plan and evaluate the work of the school. Governors are aware of the need to ensure that best financial value is obtained when purchasing products or services. There are good consultation procedures with governors making use of a variety of information from parents, staff and the pupils. Governors are aware of trends in performance and are making effective comparisons with how school standards compare with those expected and achieved elsewhere. They have a clear appreciation of the need to challenge what is being done in the school to assess the impact on pupils' learning and very good procedures for achieving this.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

61. All members of staff form a dedicated and enthusiastic team. Teaching staff are more than adequate in number to meet the demands of the curriculum, and they are well supported by a good number of teaching assistants. Teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced in the full range of curriculum subjects. There are very good procedures in place for supporting newly qualified teachers, and all staff new to the school are properly briefed and assisted. Teachers are

regularly appraised, and this, together with the priorities of the school's strategic plan, is used very well as a basis for planning their training. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers, and they are very well briefed to fulfil their roles. The total integration of non-teaching staff into the life of the school is exemplified by their inclusion in the rotas of staff for duties, such as playground supervision, and greeting pupils as they enter school each morning. They are much appreciated for their work. Lunchtime staff and cleaning staff are also greatly valued for their contributions, and everyone carries out their duties conscientiously and efficiently.

62. The accommodation is very good, and contributes very significantly to the quality of education being provided. The school site is very attractive, with pleasant play and nature areas provided for the benefit of the pupils. The classrooms are bright and airy, with plenty of room for pupils to carry out a range of activities. Again, the library and the music and drama room are pleasant places in which pupils can work. The computer suite is rather small, but it is put to good use by teachers and pupils alike. The quality of the working environment is enhanced by the colourful and thoughtful displays of pupils' work produced by members of staff. The current facilities for outdoor play for children in the reception classes are limited, and those that are available are inadequately used.
63. The overall provision of learning resources is very good. They are also of very good quality, suitable and relevant to the needs of the pupils and neatly and carefully stored. Resources are accessible to staff, and, where appropriate, pupils, and they are put to good use. They successfully enhance all aspects of the curriculum. There is a very wide range of resources to support learning for pupils with special educational needs, although more specific resources using information and communication technology would be an advantage. Where special equipment is needed this is readily obtained. The school is fully accessible to pupils with physical difficulties.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to improve the standards of work and the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- Raise standards of pupils' writing* by:
 - Increasing opportunities for pupils to complete extended pieces of writing;
 - Raising teachers' expectations of the standards and presentation of pupils' writing across the curriculum. (*Paragraphs 4, 14, 23, 91, 96, 98, 99 and 101*)

- Raise the profile of the Foundation Stage and improve the progress of different groups of children by:
 - recognising the Foundation Stage as a separate key stage with its own identity and designated leadership;
 - continuing to develop a curriculum for the Foundation Stage that provides a balance of purposeful independent and adult supported activities;
 - using assessment information as an integral part of day-to-day provision, in order to plan effective programmes of work that match the needs and abilities of individual children;
 - providing greater opportunity for children to explore, experiment and investigate;
 - developing a structure outdoor play programme.
(*Paragraphs 1, 13, 51, 53, 55, 62, 68, 70, 71, 72 and 73*)

The following issue should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- to develop greater consistency in teachers' marking of pupils' work*. (*Paragraphs 17 and 99*)

*The areas for improvement marked with an asterisk * have been identified as priorities in the current school development plan.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 73 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 39 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 2 | 22 | 31 | 17 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 3 | 30 | 42 | 24 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

| | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 400 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 8 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 1 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 80 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 18 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 12 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 15 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.6 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| 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 (Year 2)

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2002 | 29 | 31 | 60 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 27 | 28 | 28 |
| | Girls | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| | Total | 58 | 59 | 59 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 97 (93) | 98 (98) | 98 (100) |
| | National | 84 (84) | 86 (86) | 90 (91) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 27 | 27 | 28 |
| | Girls | 31 | 31 | 31 |
| | Total | 58 | 58 | 59 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 97 (100) | 97 (100) | 98 (100) |
| | National | 85 (85) | 89 (89) | 89 (89) |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2002 | 32 | 32 | 64 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 27 | 28 | 31 |
| | Girls | 29 | 25 | 29 |
| | Total | 56 | 53 | 60 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 88 (92) | 83 (85) | 94 (98) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 73 (71) | 86 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 26 | 28 | 29 |
| | Girls | 28 | 30 | 29 |
| | Total | 54 | 58 | 58 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 84 (92) | 91 (89) | 91 (95) |
| | National | 73 (72) | 74 (74) | 82 (82) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| White – British | 373 | 0 | 0 |
| White – Irish | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Pakistani | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 16.7 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 23.5 |
| Average class size | 28 |

Education support staff: YR– Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 12 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 228 |

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Financial year | 2002/03 |
|----------------|---------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 816,752 |
| Total expenditure | 795,706 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1,999 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 21,046 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 62,276 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 4.2 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 4.2 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 400 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 230 |
| Percentage of questionnaires returned | 58 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 63 | 33 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 43 | 50 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 37 | 58 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 32 | 49 | 17 | 1 | 1 |
| The teaching is good. | 43 | 51 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 28 | 56 | 13 | 1 | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 63 | 34 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 52 | 41 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 27 | 62 | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 59 | 39 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 46 | 47 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 16 | 40 | 22 | 6 | 17 |

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

65. Overall, provision is satisfactory, with some good and very good features.
66. Children's personal and social development is impressive. High standards have been maintained since the time the school was last inspected. The total commitment and dedication of staff towards providing the best for the children in their care, permeates every aspect of their work. All adults provide excellent role models, and support staff are of very high calibre. Children know they are part of a highly caring community. Very strong relationships between adults, older pupils and children in reception make a significant contribution towards the children's love of school. Where a child has a statement of special educational needs, provision is particularly good. Links with parents are very positive and the quality of information they receive is good. Parents, rightly, hold both teaching and support staff in high regard.
67. At the time of the previous inspection, children entered the school with above average levels of attainment and were expected to exceed the Early Learning Goals⁴ by the end of the reception year. A similar picture emerges from current inspection. Evidence taken from initial assessments, shows that most children have very secure speaking and listening skills. Although children's reading and writing skills are not as strongly developed, overall, their literacy skills are above average. Children's early numeracy skills are securely above average. Children also start school very well informed about the world in which they live and have strongly developed personal and social skills.
68. The school uses information gained from these initial assessments well in order to set targets for development, track progress and identify children who may have learning difficulties. It does not yet use day-to-day assessment quite so effectively. Although staff keep thorough records of work covered, they do not use information well enough to plan an appropriate range of activities at the right level for each child. Therefore, more able children do not always make as much progress as others when work is too easy for them.
69. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with just under half of lessons judged to be good. One unsatisfactory lesson was also observed. The school has put much thoughtful effort into devising a programme of work that adheres well to the six areas of learning for children this age, but recognises that further work remains to be done. Both teaching and support staff manage children very well and use praise and encouragement, very successfully, to build confidence. Group work is particularly effective. Staff ask purposeful questions to promote learning and successfully increase understanding.
70. The school acknowledges the need to develop further the Foundation Stage. Sometimes, teaching focuses too much on the National Curriculum and not enough on the suggested curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. There is a need for the teaching methods, advocated for children of this age, to be clarified. These factors have a detrimental effect on the quality of provision. In a small percentage of lessons, not all activities were sufficiently appropriate or purposeful. Here, some children did not make enough progress because the work was too easy. The school has started to identify its gifted and talented children early and has implemented a programme of work to meet their needs. Although the work is appropriate and provides a good challenge, it is not yet an integral part of daily lessons.
71. In lessons where teaching was satisfactory, there were sometimes too few opportunities for children to practise their literacy skills. Creative activities were over directed, restricting opportunities for children to explore, investigate or use their imagination. When children chose activities from a range displayed on the '*Planning Board*', although they developed independence well, they made little progress in other aspects of learning because learning intentions had not been defined clearly enough.

