

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FAIRWAYS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Leigh-on-Sea

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114841

Headteacher: Mrs D K Allen

Lead inspector: Mr Michael Raven

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 September 2003

Inspection number: 256098

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	419
School address:	The Fairway Leigh-on-Sea Essex
Postcode:	SS9 4QW
Telephone number:	01702 525693
Fax number:	01702 522940
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mike Grimwade
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This large school serves a predominantly White British population. There are few pupils from other ethnic backgrounds and none is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The area is socially mixed, but there are few extremes of social advantage or disadvantage. Children start school at the age of four with skills which are a little below average. The school has two resource bases for pupils with special educational needs. Seventeen pupils aged between six and eleven years attend the Speech and Language Resource Base. These pupils, of whom 15 have Statements of Special Educational Needs, are fully integrated into mainstream classes for most lessons. Fourteen pre-school age children attend the Early Years Resource Base, where their various special needs are being assessed. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils with Statements of special needs is, however, well above the national average. The total annual mobility of pupils is high. This is because pupils attending the special resource bases frequently join or leave the school at other than the usual points. The school is part of the local Education Action Zone. It gained School Achievement Awards for improved standards in 2000 and 2002. It has also been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark, an Investors In People Award and the Healthy Schools Award.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3961	M Raven	Lead inspector	English Physical education English as an additional language
13395	J Illingworth	Lay inspector	
27243	I Tatchell	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education Special educational needs
32954	W Hawkins	Team inspector	Art and design Geography History Foundation Stage of Learning
17757	J Willis	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Music

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This large school serves a socially mixed area and has two specialist resource bases for pupils with special educational needs. It is a **good** school that offers good value for money. Standards in those subjects inspected, including English, mathematics and science, are above average by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6. In response to the good teaching which they receive, pupils develop very positive attitudes to school and achieve well. The headteacher leads the school well and there is an effective and committed senior management team. The school is efficiently managed. The requirements of pupils who have special educational needs, including those in the resource bases, are very well met.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Leadership is good overall and management is effective.
- The teaching is good and it promotes good learning.
- The school promotes very good attitudes and behaviour in pupils.
- Very good care, guidance and support are offered to pupils.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- The leadership and management roles of some members of middle management require further development.
- More use could be made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning in other subjects.
- Too little is done to promote pupils' awareness of the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection. All the issues for improvement identified then have been successfully tackled. Standards in English, mathematics and science are higher. The quality of teaching has improved. The provision for pupils with special educational needs to take a full part in the life and work of the school has improved significantly.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	E	B	C
Mathematics	D	E	A	A
science	C	E	B	C

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

Pupils **achieve well**. The results of national tests fluctuate from year to year, with the varying proportions of pupils from the Speech and Language Resource Base who take the tests. The children in the Reception classes achieve well and most are on course to reach the national goals that they are expected to reach by the end of the year. Achievement in Year 2 is good. Standards in reading and writing are average and in mathematics and science they are above average by the end of Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science, as well as music. In the other subjects for which there is sufficient evidence to make a judgement, standards are generally in line with national expectations.

**The pupils' personal qualities are good.** Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and to one another. They behave very well in lessons and around the school, for instance at playtimes. The rate of attendance is similar to that found nationally in primary schools. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, although more could be done to promote pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education** provided by the school is **good**. A positive learning atmosphere is established. **Teaching is good**. It promotes **good learning** and very positive attitudes and behaviour. Teachers ensure good order and discipline, so that pupils can get on and learn. They make it very clear to pupils what it is they are going to do and learn, so that pupils have a good understanding of their own progress. Teachers make good use of plenty of well-delivered whole-class teaching.

The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and it is enriched by a wide range of activities beyond lessons, including sport and music. Great care is taken to ensure that all pupils, including those in the speech and language resource base, have full access to all the opportunities that the school has to offer, including those provided outside lessons. The school's partnership with the Education Action Zone makes a very effective contribution to the quality of education provided, notably for reading and ICT.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are good overall.** Leadership is good overall. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and is well supported by the two deputy headteachers. Together they lead the school with a clear and convincing sense of purpose and direction, reflected in the school development plan. They promote effective teamwork and commitment to school improvement on the part of the whole staff. However, the leadership and management roles of some subject leaders and others with leadership responsibilities require improvement. Management is good overall. The school is very good at evaluating its own performance and it acts appropriately on the basis of its careful analysis of how well pupils are doing. This is seen, for example, in its recent initiative to improve reading. The workload of staff is carefully managed, so that teachers have valuable preparation and marking time. The governing body plays its part soundly, fulfilling all its statutory responsibilities.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most **parents think highly** of the school. They feel that their children are making good progress and they are well taught. They particularly appreciate the wide range of activities outside lessons. Although a minority of parents feels that there is some bullying or harassment, the inspection found no evidence to support this view. Most **pupils like being at the school**. They say that their lessons are interesting and fun and they find out new things in them. They are quite confident that there is an adult that they could turn to if they were worried about anything at school.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop further the leadership and management roles of members of middle management, to include the effective management of all subjects.
- Develop further the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects.
- Press ahead with plans already made to improve pupils' awareness of the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Pupils achieve well, given their starting point when they come to the school and their capabilities. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. In most of the other subjects inspected, including information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE), they are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. In music they exceed national expectations.

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

- Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are helped to achieve well, whatever their starting point.
- Standards in reading are improving as a result of the school's drive to raise standards.
- Pupils' ability to undertake independent study and find things out for themselves is limited by their experience of using the library, which was, until recently, slight.

#### **Commentary**

##### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002***

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (15.3 )	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.4 (14.2 )	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	16.2 (16.0 )	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

##### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002***

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (24.7 )	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.6 (24.9 )	26.7 (26.6)
Science	29.1 (25.6 )	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

*These tables provide an analysis of pupils' performance in national tests, compared with all schools nationally, using pupils' average National Curriculum points.*

1. Pupils' performance in national tests fluctuates from year to year, with the varying characteristics of groups of pupils. It is significant that pupils from the school's Speech and Language Resource Base are included in the national tests. These pupils achieve very well and some reach nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. However, their particular difficulties mean that many do not reach expected levels. This inevitably has a negative effect on the school's overall test results. This is an effect which varies from one year to the next, with the varying numbers of pupils involved. The school's overall trend in standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 over the past six years has been one of steady improvement, in line with that seen nationally.

2. The effect of pupils' language difficulties on the overall standards achieved can be seen in Year 2, where standards in reading and writing are average, whereas in mathematics and science they are above average. Standards in reading are improving well in response to the school's initiatives to raise standards, such as the intensive individual programme of *Reading Recovery* for pupils mainly in Year 1.
3. Pupils achieve well because they are taught well and they have positive attitudes and an enthusiasm for learning. This is true throughout the school. Children get off to a strong start in the Reception classes. It is particularly notable that the high quality of teaching in Years 2 and 6 promotes good achievement and prepares pupils well for national tests and assessments taken towards the end of those two years. The analysis of pupils' test performance in relation to their starting point (or *attainment on entry to school*) confirms that pupils achieve well. For example, records show that the pupils who took national tests at the end of Year 2 this year made good progress, comparing their test results with their attainment on entry.
4. The standards reached by pupils in ICT are above average in Year 2, although by Year 6 they are not as high as those found in English, mathematics and science. The standards in Year 6, although they meet national expectations, reflect the past state of development of the subject. Much work has gone into improving the provision for ICT since the last inspection. The school's partnership with the Education Action Zone has contributed strongly to pupils' achievement in the subject. Standards are improving as pupils pass through the school. Those pupils currently in Year 6 have not experienced the full benefits of the improved provision for the whole of their time in school. Those in Year 2 have.
5. Standards in music are above average. They exceed national expectations at the end of Year 2 and also when pupils leave at the end of Year 6. This is because the subject is well led and taught. The employment of a part-time specialist teacher makes a strong contribution to the provision for music, as do the musical activities offered outside lessons, such as the choir, and individual instrumental tuition.
6. In response to the good teaching that they receive, the children in the Reception classes are mostly on course to reach the national goals set for them by the end of the year. In personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development, they are likely to meet national expectations. A few are likely to exceed these expected levels. The same is true of their knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development during their time at the school. There have been no recent exclusions from the school. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well, but their cultural development is not promoted as fully as it might be. The school works hard to achieve its satisfactory attendance rate. Pupils are punctual.

### **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	317	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' very positive attitudes to school mean that they work hard and achieve well.
- Very good behaviour in lessons and around the school makes for a productive working atmosphere and a harmonious community.
- The school takes too little account of the need to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural, ethnically diverse society.

### **Commentary**

7. Pupils enjoy the direct, whole-class teaching which is a strong feature of lessons, and listen carefully. They are eager to join in, answering questions and sometimes asking them too. Those pupils who have learning difficulties are very well supported in lessons so that they are able to follow and take a full part. Teaching assistants work hard to keep these pupils' attention focused and ensure that they are following, using sign language for some of those with hearing impairment or speech and language difficulties. Pupils display very positive and caring attitudes to one another. They listen sensibly as those with speech difficulties make their contribution to lessons. In a very good English lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils showed great respect and

consideration as those from the Speech and Language Resource Base identified verbs in a story that they were reading.

8. The school has a good whole-school behaviour policy, the working of which is monitored and reviewed regularly. This is effectively implemented by both teaching staff and support staff such as midday supervisors. As a result of this, together with high quality teaching, there is little misbehaviour in lessons or at other times, such as at lunch and playtimes. A significant minority of parents and carers responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire had concerns about harassment and bullying. Inspectors therefore investigated this issue very carefully. They made discreet observations of pupils' behaviour and relationships and questioned pupils, midday supervisors, site staff and parents. No evidence was found to support the idea that bullying or harassment are a problem. Indeed, direct observations and discussions made it quite clear that behaviour is very good and relationships very harmonious. The very small numbers of pupils from ethnic minorities are respected and there is very good racial harmony in the school.
9. The school effectively promotes pupils' spiritual development. Pupils explore a range of values and beliefs, in religious education lessons, in acts of worship and through the programme for personal, social and health education. For example, in a Year 4 RE lesson, pupils learned about the Hindu belief in one god who has many forms. They then went on to reflect on the many facets of their own character, their various different roles and interests. The clear set of school rules is understood and respected by pupils. They enjoy singing the *School Rules Song* in music assemblies. They have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and the need to be considerate and respect others, especially those who have learning or other difficulties. Pupils mostly accept that when they do wrong, appropriate and proportionate sanctions will be applied. There are many good opportunities in lessons for pupils to work co-operatively. Even the children newly admitted to the Reception classes are learning to share and take turns fairly. The school council gives pupils a good opportunity to start to engage in the democratic process, gaining an understanding of citizenship and community life. It also gives older pupils good opportunities to exercise leadership and responsibility, for example as elected officials. The school's links with local businesses, for example the *transition mentors* from a local bank, who help prepare the oldest pupils for transfer to secondary education, provide a positive link with the world outside school. The annual residential visit for Year 6 gives pupils good opportunities for social interaction and development.
10. There are plenty of good opportunities for pupils to explore and appreciate their own cultural heritage. There are good class and individual music lessons, for instance, performances and visits to places of cultural and historical interest. However, the school is aware that, as a virtually mono-cultural community, it has a particular responsibility to promote pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural and ethnically diverse nature of British society at large. Although two teachers have recently been appointed to lead the development of the school's work in this area, at present cultural and ethnic diversity have too low a profile. Pupils questioned have little understanding of the values and traditions of the diverse cultures to be found within modern British society.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good with some very good features. There is a good range of activities outside lessons. The good quality accommodation and learning resources, the high quality of care, guidance and support given to pupils, and the good partnerships with parents and the community, all combine to ensure that the quality of education provided is good overall.

### **Teaching and learning**

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. The assessment of pupils' work is good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers maintain very good order and attention in lessons through the clarity and liveliness of their teaching and the very good relationships that they establish.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of their own learning because teachers explain clearly what it is they are going to do and what they will learn.
- There is an appropriate emphasis on plenty of good, clear whole-class teaching.
- The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is patchy, varying from very good in some classes and subjects, to slight in others.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	13 (27%)	21 (44%)	13 (27%)	0	0	0

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

11. Both pupils and their parents say that teaching is good. Pupils report that they learn new things and that their lessons are fun. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The proportion of good and very good teaching is now slightly better than that usually found when primary schools are inspected nationally. There is more very good teaching than there was at the time of the last inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, whereas at the last inspection a small proportion of lessons were unsatisfactory. As a result of the good teaching that they receive throughout the school, and their enthusiasm for lessons, pupils learn well. Teachers use assessment well to check on pupils' progress. The capabilities of each year group of children are carefully assessed when they start school, so that their learning needs are identified and lessons are planned to meet them. Staff set individual targets for pupils so that they know what they need to do to improve. Careful records of progress are maintained. The good quality individual education plans for those pupils who have special educational needs, including those with statements of special needs, are used very effectively to set targets for them and to check on their progress. The headteacher and senior staff make an important contribution to maintaining the good quality of teaching through their programme of monitoring and development.
12. The good quality teaching contributes positively to pupils' very good attitudes to learning. Teachers control classes firmly but unobtrusively, making it clear that they expect high standards of attention and behaviour and good effort. They treat all pupils with respect and consideration, whatever their capabilities, and challenge and encourage them to give of their best and achieve as much as they can. Those who have particular difficulties are fully included in all lessons, one approach being the careful posing of questions to enable them to participate successfully in class discussion. This was seen, for example, as pupils in Year 4 learned about the development of the human skeleton during childhood and adolescence. Challenging questions were put concerning the differences between babies' bones and those of older children, in such a way as to involve all pupils, including the most able and those who find learning more difficult. Most of the teaching is clear, well informed and stimulating. For example, an excellent mathematics lesson for the more able Year 6 set on the use of the multiplication tables promoted outstanding learning because the very demanding work, to be completed within tight time limits, was presented in an exciting way. Pupils responded very enthusiastically to the challenge and some commented on how much they enjoyed this sort of work.
13. Teachers take great care to ensure that pupils understand what they are doing and why. They display on the board the learning intentions for each lesson and discuss and clarify these for pupils at the outset. They take care to ensure that pupils understand what it is they are going to

do and learn before starting on the main part of the lesson. Teachers then return to these intentions again towards the end of the lesson, to sum up what has been learned, and assess how much progress pupils have made. This enables them to modify their plans for subsequent lessons to build on what has been learned and go over anything that is unclear. A good example was seen in a history lesson on King Henry VIII in Year 4. The teacher first explained the main purpose of the lesson – to learn to identify features and characteristics of Henry from portraits and written sources. Following whole-class discussion and some individual work the teacher then brought pupils together again towards the end of the lesson and considered with them how far they had met this learning intention.