⁴ The Early Learning Goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

72. Staff have worked hard to provide an attractive learning environment. Classrooms are bright and displays are lively and relevant. The quality of learning resources is good and makes a positive contribution to children's learning. There is a wide range of reading books to interest all abilities and these successfully encourage the development of good reading habits. However, outdoor play provision has not improved significantly since the 1999 inspection. The separate fenced area is still too small. Bicycles and other wheeled toys are not used regularly throughout the year. The school recognises the potential for development of structured outdoor play but needs to ensure there is a fuller understanding of its purpose and importance.
73. In recent years, the school has had to target areas in most need in order to raise standards as a matter of urgency. The Foundation Stage has not been the focus of attention. Currently, there is no designated leadership for the Foundation Stage, and little reference to this area in documentation. Although the school has monitored Foundation Stage practice, there needs to be a clearer overview of the quality or appropriateness of provision.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is very good. All the children currently in the reception class are making very good progress, and most will exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year. Children feel safe and secure. They display high levels of trust in the way that they arrive each day, confidently leaving their parents and carers. Staff in reception successfully create an atmosphere of mutual respect. Children of all abilities contribute in class lessons because they know their ideas are valued. A good example of this high quality provision was observed during a lesson on '*Precious Things*'. The children's behaviour was faultless, as they revealed the contents of their special boxes. The whole occasion cemented already strong relationships and gave children valuable insight into each other's personalities. There was a delightful blend of discussion, respect, fascination and appreciation. Children behave very well at all times and are keen to be involved. They work and play together amicably and value the success of others. There is a clear commitment towards developing independence. Children respond with impressive speed when asked to tidy up or finish their work.

Communication, language and literacy

75. Children enter the school with well developed speaking and listening skills and most have at least adequate early reading and writing skills. Through satisfactory teaching, they make steady progress. The majority of children are on course to achieve above expectations by the end of the reception year and nearly half of the children are on course to be well above expectations.
76. Children have numerous opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills further. Personal and social development lessons are used particularly well to encourage children, who are normally a little reticent, to express feelings and opinions. Most children give detailed answers. They are inquisitive and express themselves with real maturity. In discussion about reading, the higher-attaining children were well informed and articulate.
77. The school promotes the development of early reading skills well, and children make good progress. They love books and have access to a wide range of good quality reading material in the classroom and the library. Reading routines are firmly established, and reading diaries contain helpful evaluative comments about progress. Parents make a significant contribution towards the high standards achieved. Reading is an enjoyable, social occasion when children share a book with their partner in Year 6 or an adult. In discussion, one confident early reader expressed very clear preferences. He enjoyed the humour of books and knew exactly why he liked the story about the seaside trip when Dad was buried in the sand. Children of all abilities act as if they can read. They make up acceptable alternatives, talk enthusiastically about the story and predict with confidence. Most develop secure simple strategies for working out unfamiliar words.
78. The one area of weakness in literacy provision lies in developing children's writing skills. When given the opportunity, a significant proportion of children demonstrate competent early writing skills. Some of the most able spell correctly and are aware of punctuation. They work independently and unaided. One girl recited the alphabet confidently and unprompted. During a good lesson on '*Favourite Toys*', the class teacher used the beginning of the lesson well to build up an extensive

vocabulary. Although some children needed support when describing their toy, a large proportion wrote in sentences, spelt familiar words correctly and could read back what they had written. However, all too often, there are few opportunities for children to practise, experiment, or explore with written language. In addition, many children have difficulty with handwriting. Some are beginning to master the complex letter formations in the handwriting scheme. Most have great difficulty and, consequently, there is considerable variation in handwriting quality and style.

Mathematical development

79. Most children enter the reception classes with a secure understanding of mathematics. A significant proportion of the children, currently in reception, have already achieved the Early Learning Goals. They are familiar with shapes, such as circles, squares and triangles. Most are confident with numbers and count to ten, and often far beyond. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory, although this was the area of learning in which the one unsatisfactory lesson was observed and where the lack of challenge for more able children was most apparent. In this lesson, more able children received little to stimulate or inspire them. They quickly completed the same sequencing task as everyone else and received nothing to make them think. The progress made by these children was also hampered because the task did not lend itself to further exploration or additional work.
80. Evidence taken from examples of previous work confirms children's security with numbers. They display total confidence, for example, when identifying the biggest and smallest in stories of *'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'* and *'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'*. However, it is apparent that children of all abilities complete the same work, with varying levels of support. Children with special educational needs make the most progress, because they receive a good level of high quality support. More able children make least progress because they receive little work to extend their knowledge.
81. Children's learning in numeracy is developed through class and group work led by teachers and also in less formal ways, however, there is not always a rich enough variety of activities. They play in the sand and the water, but the activities make little contribution towards children's mathematical development, because they lack purpose and structure.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

82. Children enter the school with a very secure basic knowledge of the world around them. Teachers successfully build on this understanding, through good teaching and children make good progress. In one lesson, the teacher and support assistant questioned children well to find out their knowledge of materials. Group work was carefully organised and children had many opportunities to guess what was hidden in the sock. They started to use vocabulary, such as *'hard'* and *'rough'* appropriately in their explanations.
83. Lessons often involve opportunities for children to experiment with construction toys and to develop secure computer skills. Children clicked on the mouse confidently and laughed excitedly as they made the right selection to fit in *'Tizzy's Tool Box'*. They used tape recorders with total independence, as they listened to stories. Activities are frequently linked to topic themes. Previous work on Bonfire Night was linked well to Guy Fawkes and demonstrated a good basic grasp of factual information. Children of all abilities had a clear understanding of the progression from being a baby.
84. A significant proportion of children have already achieved the Early Learning Goals, and will leave their reception year with a very secure knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live.

Physical development

85. Teaching of this area of learning is good and children of all abilities make good progress. Half of the children currently in reception have already achieved the Early Learning Goals and standards are on track to be above expectations, overall, by the end of the reception year. In one lesson, children displayed considerable control and co-ordination, as they moved around the hall in their performance of a puppet dance. They expressed themselves imaginatively and used space well. One child knew that they warmed up at the beginning of the lesson because their muscles had

'been asleep and needed to wake up'. A few knew that exercise caused them to breathe more quickly.

86. Children handle pencils, glue spreaders and scissors competently. They cut out shapes with reasonable accuracy, and display varying levels of skill when creating a pattern with thread. Some have difficulty with new jigsaw puzzles but all persevere and make good progress.
87. The separate play area is inadequate. It is too small to permit the use of large apparatus. Consequently, there is insufficient opportunity for children to explore and develop their physical skills through structured play activities.

Creative development

88. The standard of children's creative development is similar to that expected for their age. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and children make steady progress. Although there are many opportunities to develop creative skills through activities, such as presenting their puppet plays to an audience of friends, there are fewer opportunities for children to experiment or explore with a wide variety of materials. Activities do not always allow children to be creative or imaginative. In lessons where children have to move on after a set period of time, the 'rota' system is very restricting and some children express disappointment when they are unable to finish the task they have started.
89. Children know a good range of songs. They remember words well and sing with great vitality when they join infant pupils in the hall for their weekly song practice. Music is a good social occasion where children learn well. Some children use the '*Alphabet Song*', very effectively, to learn the order of letters.
90. Despite the lack of opportunities for independent exploration and investigation, children make sufficient progress to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year.

ENGLISH

91. In recent years, standards attained by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been rising at a similar rate to those nationally, remaining well above the national average and also well above average in comparison with schools in similar contexts. Results showed particular improvement in the national tests in 2000 and 2001, followed by a slight decline in the 2002, when they remained well above average, although fewer pupils than expected achieved the higher levels in writing by the end of Year 2, or by the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence indicates that, although the pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are on track to achieve standards above national expectations, this downward trend in writing has continued. Teachers throughout the school make good use of the national strategy for developing pupils' literacy skills. However, too little time is devoted to enabling pupils to practise and improve their extended writing skills and teachers' expectations of the standards, and presentation of pupils' writing across the curriculum, are too low. Consequently, pupils' progress in writing, although satisfactory, could be better given the good strategies that are in place. In the other key areas of speaking and listening and reading, pupils are on track to achieve standards well above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is because teachers and support staff work hard to develop pupils' reading skills step by step as they grow older and teaching across the curriculum provides very good opportunities for the development of speaking and listening skills. These findings reflect good improvement, overall, since the last inspection, which judged pupils' attainment as similar to or above national expectations. When all aspects of English are considered together, pupils throughout the school are making good progress, because the overall quality of the teaching is good. Pupils with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language, receive good, clearly focused support from teaching assistants and they also make good progress.
92. Throughout the school, teaching in English, and in subjects across the curriculum, provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills. In Years 1 and 2, pupils become entirely used to 'hot-seating'⁵ and discussion in small groups. By the end of Year 2, the vast majority of pupils confidently ask questions of their own and answer in complete, clear

⁵ 'Hot-seating' is when a member of the class takes the role of a real or imaginary character and is questioned by classmates.

sentences. Many more able pupils are very articulate, reflecting standards well above average for their age. One pupil talking about the photograph she was writing about, for example, suggested, *'The old man looks puzzled. He looks as if he's wondering what's going on.'* Only very few pupils hesitate to join in discussions at this stage.

93. From Years 3 onwards, teachers make good use of drama and role-play to further develop these skills. By the end of Year 6, most are very confident about reporting clearly back to their class on a wide range of issues. They listen discerningly to what others are saying and ask questions or suggest improvements. A pupil in the lower ability group, for example, presenting a persuasive counter-argument about the potential danger of spiders, proposed, *'Your theory is good, but we don't know of any spider that harms plants.'* Only a very small minority are hesitant or limit contributions to short phrases or single word answers. Pupils throughout the school enjoy these opportunities, co-operate well and behave responsibly.
94. Standards in reading are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. In Year 1, pupils receive very useful adult support and quickly become confident at deciphering unfamiliar words using letter sounds and cues that they work out from pictures. By the end of Year 2, most are familiar with the terms *'author'* and *'illustrator'* and know the difference between *'fiction'* and *'non-fiction'*. They visit the school library regularly with adults to change books, or simply to browse and enjoy sharing stories with their friends. This makes a very positive contribution to their attitude to reading and ensures the development of good reading habits and information retrieval skills, as they grow older. Many more able pupils read aloud with expression, reflecting standards well above average for their age, and even the weaker readers need little support, as they get older. This is because they gain confidence through the good help they receive from teaching assistants, parents and other volunteer helpers.
95. From Year 3 onwards, the pupils continue to enjoy books and take pleasure in reading, because they are encouraged to talk and write about what they read and have a good range of interesting material to choose from, both in school and class libraries, which are very well resourced. By the end of Year 6, the least able pupils read independently, although often from less challenging books, whilst many more confident classmates develop mature attitudes to literature and discuss the differences in writing styles, for example, between J K Rowling and Jacqueline Wilson, with some authority. Pupils have regular opportunities to use the school library to find information independently, and their research skills are good.
96. Standards in writing are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. In Years 1 and 2, teaching develops writing skills in a carefully structured way. Pupils in Year 1 quickly gain confidence in using adjectives to add interest to their sentences, for example when writing about their earlier childhood in history lessons. By the end of Year 2, the vast majority write clear, consecutive sentences using capital letters and full stops, and many are beginning to write imaginative stories, for instance about pirate adventures, organised into paragraphs. A minority still need help from adults to build sentences, and this aspect is below the level expected for their age. The quality of handwriting at this stage is variable but satisfactory, overall. Most pupils space words correctly and maintain uniform size and style of writing. A significant minority, on the other hand, have difficulty in joining letters correctly and this slows them down, so that they sometimes produce less work than expected, given their age and ability.
97. In Years 3 and 4, pupils successfully develop skills in writing. The extended writing skills of many pupils in Year 4 are very well developed. They are given regular opportunities to write at length, for an increasingly wide range of purposes, and make good progress. Consequently, they become confident and often creative writers, as in,
*'I have a hyena in me,
Attacking playfully,
Running quickly,
Jumping expertly,
Laughing madly.'*
98. Progress is slower in Years 5 and 6, in relation to the amount and quality of the extended writing that pupils produce. However, by the end of Year 6, the majority structure their work using paragraphs and clear punctuation. They write persuasively, for example about moral issues such as the use of performing animals, or imaginatively, through stories and poems, where more able

pupils introduce tension and atmosphere into their work. There are inconsistencies throughout the junior classes in the quality of handwriting. Written work is sometimes presented well, for example, in some of the pieces on display. Nevertheless, pupils are not consistently expected to take care and pride in their finished pieces of work. Lesson observations showed that they have a good knowledge of the strategies they need for writing, but do not always put these into practice when asked to work independently.

99. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall. The best feature of teaching is the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. They universally plan an interesting and wide range of activities to develop pupils' skills in the key areas of English. The strategies for developing speaking and listening skills are also very successful. Teachers regularly provide opportunities for discussion and will often say to their class, '*You have one minute to talk about this with the person next to you and tell us your ideas.*' Pupils enjoy these activities, which also make a positive contribution to the very good relationships in all classes. Teachers also make very good use of assessment information to set long term writing targets for individuals and groups of pupils. They share these with pupils and parents and older pupils in Year 5 and 6, in particular, are aware of the standards they are trying to achieve. The quality and use of day-to-day marking is variable throughout the school but is satisfactory overall. Most teachers mark work conscientiously, often with encouraging comments. However, few use this day-to-day assessment, either to guide pupils towards their agreed targets or to plan future work for them. Consequently, groups of pupils are sometimes given work which is either too hard or too easy for them, which leads to occasional restlessness or loss of concentration. Additionally, teachers' expectations of the quality and the amount of work which their pupils should produce in order to meet their targets varies from class to class and from subject to subject and should be higher, overall. In some lessons, there is either insufficient time in the writing session of the lesson or the pace of work is too slow to ensure that work is completed. This reduces the rate of achievement and accounts for some inconsistency in pupils' attitudes to presentation and the quality of their completed work.
100. Teachers make good use of computers to enable pupils to edit, improve and publish their writing. A good example of this was the attractive work produced by pupils in Year 6 on the story of Macbeth. Additionally, they make regular use of overhead projectors as a teaching resource. Teachers and teaching assistants, throughout the school, have established close and efficient working relationships and these have a positive impact on the good progress of pupils with special educational needs.
101. The subject leader is providing clear direction and targets for improvement. She has worked hard and successfully to achieve the good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the use of test data for tracking pupils' progress and identifying individual strengths and weaknesses. This has rightly led to a greater emphasis throughout the school on the development of writing, a strategy that is in the early stages of development. In order to improve standards further, there is a need to establish a better balance between teaching the skills of extended writing and ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunity to practise and improve them.