14. There are some good examples of the use of ICT to help pupils to learn across the curriculum. The Internet is increasingly used to enable pupils to carry out their own research, for instance in history and geography lessons. Some good use is made of ICT in mathematics. However, the school is aware that more classroom use of ICT is needed to support pupils' learning, for example in RE, where it is slight. More use could be made of ICT to promote pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. In science, there are some good examples of the use of ICT, but the school has recognised in its planning that more could be done, for example making use of sensing equipment to monitor, record and analyse physical changes, such as the changes in light and temperature over time.

## **The curriculum**

The school provides a satisfactory, broad and worthwhile curriculum that caters well for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils and ensures good progress in their learning. Good opportunities are planned to enrich the curriculum and there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities. The school has very good accommodation of a high quality and a good range of resources for learning, although there is scope for further development in some areas.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Access to the full curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good.
- The school is very successful in promoting participation in a wide range of activities, including the arts and sport, through its very good extra-curricular provision.
- The very good accommodation contributes well to the effective teaching of the curriculum.
- Although resources for most areas of the curriculum are good, there are insufficient resources to represent cultural and ethnic diversity.

## **Commentary**

15. The well-planned curriculum promotes good achievement for all pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs to access the full curriculum is very good. Support staff and teachers work well together to meet pupils' individual needs as identified in Statements of Special Educational Needs and their carefully drafted individual education plans. Special classes are arranged for some pupils to provide extra help with literacy, language and communication skills and mathematics, so that they achieve as much as they can. The Speech and Language Resource Base provides very good support for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs, both in the mainstream school and in the base itself.
16. Work is planned to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and those with particular gifts and talents are identified and provided with work of appropriate challenge. Staff are aware of the needs of pupils with physical difficulties and these are well catered for to allow these pupils full access to the curriculum. The headteacher and senior staff ensure that analysis of assessment data is used effectively to modify curricular provision, to identify pupils for booster or extension classes as appropriate and to monitor the success of these initiatives in raising achievement.

17. The school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons. These include musical and sporting activities and a range of other clubs and classes, such as signing classes, sewing clubs, chess club, an ICT club and 11-plus classes for pupils taking that examination. The quality of this extra-curricular provision is very high and pupils who attend achieve well. All activities seen during the inspection were well attended and pupils participated enthusiastically. The curriculum is enhanced by planned visits related to learning. These include an annual residential visit for Year 6 pupils, designed to contribute to their personal and social development as well as furthering their learning. Initiatives such as Arts week, Health and Fitness week and participation in drama and sporting competitions further enrich the curriculum.
18. Classrooms are spacious and bright with interesting and stimulating displays. The school grounds, which include a wildlife area and pond, have been well developed to enhance the curriculum for environmental education. The school has its own swimming pool, which makes a valuable contribution to pupils' physical education in the summer months. There is a spacious and well-equipped suite for ICT and there are also computers in the library and in all classrooms.
19. The school is well resourced and has sufficient teaching and support staff, including an ICT technician, to meet fully the demands of the curriculum. The school has already identified the need to develop the promotion of positive attitudes to ethnic and cultural diversity but, at present, resources for this area are limited. For example, there are few library books reflecting cultural and ethnic diversity and only limited examples of art from a range of cultures.

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

The school takes very good care of its pupils, and has very good arrangements to ensure their welfare, health and safety. It gives them very good support, advice and guidance and involves them well in its work and development. The high quality of care that pupils receive enhances their academic achievement and personal development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have very good relations with adults in the school and are confident that they will receive effective support and guidance from them.
- There are good arrangements for the induction of new pupils who, as a result, settle quickly at school.
- The school monitors pupils' achievements and personal development well.
- The school council has a real influence on the running of the school and keeps senior management and the governing body in touch with pupils' opinions.
- The school has very good systems for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- The school has very good systems for supporting pupils with special educational needs.

### **Commentary**

20. The school has good formal policies relating to child protection and to health and safety. It ensures through briefing sessions and staff training, that members of staff understand the correct procedures and apply them effectively in practice. There are very good arrangements for first aid, for supervision of pupils in the playground and for the security of the site, and these are very effective in safeguarding pupils' physical well being. The school also looks after pupils' emotional welfare very successfully. Arrangements for the induction of newcomers are very good, and as a result they settle quickly and are happy at school. Members of staff are caring and go out of their way to ensure the welfare of pupils. They know pupils well as individuals and give them guidance that meets their needs. Pupils understand and appreciate this. They speak very enthusiastically about the school's friendly teachers and teaching assistants, and they praise the way in which members of staff give them effective support whenever they require help. Parents too are very pleased with the standard of care that their children receive.

21. Very good monitoring of pupils' progress enhances the quality of academic and pastoral support, and this in turn raises standards of attainment across the school. Where personal development is concerned, much of the provision is informal but nonetheless effective. It works well because it is founded on teachers' knowledge and understanding of the pupils in their class. It is backed up by good formal procedures, such as the *GOAL* analysis of pupils' attitudes. This assists teachers to identify individuals who are having problems and to take effective action to help them. The school has good systems for assessing and tracking academic achievement, and these underpin its arrangements for supporting and encouraging pupils of all levels of attainment. Pupils' successes are recorded and given due recognition, for example in celebration assemblies and through certificates of merit. The school also uses target setting effectively to promote academic progress: individual targets for improvement are set and shared with pupils, who as a result develop a good understanding of how they can raise their attainment.
22. The school makes good arrangements to seek and act on pupils' views. There is an active, well-organised and influential school council, consisting of representatives of all year groups. It meets every half term, "to discuss how to make the school a better place". Its members take their remit very seriously. They sound out the opinions of the classes that they represent and put them forward at meetings. They are proud of the improvements that they have brought about, such as the installation of drinking fountains and the purchase of new portable goal posts. The school council is valued by pupils, who have a sense of ownership of the school as result of its work. It is also treated with respect by the senior management team and the governing body. Governors are entitled to attend meetings of the school council, and some of them find this a very useful way of keeping in touch with pupils' views.

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

The school has a good partnership with parents, other schools and the wider community. The links that it has established with its partners are effective in raising standards of attainment and successfully promote pupils' progress.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents' involvement with pupils' learning at school and at home is good and promotes academic progress well.
- Information for parents on school routines, the curriculum and school events is good.
- The school has good links with other providers of education. These contacts extend pupils' opportunities for learning and prepare children for the next stage of education.
- Partnership with the Education Action Zone makes a positive contribution to provision for ICT and to the school's work to raise pupils' reading standards.
- Targets for improvement in written reports on progress sometimes lack precision, and the text of subject reports does not always give a clear picture of the standards that pupils have reached.

### **Commentary**

23. Links with parents are effective and their involvement with the work of the school has a positive impact on pupils' attainment. Communications with parents are satisfactory overall. They have some major strengths. Members of staff work hard to keep parents well informed about school routines and the curriculum. For example, they send home a wealth of letters on topics of study, clubs and school trips. Parents appreciate the amount of information that they receive. They also value the ease with which they can talk informally to class teachers about their child's academic work and general wellbeing. These positive features successfully foster a constructive partnership between home and school. The school's formal systems for informing parents of pupils' progress are satisfactory, but there are some weaknesses in the annual written reports. At times it is difficult to tell from the texts what level the pupils are working at.

Subject reports sometimes use the same phrases to describe the understanding and skills of pupils of significantly different abilities. However, the inclusion of National Curriculum levels helps to clarify the picture in respect of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The quality of target setting is variable. Some reports include precise targets, but others provide only general indications of areas for improvement. The latter do not clearly spell out to parents what their child needs to do to raise his or her attainment.

24. Parents are interested in their children's learning and are keen for them to make good progress, as their very good attendance at consultation evenings shows. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' reading standards. They hear their children read at home, and several volunteers regularly come into school to help with the "Rainbow Reading" programme. Most parents also enhance their children's learning through their support for extra-curricular activities and for the parents' association. They act as volunteer supervisors on school trips, for example. The parents' association is thriving and raises money that funds extra resources for the school.
25. The school has developed a good partnership with the community, and its links with local organisations make an important contribution to its curriculum. Pupils' participation in community events, such as the Leigh Drama Festival, widens their opportunities for learning and enriches their experience. The school is closely involved with the Education Action Zone (EAZ), and this link is making a major contribution to raising standards. For example, the EAZ's reading initiative is helping a number of younger pupils with reading difficulties to catch up with their peers. The school has close contacts with a wide range of specialists, such as occupational therapists, paediatricians, and physiotherapists, who work with pupils with special educational needs. This significantly enhances the quality of support and guidance for these children.
26. The school liaises closely with other providers of education, such as local secondary schools and the playgroup that is based on the Fairways' site. These links enrich pupils' opportunities for learning, as when teachers and students from Belfairs Community College support dance lessons in Fairways school. Good links also help to guide children smoothly through the transfer to the next stage of their education. Years 5 and 6 get the opportunity to visit Belfairs Community College, meet its staff and experience a secondary school day. The school's collaboration with the playgroup ensures that children become familiar with teachers and school routines before they join the reception class at Fairways.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher and senior management team is very effective, although the roles of some members of middle management require improvement. Management is good. The governance of the school is sound.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and senior management team have a clear sense of direction and purpose and are ambitious for the school and its pupils.
- Senior staff inspire and motivate effective team working.
- The school is very good at monitoring its own performance and taking appropriate action to bring about improvements.
- The leadership is very committed to meeting the needs of all pupils and ensuring equality of opportunity.
- The roles of some middle managers are underdeveloped.
- The governing body fulfils its statutory duties, but its role in planning for school development and improvement is too slight.

### **Commentary**

27. The headteacher has successfully developed a strong senior management team. Together they share a clear understanding of the main priorities and challenges facing the school. The school development plan clearly reflects their identification and pursuit of the most important issues for school improvement. It appropriately focuses on matters such as developing the teaching of reading; identifying and meeting the needs of the most able; the effective deployment of teaching assistants and the further development of the role of subject leaders. The plan was developed out of a comprehensive process of evaluation of the school's performance and wide consultation. This included the analysis of the school's test results in light of local and national comparative data and consultations with staff, the local education authority and representatives of the Education Action Zone. Inspection evidence shows that progress towards school development plan targets is very good. For example, the plan to improve the teaching of reading is well advanced and standards are rising as a result. A good start has been made on meeting the needs of the most able.
28. The clear, purposeful lead given by the headteacher and senior staff effectively inspires the confidence of staff, pupils and parents. Most of the parents and carers say that the school is well led and managed. Pupils show respect and high regard for the headteacher. Staff feel well supported and have a clear sense of the direction and priorities set by the senior management team. They appreciate the recent introduction of dedicated lesson preparation and marking time.
29. The school takes seriously the need to monitor and evaluate its own performance and it does this well. Self-evaluation had already identified for action most of the issues for improvement arising from this inspection. The need to improve pupils' awareness of cultural and ethnic diversity, the need to develop further the roles of some middle managers and the need to make more use of ICT across the curriculum had all been identified by the school as a result of self review. Action had been taken, for example in the appointment of two members of staff to develop multi-cultural education.
30. The very effective provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those from the Speech and Language Resource Base, reflects the strong commitment of the headteacher and senior management team to meeting the needs of all pupils. The provision for these pupils and their access to the full curriculum and the other activities of the school have improved greatly since the last inspection, under the guidance of the headteacher. There has also been a vigorous and determined response to the underperformance of boys in national tests in recent years. Positive male role models from the world of work have been introduced, in an imaginative attempt to demonstrate that it is 'cool to be clever'.
31. The 'core' subjects – English, mathematics and science – are well led by members of senior management. The co-ordination of the provision for pupils with special educational needs, both in the mainstream and in the specialist resource base, is of very good quality. However, the leadership and management of some of the other subjects and aspects of the school's work is at an early stage of development and requires improvement. Design and technology, for example, has just been taken over by new subject leaders, and its co-ordination is at a very early stage of development. The provision for cultural and ethnic awareness is a newly identified priority. Two keen young members of staff have been appointed to develop this work, but they require training and guidance if they are to be fully effective in this key endeavour. The leadership of religious education is satisfactory, but would benefit from a more proactive approach.
32. The budget is planned and managed efficiently, ensuring that the school's financial resources are used effectively to support educational priorities. The governing body retains a prudent sum in reserve at the end of each financial year.

### ***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,615,027
Total expenditure	1,539,320
Expenditure per pupil	3,613

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	82,802
Balance carried forward to the next	75,708

33. The governing body keeps itself reasonably well informed about the work of the school. Individual governors make visits to classes, have meetings with staff and are linked with particular subjects and year groups. Governors understand the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and are committed to meeting the needs of all its pupils. However, the role of the governing body in planning for school development and improvement is too slight. Governors rely too heavily on the headteacher and staff to shape the direction of the school. Their part in drawing up the school development plan is too limited.

## THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE RESOURCE BASE

Provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Successful inclusion of pupils into classes in the mainstream of the school.
- The high quality of teaching and support for pupils' learning.
- Specialist speech and language therapy.
- A model of good practice for other specialist bases within the local area.
- Very good resources and accommodation.
- High expectations in terms of returning pupils to their local mainstream school as soon as possible.

### Commentary

34. The Speech and Language Resource Base provides very good support for up to 20 pupils from other schools, both within the local area and beyond, who have speech and language difficulties. These pupils achieve well. They make good progress and overcome many of their difficulties through the specialist teaching and the support provided.
35. All the pupils in the base either have a Statement of Special Educational Needs or are undergoing specialist assessment. Each pupil has an individual education plan which often specifies sessions with the speech and language therapists who work closely with specialist staff. Pupils also participate in the annual reviews of progress with their parents or carers.
36. It is not appropriate to judge the standards reached against national expectations, particularly in English. However, most of the individual targets set are achieved with the support of teacher, therapist and parents. This represents good achievement and progress. Inspectors were impressed by the successful integration of these pupils into mainstream classes and the way teachers and support staff ensured that they received the support needed to succeed in all subjects. They work as a class, in small groups and individual settings as appropriate. The pupils are very much a part of school life and are included in all its aspects, joining whole-school assemblies, playtimes and lunchtimes.
37. The quality of teaching and the learning support are good and this is the most important factor in the good progress made by pupils. A key strength of the teaching is the commitment to ensuring that all the pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners who are helped to reach their full potential. Together with support staff, teachers successfully create a learning environment that is warm and caring, offering pupils a good quality curriculum with a full range of activities matched to their needs.