MATHEMATICS

102. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average. Pupils are making good progress in the infants, and, based on their prior attainment, very good progress in the juniors. No difference was noted between the performances of girls and boys. In the national tests in 2002, the school's results were also well above average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, and the high standards are being maintained. At the time of the school's previous inspection, standards were reported to have been broadly in line with the national average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Clearly, very significant improvements have taken place since that time.
103. At the end of Year 2, pupils carry out a range of practical and problem solving activities successfully, and readily try to discover their own ways to find solutions. Pupils are confident in handling numbers, and they show an understanding and dexterity that is well above that expected. Pupils have a clear understanding of addition and subtraction. They know the multiplication facts relating to 2, 5 and 10, and most can undertake a range of multiplication and division exercises successfully. Higher-attaining pupils readily tackle division problems involving remainders. Pupils

have a clear understanding of place value to three figures, and they recognise odd and even numbers. They successfully identify halves and quarters, and many can find a fraction of a whole number. Pupils carry out addition and subtraction of money confidently, in the context of shopping activities. Most pupils can identify two and three-dimensional shapes and reflective symmetry correctly, and they have a good understanding of time on the half hour. In measuring activities, most pupils are able to use both standard and non-standard units of measure confidently. Pupils collect data, such as on favourite food, successfully, and they carefully represent their findings in bar graphs. More able pupils readily interpret the information contained in these graphs.

104. At the end of Year 6, whilst a small number of lower attainers find the exercise difficult, most pupils successfully develop their own strategies for solving problems. They readily identify the information they need, and then draw their own conclusions from their work. Pupils undertake work in addition and subtraction with confidence, as well as in a wide range of multiplication and division forms, and they display skills and confidence that are well above average in all aspects. They have a clear knowledge of place value to seven figures, and beyond, and pupils are confident in saying the times tables, and in quickly recalling individual multiplication and division facts to 10×10 . Pupils understand decimals, to two and three places, and they use them confidently in addition and subtraction, as well as in the context of various forms of measurement. Most pupils have a clear understanding of fractions, and they readily reduce a fraction to its lowest terms. Pupils use and interpret coordinates in all four quadrants. Pupils name a range of angles, including acute, obtuse and reflex angles, and they confidently measure angles to the nearest degree. Most pupils know the angle sum of a triangle, and they can use this knowledge to find missing angles. Pupils are able to calculate perimeters and areas of regular and compound shapes, using an appropriate formula when required. Most readily compare two simple distributions, confidently identifying, for example, the range and median. Pupils collect data on a variety of issues, such as temperature, or types of rubbish, and they successfully produce a range of graphs, including line graphs and pie charts, to display their findings. Most pupils understand the concept of probability, and they confidently use the appropriate terminology to describe their observations.
105. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the infants, and, in the juniors, it is very good. This is a significant improvement since the previous report. Lessons are carefully planned, based on the National Numeracy framework. In particular, teachers make most careful allowance for the provision of practical and problem solving activities. They are also careful to ensure that all pupils receive work that is suited to their particular needs. All teachers make good use of mental activities, at the beginning of lessons, and this develops pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. They are also keenly aware of the need to continue to extend pupils' mathematical vocabulary, and they readily address this issue during lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear instructions and give much well directed support throughout. Lessons are brisk in pace, pupils are kept busy and much help is provided, both by teachers and teaching assistants, with the result that pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make at least good gains in their overall mathematical understanding. Where teaching is very good, in the junior classes, and where subject knowledge is particularly secure, a wide variety of stimulating methods is used, challenging activities are provided and expectations are high, pupils are helped to make very good progress. Pupils throughout the school clearly enjoy the work, and the mental activities in particular. They settle to their written and practical tasks, with interest and enthusiasm, and they work well with other pupils, when required. Pupils make considerable efforts to accomplish their tasks. Pupils are usually very well behaved, and this enables them to concentrate well on their learning throughout the lesson. Teachers hold most appropriate summary sessions to check pupils' understanding and celebrate some of the work done. Many pupils take care with the appearance of their work, although some are less careful. On occasions, this is because teachers fail to give pupils enough advice about how they should present their work. Teachers mark pupils' work promptly, but, although some teachers provide comments of advice or praise, others provide little more than ticks.
106. The school utilises the National Numeracy Strategy document, as its scheme of work, with the staff making appropriate additions where they believe they are needed. Teachers use the scheme well to produce very good quality planning. The strategy itself has been implemented very effectively, and high standards are now being achieved. The subject leader is enthusiastic and well informed, and her leadership of the subject is good. She monitors carefully the work being undertaken in the school, and very occasionally she also supports her colleagues in their classrooms. Through studying samples of work, as well as test results, she has identified, and helped address,

weaknesses in pupils' performance. She has, therefore, played an important role in helping the school to achieve its current high standards. Assessment procedures have improved since the time of the last inspection, and are now very good. They are being used effectively to identify pupils' current attainment and progress, and to provide work that is suited to their particular needs. This is especially the case in Years 5 and 6, where ability groupings have been introduced. Most pupils find mathematics an exciting subject, and the excitement generated, when, for example, identifying solutions to problems, helps develop pupils' spiritual awareness. Mathematics is used appropriately in other subjects, such as science and design and technology, and suitable use is also made of information and communication technology to develop pupils' mathematical skills further.

SCIENCE

107. Standards in science are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in scientific enquiry are very good at the end of Year 6.
108. When pupils in Year 6 are challenged to explain cause and effect, for example, when describing which forces are exerted in different situations, more able pupils think creatively using prior learning to identify that there are more than simply two opposing forces on a moving object. When a ball is thrown and caught, they recognise that in addition to the forces of throwing and catching air resistance and gravity also play a part. Pupils also recognise the necessity of repeating investigations to check the validity of their results, and to evaluate their methodology to see if improvements could be made. They use their prior knowledge to make deductions and predictions, for instance, when asked whether the water vapour from evaporating blue liquid would be blue, they predicted that it would not, but that the solid residue would be. However, when presenting data, an incorrect use was made of a continuous line graph in one class, when pupils compared how quickly sugar dissolves in different situations.
109. In Year 2, pupils experiment with toy vehicles to observe the force needed to make the vehicle travel different distances. Although most pupils recognise that more force is needed to propel the vehicle over a longer distance only the most able articulate this coherently. More able pupils in Year 2 are not challenged sufficiently to record their investigations independently because they are frequently given worksheets or a recording frame to complete.
110. Pupils make good progress through the school in acquiring knowledge and understanding and developing skills. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress because tasks are adapted to match their needs, for example, they work in mixed ability groups with more able pupils working alongside them, or they are supported by the teacher or classroom assistant. All lesson plans include additional activities to challenge the more able pupils so that they reach their potential.
111. There are generally satisfactory links with mathematics and English, but the use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped. Pupils learn the relevant scientific vocabulary. Older pupils use a range of reporting methods, writing, tables, graphs and labelled diagrams to record their findings.
112. Teaching is good overall, with some very good lessons seen. In Year 3, reference books are used well to practise research skills when identifying the common and Latin names of major bones in the human skeleton. This topic includes a detailed understanding of how to achieve a healthy lifestyle. In Year 5, this is developed to learn about helpful and harmful microbes. Pupils learn how to minimise the spread of infectious and contagious diseases. The teacher refers back to a geography lesson, where pupils have learned about the care given to bananas during their transportation to ensure that they arrive in prime condition, to help pupils devise a fair test to investigate in which conditions apples decompose most quickly. All teachers challenge pupils' thinking very effectively, by asking good, open-ended questions.
113. In Year 1, learning is always through practical experience. Pupils go for a walk in the immediate locality and listen carefully to the many different sounds they hear. They learn that sounds become fainter the further away they are from the source. They investigate musical instruments to discover the different ways in which sound is produced. They record most of their findings in pictures or by

contributing to whole class friezes. A good example is the lively pictograph using paper plate meals to see which foods are the most and least popular in the class.