38. Procedures for assessment are good. The school maintains extensive records of the achievement of all pupils in the base, and uses these well to review their progress and set and modify targets for attainment. Speech and language therapists contribute helpfully to the identification and assessment of the communication and social needs of pupils.
39. There are good procedures for welcoming pupils into the base and helping their parents and carers to feel confident about their children's placements. Good procedures also exist for helping pupils and their parents to prepare for the next stage of their education. These include helpful visits to the school to which they will transfer. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress, and they have access to the school at any time. They are fully involved in the annual review of their children's individual education plans and Statements of Special Educational Needs.
40. The teacher in charge, along with the headteacher, provides very good leadership and gives the base a positive identity and purpose. Since the last inspection the school has developed and maintained the quality of this provision, which was reported to be a strength of the school. All pupils from Year 3 upwards are now full time members of mainstream classes and inclusion of the younger base pupils is developing well, being a target of the base development plan.

### **THE EARLY YEARS RESOURCE BASE**

41. The new Early Years Resource Base had been functioning for only a few days at the time of the inspection. The inspection team talked with staff and observed the children settling into new routines, but it was agreed with the school that this provision was too new to make reliable judgements about its quality. However, it has the potential to make a valuable contribution to the assessment and education of pre-school children with special educational needs. It has appropriate resources, accommodation and staffing to succeed within a very inclusive school setting.
42. This Resource Base replaces the Observation Centre formerly incorporated as part of the school since 1996. It has been developed as part of the local education authority's special educational needs strategy review. The newly formed staff team will implement an inclusive policy of Early Years provision for pre-school children with a variety of special needs. The present group of 14 children includes a number with autistic spectrum disorders and speech and language difficulties.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

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

Provision for children in the Reception classes, at the *Foundation Stage*, is good. The children enter Reception with attainment that is slightly below average for their age. Positive attitudes are fostered. This is a strength of the provision and reflects the ethos of the school. Children are on course to reach the national goals set for them by the end of their time in Reception. Children achieve well as a result of the consistently good teaching that they receive. The curriculum is well matched to the children's interests but could be enriched further by placing greater emphasis on cultural diversity. The teachers are skilled and experienced early years' practitioners. They manage the Reception classes effectively in co-operation. Since the previous inspection the school has maintained its good provision and improved assessment. There are now highly effective arrangements for the integration of children from the school's Speech and Language Resource Base and the accommodation has been improved to give access for pupils with impaired mobility.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

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

- Highly effective induction arrangements.
- Teachers promote good behaviour and respect for others.
- Children of all abilities very well supported to achieve well.
- Children need more opportunities to develop an understanding of the multi-cultural society of which they are a part.

#### **Commentary**

43. Small groups of children attend school initially on a part-time basis, giving them the benefit of individual attention and assessment. They quickly gain confidence with adults and get to know school routines. They learn to sit still and pay attention and they soon learn that they need to wear a badge to denote their participation in activities like sand play. Teachers judge the pace of lessons expertly to ensure that the children have enough time to assimilate information and routines. They explain things clearly and teaching assistants support children as they come to terms with managing simple tasks. As a result the children are happy to come to school.
44. Teachers are highly effective when modelling good behaviour. They have a calm and respectful manner when addressing children and one another. Teachers value children's contributions to lessons. For example, in one lesson the teacher listened closely as she skilfully encouraged a child to add details and personal feeling as he recounted a journey he had made during the summer. Children have roles as helpers and are keen to live up to the title. They proudly hand out biscuits and drinks, which the recipients accept with, "please" and "thank you". Adults are quick to acknowledge good behaviour and children are praised appropriately for listening with attention and sitting sensibly.
45. Reception age children from the school's Speech and Language Resource Base have planned sessions with the Reception classes. Their integration into activities, such as physical development sessions, contributes positively to their own personal and social development and also that of the other children.
46. Too little is done to broaden the children's understanding of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the wider society. Displays and learning resources give scant recognition to cultural and ethnic diversity.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The structured teaching programme results in good achievement.
- Parental involvement in children's learning makes a positive contribution to children's achievement, for example in reading.

### Commentary

47. Children's language skills are assessed when they first start school. Effective use is made of the information gathered to target individual children's progress and to ensure appropriate levels of challenge and support. The school's own analysis and that of the local education authority show that, in recent years, many children have made better than expected progress. The teaching is consistently good and the curriculum well structured. In one of their first literacy lessons children were encouraged to take part in a class exercise to discriminate between letter sounds. The teacher had high expectations and supported children with the task by exaggerating lip and mouth shapes and enunciated sounds. This was limited to three distinct letter sounds. The children were visibly pleased with their success and the praise they received and were keen to have a go. This whole-class lesson was appropriately followed up with a range of related physical activities, including making letter shapes in the sand. The children's performance was carefully assessed and notes were made to help with the planning of future teaching. Such a cycle of high quality teaching and effective evaluation results in good achievement.
48. Parents appreciate the detailed consultation with teachers which they are offered within the first few weeks of their children starting school. They are given clear guidance on how they can help their children achieve their learning goals. There is an appropriate emphasis on the importance of language development. Children are encouraged to read at home. Children select books carefully and they talk about books they have enjoyed reading at home with their parents or carers. They extract information from the illustrations as well as recognising letters, sounds and words. Parents co-operate well with the school. For example, they have recently helped their children select toys with specific initial letter sounds to bring to school for use in a reading lesson.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide variety of learning experiences effectively develop children's mathematical skills.

### Commentary

49. On entry, children's attainment in mathematical skills is slightly below average. By the end of their Reception year most are likely to reach the goals set for them. Teachers foster children's interest through good direct teaching and the provision of a wide variety of practical activities, such as singing number rhymes and songs and measuring capacity in sand and water play. In a lesson observed children were counting forward and backward along a counting stick from zero to ten. Most could recognise the numbers one to ten. Some could already begin to arrange the numbers in the right order. All were happy to have a go as the atmosphere in the class engendered a sense of security which helped learning. Teaching assistants support children

well, for example by joining in, modelling the right response to the teacher's questions. Teachers have a good understanding of the different abilities within the class and question children with the appropriate level of challenge.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children use ICT with confidence.
- The curriculum is stimulating and makes effective use of links with other areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.

### **Commentary**

50. Resources for ICT are very good and they make a positive contribution to the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. The children have easy access to computers in their classrooms and in addition they have a regular session in the school's ICT suite. Teachers have good subject knowledge and skill and this enables them to demonstrate the use of ICT very clearly, so that the children easily understand and learn. This gives the children the confidence to try new things for themselves. For example, having watched the teacher demonstrate very effectively the use of the mouse to move an image across the large screen, the children were soon able to manipulate the mouse skilfully for themselves.
51. Examples of children's work on display demonstrate good links between this and some of the other areas of learning, such as creative development. In learning about life cycles, for example, the children have made symmetrical butterflies and fold out booklets on tadpoles and frogs. Opportunities to reinforce the basic skills of reading, writing and using numbers are actively sought, for instance as the children look at books to find out information or attempt to write about what they have learned.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good learning resources and accommodation and well-planned activities result in children achieving well and making good progress.

### **Commentary**

52. The outdoor garden has good grassed and paved surfaces. A path has been added to link areas for children with physical difficulties. Children have access to appropriate equipment for large movement and this encourages them to improve their large muscle control and co-ordination. Most children move with good control. For instance, they jump with both feet and hop on one. In a lesson seen the teacher encouraged the children to learn from each other and extend their capabilities by exploring new ways of moving. As a result of the good teaching, by end of the lesson most children had found ways of balancing securely on three points of contact with the floor.
53. Teachers plan many activities for the children to experience a range of different materials and textures. The children use small equipment such as scissors, paint brushes and glue sticks as they cut, stick, draw and paint. Such activities are attractively presented, so that the children are eager to have a go and this encourages the steady development of their small muscle

control and co-ordination. The teaching appropriately ensures that the children are expected to do things for themselves after demonstration and instruction.

## CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

54. It is not possible to make a judgement on the provision for creative development or the standards of work in this area of learning. The quality of the work on display and in the children's records of achievement for the previous year was good. Children had completed a large background canvas of bubble printing to represent water. They had completed handprints and paintings with large brushes. Both classes have a home corner and an extended role play area that is currently an office, equipped with telephones and writing paper.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.
- The school's initiative to raise standards in reading is effective and standards are improving as a result.
- The teaching is good.
- Pupils' skills in using the library for research and independent study are inadequately developed.

#### Commentary

55. In the most recent national tests for which confirmed results are available (2002), pupils at the end of Year 6 reached standards that were above the national average for all schools but were similar to those in schools working in a similar social context. Pupils at the end of Year 2 reached average national standards in writing, but their performance in reading was below average compared both with all schools nationally and with other schools working in a similar social context. The inspection shows that standards in Year 6 are again likely to be above average by the end of Year 6. In writing, standards are again likely to be average by the end of Year 2. Standards in reading are better this year. Pupils are on course to reach the national average by the end of this school year. Standards have risen and continue to rise as a result of the school's vigorous response to the below average standards over the past few years. In conjunction with the Education Action Zone and with the support of the local education authority, the school has introduced a raft of measures to raise standards. These have included an intensive and highly structured programme of individual tuition in reading – known as *Reading Recovery* – for pupils mainly in Year 1, but also some in Year 2, who have experienced difficulties in learning to read. The school's own analysis of pupils' progress between starting school in Reception and taking national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, and that carried out by the local education authority, indicate that most pupils achieve well over their time at the school. This is also true of those attending the Speech and Learning Resource Base, although these pupils do not always reach the nationally expected standard in English by the time they are eleven.
56. By the end of Year 2 most pupils read simple texts with accuracy and understanding. They recognise many common words readily and explain clearly the story so far. They have some helpful skills that they use to tackle unfamiliar words, such as *sounding out* a word they do not recognise, or looking at the illustrations for clues. Most pupils write legibly, distinguishing clearly between upper and lower case letters. They make some use of basic punctuation, for instance using full stops to demarcate some of their sentences. They spell some common words

correctly and more complex words are spelled plausibly, if not correctly. One pupil wrote, for example, *Put the parcel on the parashoot*. By the end of Year 6 most pupils have very positive attitudes to reading and discuss books, stories and a number of popular authors with interest and obvious enjoyment. They understand a range of different texts, both fiction and non-fiction. They pick out and discuss features of a text and discuss the plot and some of the characters, making reference to appropriate words, descriptions or other information to support their point of view. They make some use of non-fiction in their studies, for example to research information about buildings in geography lessons. However, their library skills are less well developed than they should be for their age. They have only a rudimentary understanding of how to use a catalogue, or of the commonly used systems of classification of non-fiction books. Their handwriting is mostly joined. It is neat and easy to read. Punctuation is mostly accurate. Pupils write for a range of different purposes. For example, they write autobiographically about their first day in a new class, produce play scripts and summarise stories that they have read, such as *Oliver Twist*. They bring liveliness and interest to their writing, producing more complex sentences that make use of connecting words and phrases such as *whenever* and *so that*, in place of the more common *but* and *then*.

57. The quality of teaching is good and it promotes good learning. Teachers take care to meet the learning needs of all their pupils, including those who find learning more difficult. They have identified the most able, so that they may be set appropriately challenging work, enabling them to achieve their full potential. The arrangement of pupils into ability sets in Years 5 and 6 enables teachers to match work more closely to pupils' needs. Lessons are stimulating and proceed at a brisk pace. This results in pupils paying close attention and working hard. The good quality of teaching has the effect of promoting good attitudes to learning and enthusiasm, because pupils find their work enjoyable and rewarding. Teachers help pupils to have a good understanding of their own learning. They explain at the outset what it is pupils are going to do and learn. They spend a high proportion of lessons on clear, direct whole-class teaching. They use questions well to involve all pupils and check that they are following. In a very good lesson in Year 2, for example, the teacher skilfully posed questions about the use of command verbs so that all pupils, including those from the Speech and Language Resource Base, could confidently respond. The teaching of reading is good and it is successfully raising standards. It is carefully planned and structured, so that pupils constantly build up and practise the basic skills such as word and letter recognition and the knowledge and use of letters and the sounds that they combine to make. The teaching of the individual *Reading Recovery* programme is particularly carefully structured and very good, comprehensive records are kept. This means that not only is each individual pupil's progress carefully watched, but the success of the programme itself can be monitored over time. Teachers make generally sound use of ICT to support pupils' learning, for example as pupils word process some of their writing.
58. English is well led and managed by the deputy headteachers. They keep a very careful eye on pupils' achievements and the standards that they reach. They monitor trends in standards, comparing the school's pupils with others both nationally and in the local area. They have led successful initiatives to raise standards, such as that concerned with the teaching and learning of reading.

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

59. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to use their reading, writing and speaking and listening skills in most other subjects. Pupils use books to find information, for example as they learn in Year 2 about Florence Nightingale in history and as they research the use of religious artefacts in Year 6 religious education lessons. They have sound opportunities to write in most subjects, for example writing up the investigations of materials and their properties that they carry out in Year 5 science lessons.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.



## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality teaching promotes good learning and achievement.
- Work is well matched to the learning needs of all pupils, particularly through the use of ability sets for older pupils.
- Marking does not do enough to help pupils to understand what they should do to improve.
- Too little use is made of pupils' mathematical skills as they learn in other subjects.
- Not enough use is made of ICT in mathematics lessons.