114. The planned programme of work meets all requirements of the National Curriculum and ensures continuity and progression through the school. Topics are revisited regularly to build on pupils' earlier learning. The assessment procedures are good. Pupils' individual attainment is judged at different levels against what it is intended for pupils to learn in each topic. Pupils' developing skills in scientific enquiry are also recorded. The results are monitored. When completed, each topic is evaluated from the teacher's point of view. The assessments and evaluation are used well when planning future lessons. Pupils' answers in national tests in Year 6 have not been analysed, as yet, to see if there are particular areas of weakness that need to be addressed.
115. The subject leader is at an early stage in her teaching career and has held the post for only a short time. Her mentor supports her very well. She has worked hard to familiarise herself with the curriculum, lesson planning and assessment procedures, as well as ensuring that resources are readily available for all the units of work. She teaches younger pupils and has not had time to become familiar with how older pupils are taught and learn. She has the potential to be very effective in time. Her action plan rightly identifies a need for greater use of information and communication technology.
116. Improvement in science has been very good in recent years. Since the 2001 inspection standards in all aspects of science have been maintained. Since the inspection in 1999, there has been a significant improvement in pupils' scientific enquiry skills. The whole curriculum is taught through investigation, observation and recording, as well as through challenging questions. Pupils' attitudes to science lessons throughout the school have improved greatly, they are enthusiastic and work hard. This is due largely to the greatly improved teaching. Teachers now have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and plan lessons to match the different ability groups within the class. Teachers prepare lessons well, making sure all necessary equipment is readily available. The pace is brisk and the content challenging, so pupils' attention and interest is maintained throughout and the behaviour of all pupils is consistently good.

ART AND DESIGN

117. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above those normally expected for their ages. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language do not need any extra support in order to make similar progress to their classmates. These standards are an improvement on those reported in the 1999 and 2001 inspections. The improvements seen are due, in no small way, to the rationalising and development of the curriculum by the subject leader.
118. At the time of the 1999 inspection, although attainments were judged to be similar to those found nationally, it was noted that there was an inconsistency in the use of sketchbooks through the school. This is no longer the case. The use and the value placed on the sketchbooks do much to raise the status of art and design within the curriculum. There are detailed guidelines for staff on how sketchbooks should be used. The sketchbooks used contain high quality paper and, in the case of the juniors, are hard backed. They are referred to as '*art journals*' and pupils retain them through their school career. By the end of Year 6, pupils have an interesting record of their work and progress in which they take great pride.
119. In both the infants and juniors, pupils have opportunities to experience a wide range of methods and media and these are taught in a logical order so that pupils may build on experiences they have acquired earlier. For example, pupils in Year 1 learn about mixing colours at the same time being introduced to terms such as primary and secondary colours. This skill is developed at a higher level in Year 2 when pupils consider tone. For example, mixing white and blue in varying quantities to show subtle graduations of tone that can be achieved. In the juniors, in Year 3, it is extended further by learning about Monet and Van Gogh, and how they might use colour, before creating their own compositions in the style of one of these artists. Pupils continue to experiment with different methods of applying paint. For example, effective paintings of erupting volcanoes are achieved, by spattering thick reds, oranges, and yellows, onto volcanoes drawn on black paper. Pupils in Year 6 have produced some well-observed watercolour paintings of the school grounds. These show they

can manage, mix, and apply the paint well, and also that they understand and can apply the rules of perspective to achieve a pleasing effect. Pupils are given opportunities to experiment and work with different textures, for instance with different qualities of paper or textiles. During one lesson, pupils in Year 2 mixed paint with a variety of materials, such as sand, salt and paste to see how this would change the appearance of the paint and applied their mixtures with confidence, creating bold and interesting effects.

120. The work of pupils on display around the school, and in their journals, show their wide experience of working with different media and methods. Pupils can suggest wide varieties of techniques, when deciding how to approach a composition. Where the method introduced, such as colour mixing, is consistently and thoroughly developed, as pupils move through the school, their skills are of a high standard for their age. However, some of the aspects of managing media that they are introduced to are, not developed as systematically. For example, pupils are introduced to the many ways in which texture and tone can be shown in pencil. But opportunities to practice, improve and evaluate the quality of their drawing are not undertaken regularly. Although in the juniors, pupils' art journals contain pencil drawings, the media is used when planning a piece of work or making notes and experimenting, but pencil drawing techniques are not practised for their own sake to any great extent.
121. In both the infants and the juniors, pupils are introduced to a wide range of notable artists and artistic styles. Thus they develop good levels of insight and appreciation into the work many artists. They analyse the techniques artists employ and apply these to their own work. They do not only use these works as a starting point for their own compositions, but are given the opportunity to reflect, evaluate, discuss and identify what they like and dislike about the art work to which they are introduced. Opportunities are built into the subject's scheme of work for pupils to appreciate artists and designers as diverse as William Morris and Henry Moore, Monet and Archimboldo. Interesting links are made between the artwork introduced and work in other subjects so that pupils are able to appreciate the context within which the work was created. For example, during the term that pupils in Year 6 study World War Two in their art lessons, they study Paul Nash and his war pictures. Opportunities for the appreciation of art start with the youngest pupils. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were observed enjoying a painting by Archimboldo of a man's head constructed from fruit. The teacher gave the pupils plenty of time to look at the painting. They really delighted in it, being fascinated by the shapes that the fruit made and the expression on the man's face. Pupils in Year 6 are able to discuss the quality of Paul Nash's painting '*Totes Meer*', with a good degree of insight for their age. They understand the context in which it was painted and remark how the painting of crashed planes suggests waves; a reference to the Dead Sea of the title. They appreciate how effectively the paint is applied, one pupil comments on '*the richness of the orange compared to the grey green.*' They perceive that the owl in the painting is significant, and make suggestions as to the symbolism of its presence as it hovers over the planes.
122. Taking account of lessons observed, and the findings of the scrutiny of pupils' work, teaching is good overall. Teachers benefit from a scheme of work that, albeit still in the process of development, gives them detailed guidance about what should be taught and the resources are readily available and well organised. Generally, teachers' subject knowledge is secure. The subject leader has a high level of expertise and she gives effective support where it is needed. Lessons are carefully prepared, and pupils are provided with stimulating range of resources and media. For example, in a good lesson seen in the juniors the teacher wanted pupils to consider the shapes of a collection of pots and vases. At the start of the lesson the pupils' interest was quickly focused, as the teacher slowly revealed a picture of an unusually shaped pot from Papua New Guinea, the teacher's emphasis was entirely on the shape of the pot. When the teacher produced the actual pot, there was a gasp of '*Wow*' at seeing the real thing. Pupils went on to consider a wide range of pots and vases all the time being focused on considering the shape, rather than the function of the artefact. Towards the end of the lesson they started to consider how they could construct a three-dimensional form from tubs and pots provided and by this time were very engaged in achieving an interesting shape. Teachers always give pupils an opportunity to evaluate the quality of their own and their classmates' work at the end of lessons. Pupils take this very seriously, and evaluate what has been produced with a good level of maturity for their age being able to consider ways in which work can be improved.