## Commentary

60. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in their learning. They enter the school with attainment that is somewhat below average overall and by the end of Year 6 they reach above average standards. They achieve well because the teaching is good and the curriculum provides a range of challenging activities that are well matched to their needs.
61. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average but standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. The trend in standards has been upwards over the past few years, both in Year 2 and Year 6, though the improvement is more marked in Year 6. This results from good subject leadership. The two subject leaders have succeeded in developing a shared vision of high expectations and have been tracking standards with great care. Monitoring of teaching is now a regular feature of performance management, carried out by the senior managers. Pupils with special educational needs, including those from the Speech and Language Resource Base, make good progress because they receive good quality support and their work is well matched to their capabilities. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In three of the lessons seen, teaching was very good or excellent. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, they explain and demonstrate new ideas clearly, so that pupils easily understand. Pupils enjoy the good teaching and this promotes very good attitudes to the subject. The learning intentions of each lesson are shared with pupils at the outset, to give them an understanding of what they are to learn. Appropriate coverage is given to all the different elements of the curriculum, with a strong emphasis on the use of numbers.
63. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion and boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds are effectively supported to achieve well in relation to their capabilities. The warm relationships established by teachers result in very good behaviour and attitudes to work. Boys and girls of all abilities work well together, discussing their work sensibly in pairs or groups, appreciating each other's efforts.
64. A particular strength of the teaching is the way that lessons start with a variety of mental arithmetic exercises, which include timed calculation. In an excellent Year 6 lesson pupils were challenged to use their knowledge of the multiplication tables to divide six-digit numbers by 10 or 100 and correctly place the decimal points.
65. Leadership and management are good. The two subject leaders are well informed about the quality of teaching and learning across the school as a result of their programme for monitoring teaching. Their careful analysis of pupils' progress in mathematics is used effectively to focus on strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and to plan lessons in light of this information.
66. Some use of ICT was seen in mathematics lessons during the period of the inspection. A program that reinforces basic number concepts provides individual learning programmes and tracks progress, and it is used appropriately. However, the use of ICT needs to be further developed and planned so that pupils can develop other mathematical skills, including those of analysis and presentation of data.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

67. The school has rightly identified the need to plan and develop the cross-curricular use of numeracy. There is some good practice in science and design and technology, where the use of measurement and the presentation of results make effective use of pupils' mathematical skills. However, few other subjects include planned opportunities for pupils to use such skills.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good overall, promoting good learning.
- The subject is well led and managed and a good action plan effectively identifies appropriate areas for development.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT.
- More challenging investigative work could be provided for the most able pupils.

### Commentary

68. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils in the current Year 2 also achieve well from their average level of attainment on entry and are likely to reach above average standards by the end of the year. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be broadly in line with national standards.
69. Pupils achieve well as a direct result of the good teaching. Good support in the classroom by teachers and teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs, including those from the Speech and Language Resource Base, make good progress and achieve as well as they can. Teachers help pupils to have a good understanding of their own learning through sharing with them at the start of lessons what it is they are going to do and learn. The teaching of scientific knowledge and understanding, especially knowledge of life processes and living things, is good throughout the school. Teachers introduce pupils to a range of appropriate scientific vocabulary and provide an appropriate balance of directed and open-ended tasks for pupils. However, in some classes the teaching of skills of scientific enquiry is not as strong. Expectations are not sufficiently challenging to develop the scientific enquiry skills of the most capable pupils, particularly in the area of considering and analysing evidence and in scientific explanation. In a very good Year 2 lesson pupils made very good progress in developing both their oral skills of scientific explanation and their understanding of the uses of natural materials in relation to their properties. A well-planned activity encouraged them to identify suitable materials for different uses, for example an axe, and to explain why they thought the materials were suitable. Well focused questioning ensured that all pupils were challenged at appropriate levels and were able to achieve well. Similarly, in a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils collected data on the lengths of their bones and more capable pupils were challenged to raise questions suitable for future investigations. From their analysis of the data two pupils suggested the question, "Do taller people have longer spines?" However, work in books and in other lessons seen indicates that this practice is not consistent throughout the school and pupils do not achieve as well in developing their skills of scientific enquiry as they do in acquiring knowledge and understanding.
70. The subject is well led and managed by the senior management team. The science curriculum has recently been reviewed in order to improve planning for teaching and learning and to raise standards. Appropriate analysis of statutory and optional assessment data has been well used

to identify weaker areas of learning and to focus teaching accordingly. A detailed action plan identifies appropriate strategies and success criteria for monitoring teaching and learning. Development plans appropriately highlight the need to develop further the use of ICT.

71. Appropriate opportunities are planned for pupils to apply some of their literacy and numeracy skills as they learn science. For example, pupils write up their investigations in full or make notes. They measure, collect, analyse and present data in different forms, including using line graphs in Years 5 and 6. Although there are some good examples of the use of ICT in science, this is inconsistent, being stronger in some classes than others. Only limited examples were seen of the use of resources representing cultural and ethnic diversity. For example, in their work on food and diet pupils include examples such as spaghetti and pizza but are not encouraged to consider the food and diet of non-European cultures.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Very good resources for learning and support of a technician.
- Improved ICT curriculum and scheme of work since the last inspection.
- Insufficient use of ICT to support and enrich other subjects.
- Assessment of pupils' achievements requires improvement.

### **Commentary**

72. Standards are above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and in line with expectations by the end of Year 6. The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. The good improvement since the last inspection is due to staff training and the school's investment in a suite of 16 computers, and computers including laptops for use in classes. All classes have access to printers and connection to the Internet. The appointment of a technician plus a new scheme of work provide the support needed to improve the teaching and learning of ICT skills across the school.
73. By the end of Year 2 pupils can select programs using screen icons. All pupils are competent in mouse control, being able to select, double click on a chosen aspect and use tools and drop down menus to select and alter text to suit the task. Pupils know that information can be obtained from many sources including CD-ROM, video, television and the Internet. Year 1 pupils make good use of ICT to write and read their poems saved on their laptop computers. They can find Barnaby Bear using the Internet and capture images of minibeasts using their digital microscope. Year 2 pupils can control a floor robot and use art programs to create pictures and patterns. They develop good mouse control to access CD-ROMs and the Internet to search for information, for example as they learn about garden wildlife in science and about Florence Nightingale in history.
74. By the end of Year 6, pupils use ICT to present information in a variety of forms, demonstrating an awareness of the expected audience in their presentations. They present information in the form of graphs or tables, for example in relation to an investigation in Year 4 of the viscosity of liquids. They also use the Internet to import pictures of Tudor monarchs into their history topic work. Year 5 use information about their homes to create a database, and interrogate a database about butterflies. Year 6 pupils are learning how to use all their prior knowledge of ICT produce a multimedia presentation to a selected audience. The use of e-mail to communicate with other pupils or schools is at an early stage of development.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers make very good use of the projector linked to the computers in the ICT suite to demonstrate the skills and programs, prior to pupils working independently. Pupils work well in pairs and make very good use of the resources and

the advice of teachers and the technician to make good progress towards completing the task set. Year 6 pupils quickly grasped the use of a multimedia program and produced colourful title pages for a presentation using a variety of colours and lettering. Teachers' high expectations and good subject knowledge are reflected in pupils' interest and their very good attitudes to work. Pupils with special educational needs and those included from the Speech and Language Resource Base make good progress because they are well supported by experienced support assistants.

76. The quality of computers in the suite and in the new library and classrooms is very good, as is the ratio of computers, including laptops, to pupils. The computer suite is having a positive impact on pupils' ICT skills and achievements.
77. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader is knowledgeable and has produced a good action plan, which focuses appropriately on raising standards by encouraging the use of ICT across the curriculum. She leads a popular lunchtime club for pupils and supports a parents' computer session on two afternoons per week organised and run by a local college.