123. Information and communication technology is used well to support art and design. Pupils have opportunities to use programs such as 'Dazzle', and links are made with literacy, as pupils write about what processes they went through to achieve the finished piece of work.
124. The art and design leader has a good level of subject expertise, is a very enthusiastic practitioner and gives good leadership for the subject. She has developed the current scheme of work to the point where its implementation is having a significant and positive impact on standards. She has plans to extend it further and to this end has identified, very closely, what skills should be taught in each year group. The subject is well resourced, and resources are organised and easily accessible. Throughout the school, pupils' work is attractively displayed and, as well as contributing to the pleasing visual environment, this does much to raise expectations of what can be achieved across a very wide range of media.
125. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are given the time to look at and reflect on the work of notable artists. Pupils' cultural development is very well promoted through visits to galleries of national and local significance, such as the Tate Britain and the Southampton Gallery. Opportunities for pupils to work with non-European art are planned into the curriculum. For example, in Year 3, pupils investigate pattern in West African textiles and use this as a starting point for their own designs for printing.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. One lesson was observed during the week of the inspection. Judgements are based on that observation, and predominantly upon a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work, as well as on discussions with pupils and the subject leader. The standards attained by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 are similar to those expected nationally. At the time of the last inspection, no judgement was reached about standards, on the basis that there was insufficient evidence. The recently appointed subject leader has worked very hard and successfully to ensure that pupils properly record their designs and take pride in the books in which they keep them. Furthermore, teachers keep, and prominently display, pupils' completed work, which is often of good quality, and pupils talk enthusiastically about their finished products. Taking these factors fully into account, there has been good improvement since the last inspection and all pupils are achieving well, including those with special educational needs, who are carefully supported to enable them to participate fully in lessons.
127. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 receive a good introduction to the processes of planning, designing and making. From an early stage, they form good habits of comparing, drawing and carefully planning their designs before they progress to assembling the finished product. In Year 2, for example, they are given opportunities to examine numerous examples of wheeled vehicles, before designing and constructing one of their own. In doing so, they take into consideration issues, such as how to ensure that the axles move freely, and they make good progress in developing their technical skills and vocabulary. Pupils' designs show that, having decided what materials they will need, they can transfer their ideas to paper in the correct sequence and then put these plans into action. The use of clear labelling and accurate description in their work makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills.
128. From Year 3 onwards, pupils continue to develop an awareness of the need to examine and compare a range of products before planning their own and to regularly evaluate the quality of their own work at various stages during the making process. This was evident, for example, in Year 4, where pupils' designs for tuned panpipes were based on close examination of African musical instruments. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make more frequent use of specialised tools to produce increasingly sophisticated models such as toys operated by a cam mechanism. They are also required to measure accurately with a ruler and this makes a positive contribution to the development of their numeracy skills. Pupils' ability to test the suitability of their own attempts at making products, such as durable paper bags, is appropriate and sometimes better than expected for their age. On the other hand, some pupils' accuracy in cutting and assembling products is not as well developed as it could be because improvement in the curriculum has only recently taken effect and they have not developed the necessary skill over a number of years. Nevertheless, pupils have made up a great deal of ground, in a relatively short time, and the majority of pupils achieve appropriate standards for their age by the end of Year 6.

129. The subject leader has been in post for less than a year and has already been successful in considerably raising the profile of design and technology. She has implemented a rich and varied curriculum, securely based on nationally recognised guidelines and has created a solid platform for further improvement. She has also established an efficient and practical assessment system for measuring pupils' progress and ensuring that they develop the necessary skills step by step, as they grow older. This is supported by her very good use of information and communication technology to create a portfolio of pupils' work, moderated against nationally agreed standards. She also encourages colleagues to use appropriate software in their teaching, for example, to enable pupils in Year 2 to compare repeated designs, before they make '*Joseph's Coat of Many Colours*'. Her enthusiasm and clear direction for the subject is having a positive impact on the professional development and confidence of colleagues. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen and the emerging standards of pupils' designs and models suggest that teachers throughout the school have a good grasp of the principles of design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

130. During the inspection it was only possible to observe lessons in Years 4 and 5. Evidence from pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils indicates by the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are in line with expectations. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Progress of pupils with special educational needs is also good because tasks are matched to their needs and appropriate support is provided, either by the class teacher or a support assistant.
131. In Year 5, all pupils had researched background information on St Lucia during the holidays as a homework task and presented their findings in varied and interesting ways, often distilling detailed facts gleaned from the Internet. During lessons they discussed issues related to growing and marketing bananas. Pupils matched captions to pictures to understand the story of bananas from plantation to supermarket shelf and they learnt the many processes and jobs involved. Finally, they decide on the distribution between these jobs of the small amount of money generated by each banana at the point of sale. The focus of discussions is challenging. This involves using argument and counterargument and an awareness of balance and bias, which they have practised in their literacy lessons. In Year 4, pupils use reference books very competently to research how refuse disposal causes changes in the environment. In small groups they discuss ways in which the amount of rubbish might be reduced by reusing or recycling some of it. This link with English through research, discussion and writing is a good feature of geography; there are also links with other subjects, particularly with information and communication technology and mathematics.
132. Insufficient lessons occurred for there to be a secure overall judgement on the quality of teaching. The teaching in the few lessons observed was good with some very good features. The strategies employed by teachers interest and excite pupils so they enjoy the tasks set and work hard. There is good emphasis on developing thinking skills through tasks such as those described above. Pupils relate their knowledge and understanding to new situations and use reason well to justify their opinions. This was particularly noticeable when a group of pupils in Year 6, of average ability, were given a task by the inspector. They quickly used their knowledge of Ordnance Survey maps to describe an unknown area's physical and human features, including the different gradients of slopes indicated by contour lines. When asked which of two alternative sites would be most suitable for a dam to create a new reservoir, they put forward good arguments for and against each and reached a balanced judgement for their decision. They then pointed out how their choice could benefit the nearby village by creating more employment opportunities for the residents and more customers for the local businesses.
133. The planned programme of work covers all requirements of the National Curriculum. However, there is limited time available for the subject. This restricts opportunities for pupils to reach higher levels of attainment of which many are capable. The programme is well constructed to give a balance of activities, including map work, fieldwork, research and discussion. The programme provides good continuity and progression through the school in all topics.
134. The sound assessment procedure evaluates and records how well pupils of different abilities have achieved the learning intentions for each topic taught.

135. The subject leader has been in post for less than a year. During that time he has ensured that the very good resources are tidy and easily located. Maps and atlases are up-to-date. As yet he has not had sufficient time to acquaint himself with the older pupils' work. There are plans for creation of a portfolio of samples of work from each year group. The annotation of such work is intended to provide appropriate insight into provision and standards throughout the school.
136. There has been considerable improvement since the 1999 inspection, particularly in progress and attainment of pupils in the junior years. Mapping skills are now developed coherently through the detailed programme of study. There are good opportunities to consider issues and develop enquiry-based learning. The long-term planning of geography topics has improved, but pupils could benefit from more frequent lessons.

HISTORY

137. Standards and levels of achievement in history have made a good rate of improvement in the juniors since the 1999 inspection, when progress was considered unsatisfactory. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are similar to those seen at the 1999 inspection and towards the end of Year 2 are at the nationally expected level. From Year 3 onwards pupils' rate of progress accelerates, they achieve well and by the end of Year 6, pupils are attaining standards that are above the nationally expected level. The curriculum has been revised and developed since 1999 and much more attention is now being given in Years 3 to 6 to considering historical evidence and providing pupils with regular opportunities to draw their own conclusions and reach their own point of view from the information given. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported when they need to be and make similar progress to their classmates, as do pupils who speak English as an additional language.
138. By the end of their time in the infants, pupils have a reasonable understanding that life in the past was very different from their lives today. The youngest pupils start to develop a sense of the passage of time, by drawing a simple timeline showing their development from baby to toddler to independent young school child. Considering how the tools of domestic life used 50 or so years ago differed from those used today further develops their sense of the passage of time. This secure start is built on in Year 2 by the consideration of significant incidents in English history, such as the Great Fire of London, and, by the end of Year 2, pupils understand that such events have causes and that the fire spread quickly because the houses were constructed of wood.
139. In the juniors, pupils build well on the skills they have developed earlier. For example, in a lesson observed in Year 3, pupils considered reasons why the Roman Emperor Claudius wanted to invade Britain. Pupils understood that accounts contemporary to the invasion did not necessarily give the whole picture and might present a biased view. By the end of the lesson, having weighed up the information, they were able to say what they thought were the key reasons for the invasion. In Year 4, when studying Tudor times, pupils develop their ability to consider the reasons for events. For example, writing a report about the exploits of Sir Francis Drake. Many pupils are able to consider Sir Francis' motivation in attacking the Spanish ships whereas some, whilst giving a detailed account of events, do not speculate on their reasons. Throughout the juniors, the approach to history means that pupils are continually being required to think of reasons for events and trends. For example, pupils in Year 4 are able to explain why poor people were more likely to catch and die of infectious disease than rich people. As pupils move through the juniors the consideration and use of a range of historical evidence critically is a key feature of lessons and makes increasing demands on the pupils. Pupils have many opportunities to consider information and judge whether they think it is an accurate picture of what happened. In Year 6, as part of their study of World War Two, pupils become adept at evaluating the information contained in a wide range of photographs of evacuees, and the conflicting messages given by different photographs.
140. No teaching was seen in the infants, and there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in these year groups. Teaching in the juniors is good overall and, on occasion, very good. This results in pupils' good learning and positive attitudes towards the subject. Teachers have thorough subject knowledge and ensure that there is a good balance in lessons between teaching new historical knowledge and developing the historical skills of enquiry. Teachers in the juniors devise interesting activities to stimulate pupils' interest. For example, in Year 3, a lesson about the Roman invasion of Britain, started with the teacher addressing the class

in the character of Emperor Claudius, complete with toga and laurel wreath. She made references to what contemporary writers said about Claudius. This introduction, as well as grabbing the pupils' attention, set the tone of the lesson with the teacher repeatedly using the words '*probably*' and '*possibly*', emphasising that the description of Claudius was only one person's point of view. In a lesson seen in Year 6, pupils were required to consider the differing messages given by a collection of contemporary photos from World War Two. At first, they found this very difficult, but the teacher's questioning about the content of the photos enabled them to deepen their insights and they became more skilful at recognising the significant features in the photographs. At first, pupils found this seemingly simple exercise difficult, but they persevered and their comments showed that their learning was extended considerably.

141. The use of history to develop pupils' literacy skills is varied. Greater use is made of history as a vehicle for independent writing in Years 4 to 6, where pupils have had opportunities to devise play scripts, write factual reports and stories in the first person, illustrating aspects of their studies. However, for younger pupils, particularly in the infants, this is not the case. The marking of pupils' work is also variable. Usually pupils' work is acknowledged and praised but the use of marking to show pupils how they might improve their work further is often missed.
142. Information and communication technology makes a good contribution to the teaching of history, particularly in the juniors. For example, during Year 6 pupils devise and present talks about an aspect of their World War Two studies using a multi-media program to enhance their presentations.
143. The subject leader manages the subject well. The curriculum has been revised since the 1999 inspection. The infant curriculum is currently being further revised to improve the quality of some aspects. There is an effective system of assessment of pupils' progress. Teachers' planning and pupils' work is regularly monitored by the subject leader. The level of resourcing is satisfactory. Good use is made of local and regional places of historical interest to enhance pupils' experience of history and makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. For example, visiting the '*Mary Rose*' at Portsmouth. Pupils take part in drama activities, both in the infants and juniors, by dressing up in period costume, experiencing life in a '*Victorian*' school or taking part in a medieval day. Visits from '*Gudfrey the Viking*' bring the study of the Vikings alive for pupils in Year 3.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

144. Standards by the end of both Years 2 and 6 are above the national expectations. Pupils are now making good progress. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. At the time of the school's previous inspection standards were reported to be in line with those expected. Significant improvements have been made since that time.
145. By the end of Year 2, pupils confidently name items of computer equipment such as screen, mouse and keyboard. They show higher than expected skills in using all forms of equipment. Pupils successfully use a keyboard to type text, including prayers and reports about their holidays. They readily place gaps between words using the space bar, and most pupils are able to introduce capital letters and full stops into their writing. Using an appropriate paint package, pupils produce an interesting range of pictures, such as those of houses and winter scenes. Pupils confidently and independently access the menu to print or store their finished work. Pupils readily give instructions to a programmable floor robot to produce straight-line movements over varying distances, and, on the computer they successfully use a screen turtle to produce patterns and shapes. They also confidently undertake simple modelling activities, exploring aspects of real and imaginary situations presented on the screen.
146. By the end of Year 6, pupils show good skills in word processing, being confident in changing the font, colour and the size of their work. Older pupils can also successfully move portions of text from one place to another. Pupils in Year 3, for example, have produced detailed writing about the Romans, and pupils in Year 6 have written comprehensive reports about the death of '*King Duncan*', from '*Macbeth*'. Pupils can use the mouse accurately to help produce and access various forms of illustration, and they successfully merge this work into their writing, such as when pupils in Year 4 produced detailed posters on the school environment. Pupils successfully develop their control skills when using a computer to control the lights in a house. This is an improvement

since the previous inspection. They confidently access the Internet, as well as a range of CD ROMs, to provide a variety of information for subjects such as history. For example, pupils in Year 4 undertook work about Henry VIII, and the pupils in Year 6 produced most interesting presentations about aspects of World War Two. Pupils recognise patterns and relationships in, for example, adventure games, and they confidently predict the outcome of different decisions. Pupils in Year 5 further improve their modelling skills through successfully producing a range of spreadsheets, for instance when undertaking work on shopping. Pupils are showing increasing confidence in sending electronic mail. Pupils in Year 5 successfully develop their skills in monitoring external events, when using sensors to record their pulse rates before and after exercise. Pupils in Year 6 readily produce multi-media presentations on topics such as animals and sport.

147. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with examples of very good and excellent practice also being observed. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers throughout the school are enthusiastic towards information and communication technology, and they provide regular opportunities for pupils to use computers, both in the information and communication technology suite and in classrooms. The teachers are increasingly confident in the subject, and through careful preparation of lessons they are providing pupils with most appropriate and often challenging learning experiences. They provide clear and careful instructions on how to use various items of hardware, as well as various word processing and art packages. The good support provided by teachers and assistants enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are able to make good gains in their computer skills. Where teaching in the school is very good or excellent, teachers' knowledge is especially secure, resources are used imaginatively, the lessons are stimulating, and pupils are helped to make outstanding progress. Pupils respond by showing very good attitudes to the subject and behaving very well. They listen carefully and settle well to all tasks, with good levels of concentration and high levels of skill. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject and they work well, both alone and with a partner when necessary. Relationships are very good, and pupils ask adults for help when required. They share computers amicably, and are careful in their use of all forms of equipment.
148. The school has a most appropriate scheme of work, based partly on the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's guidelines, but with additional plans having been added for its implementation in the school. The subject leader is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and he has worked hard to enhance the overall provision. His leadership is good, and he has contributed significantly to the improvements being made. Assessment procedures are good, and much improved, and suitable information is now being collected to enable staff to identify pupils' current understanding, and then to plan for the future. The work being undertaken in word-processing is making a most useful contribution towards enhancing pupils' literacy skills. Through the collection of data, and its presentation, for example in the form of graphs and pictograms, as well as its use in lessons, information and communication technology is also having a significant effect on the development of numeracy skills. Information and communication technology is also contributing well to all other subjects, and is further enhancing pupils' overall knowledge and understanding. Pupils find the use of computers exciting, and the excitement generated, such as when producing various images on the screen, helps enhance pupils' spiritual development.

MUSIC

149. Music was last inspected in September 1999. At that time, standards were broadly average throughout the school and teaching was satisfactory overall. However, despite the many opportunities offered to older pupils through instrumental tuition and extra curricular activities, music did not make a vibrant enough contribution to school life.
150. Good improvement has taken place during the intervening years. Pupils in the infants make satisfactory progress and achieve standards similar to those found in other schools. In the juniors, pupils make good progress and a large proportion achieve above average standards. Music is now a very important part of school life. The uptake on instrumental tuition has increased. Almost half of junior pupils play recorder, keyboard, guitar, flute or saxophone. Tuition is of high quality, enabling this group of pupils to reach well above average standards. The school orchestra and choir develop group music making skills very well and pupils gain valuable experience of

performing. Standards are high. During the inspection, the choir produced a well-blended sound as they sang in two and three part harmony.