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

78. Although there are some good examples of the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other subjects, the school has recognised that this is inconsistent between classes, year groups and subjects and requires further development.

### **HUMANITIES**

79. No lessons were seen in geography. Two were observed in history. In both subjects, inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work and talked to pupils about what they had learned. Religious education was inspected in detail. Samples of work geography in the previous Year 2 and Year 6 classes indicated that the National Curriculum had received adequate coverage. The available work sample was heavily reliant on worksheets for recording and there were few examples of links to numeracy.
80. A sample of history work from the same classes as geography was examined. This also indicated that there was adequate coverage of the National Curriculum. In discussion, pupils were enthusiastic about a day spent as pupils at a 'Victorian School'. This brought alive the more gruesome aspects of school life in Victorian times. In one of the lessons seen the teaching was very good and in the other it was satisfactory. In the very good lesson the teacher skilfully questioned pupils to enable them to evaluate source material by putting it into its original context. In looking at a portrait of Henry VIII she pointed out that it might have been flattering as Henry had commissioned it as an instrument of his power. She followed this up by getting pupils to access other material via the Internet that gave other views on Henry.

### **Religious Education**

Provision in RE is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Strong links with the local church.
- Assessment and recording of pupils' achievements are weak.
- There are too few links with faiths other than Christianity.
- Too little monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to enhance pupils' learning.

## Commentary

81. The analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff, together with the lessons seen, show that standards match those expected by the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6. This is similar to the situation at the time of the previous inspection.
82. In Year 1 pupils are taught the beliefs and practices of the Christian faith, and that different faiths share some common features such as festivals and caring for each other. Pupils visit the local church, meet the vicar and ask questions about his vocation and the church. By Year 2 they understand the importance of the Bible to Christians. They are aware of some of the special people of the Christian faith, such as Jesus and they know, for example, that he told stories with a special meaning, such as the parables of the sower and the prodigal son. They write about aspects of Judaism and the importance of the sacred book, the Torah, and know that it is important to the Jewish people.
83. In the lessons seen, pupils in Year 5 made good progress in understanding the importance of the Koran to Muslims. The teachers' very good subject knowledge and preparation captured pupils' imagination and respect for a major world faith. Pupils know and understand that Mohammed is the prophet of Islam and that the Koran is the sacred book of Islam. The teachers' use of the Koran and a very good textbook supported pupils' learning. Pupils in Year 4 discussed the Hindu concept of one God who has many forms, responding well to questions about the importance of different Hindu symbols. They used their knowledge of Hinduism to draw symbols and write about their own roles and interests. Use of the Internet gave two pupils an opportunity to report to the whole class information they had found about the Hindu Gods. Pupils with special educational needs, including those from the Speech and Language Resource Base, were well supported by teaching assistants. In the best lesson seen, the most capable pupils were given additional work to extend their learning. Assemblies, circle times and the personal, social and health education programme give good support to pupils' learning and their spiritual and moral development. Pupils show respect for other pupils' views and the religious artefacts used in lessons, for example, the Bible, the Koran and images of Hindu gods.
84. The leadership and management of the subject require improvement. The subject leader has made a sound start on ensuring sufficient learning resources are available. She has produced a development plan, but the necessary improvements in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning have yet to be agreed. The use of ICT to enrich the curriculum is also an area for further development. Assessment is unsatisfactory, as it is largely about producing statements for the annual reports, rather than marking that informs pupils about the next steps in learning, based on what they can and cannot do. Visits to places of worship are extremely limited at present, as is the number of visitors coming into school to talk about their beliefs. This limits opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of other religions and beliefs from first hand experience.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

One lesson was seen in art and design, in Year 1. In addition, work produced during the previous school year was examined, including some of a good standard produced by the embroidery club. No lessons were observed in design and technology, but a small sample of pupils' work was scrutinised. Only limited observation of physical education took place during the inspection. Music was inspected in detail.

85. Art and design has a high profile and the school has the Artsmark award. Samples of pupils' work are well displayed. Pupils have worked with a local artist to produce a large scale painted canvas to celebrate the school's jubilee. Work from the school's embroidery club is of particular note, where pupils used nature as an inspiration for high quality individual pieces of weaving and stitching. In the one lesson observed, pupils were being taught to explore making marks with a pencil but the lesson was too rushed as they also tried to complete drawings of

themselves, so the original purpose of the lesson was not fully achieved. Learning resources have few references to traditions or artists that come from outside European culture.

86. The leadership of design and technology has recently been taken on by two new subject leaders. Little evidence of finished products was available to inspectors, partly because work of this nature is often taken home on completion. The examination of teachers' planning suggests satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum.
87. Only one games lesson, of satisfactory quality, was seen in Year 2 during the week of inspection. It is not, therefore, possible to make judgements in Physical Education.

## Music

Provision in music is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and standards are above average by the end of Year 6.
- The standard of singing is good throughout the school.
- The subject is well taught and pupils are enthusiastic about learning.
- The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities and individual music tuition for a range of instruments and pupils have frequent opportunities to perform.
- The subject is well led and managed.

### Commentary

88. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving well. They are likely to attain above average standards overall by the end of the year. In lessons seen they worked well in small groups to compose a short percussion accompaniment to a poem, demonstrating a satisfactory understanding of tempo and rhythm. They selected and played instruments appropriately to represent different lines of the poem. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils made good progress in their understanding of pitch and dynamics and were able to copy rhythmic patterns accurately. In assemblies and singing practices pupils sang well. Older pupils demonstrated a good sense of rhythm and coped well with the increasing tempo of a song. Their diction is particularly clear as they sing and they maintained their own parts well when singing a four part round. Younger pupils sang with a good sense of the shape of the melody and kept in time well. They varied their singing from loud to soft as directed and pupils playing percussion instruments beat time accurately.
89. Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching by the part-time specialist teacher seen in Years 2 and 6. Singing is taught very well in music assemblies. Both teachers who lead these provide very good role models for pupils to copy and their enthusiasm, clear explanations and varied teaching methods engage pupils' interest well and generate an enjoyment of singing. Non-specialist teachers follow a sound scheme of work well when teaching music. Their lessons are well planned, with clear learning intentions. The teacher's good use of explanation and focused questioning enabled pupils in a lesson observed in Year 3 to make sound progress in their understanding of how different musical instruments are used expressively in Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*.
90. The range of activities offered outside lessons is very wide and these are well attended. The provision is very effective in generating an understanding and an appreciation of music from an early age for those attending. The recorder club for Year 2 pupils attracted 24 members who all made good progress in their first lesson, both in playing and in beginning to read music. Choir for the upper school was equally well attended and pupils began to learn a song to perform at the Harvest Festival. The flute club for older pupils provides them with extra practice and the opportunity to work towards a performance. Pupils have good opportunities for individual

musical instrument tuition provided by the local education authority and lessons are well supported.

91. The subject is well led and managed, ensuring that music has a high profile in the curriculum. A new scheme of work has been introduced in the upper school and teaching and learning are helpfully being monitored to evaluate the effect on standards. The subject leader has a clear vision for future development of the subject with an appropriate focus on improving assessment.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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