151. The musical expertise of staff is good and there is a very strong corporate commitment towards music. At various times throughout the inspection week, teachers were observed playing flute, keyboard, guitar or involving themselves in a variety of singing activities. For many pupils, music is their favourite subject and it makes a major contribution to their very good personal and social development.
152. Pupils in the infants do not have as many musical opportunities as older pupils and, consequently, standards are satisfactory rather than good. However, they quickly become aware of the standards that can be achieved. During discussions with pupils in Year 2 they remarked on how much they enjoyed watching older pupils play the flute duet, as they entered the hall for assembly. They recalled how they had used voices and instruments to create a composition around the theme of 'Night time'. They demonstrated a secure understanding of how music is used to create different moods. In a music practice session, pupils in the infants sang 'The Wheels on the Bus', with great enthusiasm, and showed a developing understanding of dynamics, as they sang one verse loudly and the next softly.
153. The scheme of work focuses well on the systematic development of skills. This structured approach towards the teaching of music is the key to its success. Teachers effectively build on the previous year's work and pupils receive a well-balanced programme of musical opportunities. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils of all abilities have a very mature attitude towards the subject and demonstrate secure knowledge across all aspects of the music curriculum. Most make good progress and achieve above average standards. In discussion, pupils expressed clear preferences across a wide spectrum. One discussed his enjoyment of 'The Four Seasons' by Vivaldi, whilst another identified 'For the Benefit of Mr Kite', as her favourite Beatles song. There are numerous examples of how music lessons are used to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well and topics are effectively linked to other aspects of the curriculum. The geography topic on St Lucia contains an element of Caribbean music. Some activities combine music of a period very appropriately with dance work in physical education lessons. Staff make good use of technology in lessons. Programmed keyboard accompaniments, tape recorders and compact disc players are regular features. The school is aware that the use of computer programs to support pupils' learning is not yet as strong.
154. The overall quality of teaching and learning throughout the school in the small number of lessons observed was good, with some satisfactory and very good teaching. The school makes effective use of staff expertise. Planning is thorough and teachers provide an enjoyable range of activities to interest and motivate pupils. In a good Year 4 lesson, pupils made swift progress in their work on the Beatles, because time was used so well and the lesson contained a well-balanced mixture of listening, singing and composing activities. Very occasionally, a small minority of the school's oldest boys behave inappropriately during lessons. Other pupils generally ignore them because they enjoy the subject too much to allow others to spoil their fun.
155. Lesson observations, however, provide only part of the picture. Evidence taken from discussion with pupils in infant classes, where lessons were not observed, was not quite so positive. They had great difficulty in remembering previous topics, they did not have good recall of songs they had learned, and could only remember the names of familiar musical instruments. Overall, pupils of all abilities, in the infants, including those with special needs, make satisfactory, rather than good progress.
156. The subject is strongly led by an accomplished practitioner, who has a strong commitment towards involving as many pupils and staff as possible in high quality concerts, assemblies and other performances. The school also makes effective use of guest musicians to enhance learning, such as its visit from a Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra ensemble. The subject leader has a very clear view of strengths and weaknesses but has not yet had chance to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in class lessons. Although staff regularly evaluate topics and use the information to adapt future work, assessment of the standards pupils achieve is not yet an integral part of provision. The lack of monitoring and formal assessment results in some variation in quality. As yet, there is no clear enough overview of the standards being achieved, or whether the needs of

higher-attaining pupils are being met in class lessons. This issue has only been partly addressed since the 1999 inspection.

157. The recently refurbished music room is well resourced, with a wealth of easily accessible good quality instruments, including some interesting inter cultural instruments. It is a very positive feature of provision.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

158. By the end of Year 2, standards in games match expectations, and those in dance are above expectations. In Year 6, standards in games again match the expectations for this age group. Although there is no evidence of pupils' standards in Year 6, in other areas of activity, all dance seen in junior classes exceeded the levels expected. Overall, standards show some improvement, since 1999, when the subject was last inspected. The quality of teaching in the junior classes is now good and this is also an improvement. The other significant area of improvement is subject leadership, which is now very good.
159. In Year 2, pupils have satisfactory basic games skills. They run and chase with control, showing a developing ability to change direction with speed and agility. They handle equipment with sound techniques, as when striking a ball with a hockey stick. Higher-attaining pupils show good co-ordination when passing a ball to a partner, aiming accurately and getting the ball under control before returning it. All pupils co-operate well in a small group situation. A particular strength in pupils' dance work is the confidence and creativity seen in their movement. This was clearly evident in a Year 2 lesson on a theme of 'Cats'. Pupils performed their own interpretations of isolated movements observed in cats with imagination, vitality and often with humour. They successfully combined different actions into smoothly flowing sequences that showed good awareness of the mood of the music accompanying their movement.
160. Older pupils show similarly good performance levels in dance. In Year 3, for instance, pupils created dances, stimulated by their history topic on Romans. Their individual and partner sequences, developing the contrasting movement characteristics of invaders and defenders, resulted in dynamic sequences of leaping, rolling and turning actions that communicated pupils' ideas very powerfully. These pupils also have a very well-developed ability to plan and evaluate their own and other pupils' work. They have been taught very well to be constructively critical observers. Similarly, pupils in Year 5, when asked to comment on other pupils' work, do so with appreciation and also with appropriate suggestions about how it can be improved. These opportunities for evaluation provide good application of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Self-evaluation was also a feature of a Year 6 games lesson. The overall standard of basic hockey skills of the pupils was satisfactory but pupils showed, in the concluding discussion about the lesson, a very good awareness of the specific techniques and tactics that need to be worked on and improved in subsequent lessons.
161. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in infant classes and good in the juniors. The good teaching in the school has the characteristics of thorough planning of activities that provide a clear step-by-step progression in pupils' learning, with each activity building on the previous one. There is a buzz of purposeful activity in these lessons. Pupils know exactly why they are doing something; they work hard and are strongly motivated. Teachers ensure that their planning identifies situations where specific support might be required for pupils with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language. Such provision enables all pupils to achieve similar rates of progress. Teachers pay good attention to health and safety issues. All lessons commence with well-structured warm up activities and pupils of all ages know why it is important to prepare for exercise. In the instances of satisfactory teaching and learning, teachers' organisation and behaviour management are often good, but pupils are not provided with sufficient repetition of activities, which prevents consolidation of their skills.
162. Much of the good improvement in the subject since the 1999 inspection is due to very good leadership. The knowledgeable subject leader, who has a particularly high level of expertise in games, is a valuable source of advice for colleagues. Her revision of the subject policy has resulted in very clear guidelines. A notable feature of policy is the expectation that non-participating pupils carry out a specific task based on observation of what happens in lessons. This can be a written report about the lesson, comments or sketches based on the lesson content. In this way,

not only do pupils become fully involved, but also their literacy or drawing skills are developed. Information and communication technology is also used appropriately, for example, pupils in Year 5 have used sensors to measure pulse rates before and after exercise and produced graphs to illustrate their findings. The frequent opportunities to work collaboratively and to discuss aspects, such as rules, to ensure fair play make a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

163. There are good procedures for assessment of pupils' learning and these procedures are being further refined by the subject leader as part of her constructive action planning. She makes good use of opportunities for monitoring, focusing currently on the quality of provision and the progression in pupils learning in games and dance in infant classes. There are good outline plans for developing the use of the school grounds for outdoor and adventurous activities. Pupils' present learning opportunities in this area of activity are confined to the annual residential experience in Year 5. The provision of swimming takes place in Year 4 and records show that, by the end of that year, over 90 per cent of pupils achieve the nationally expected standard.