

# INSPECTION REPORT

**SHEERING CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Sheering, Bishop's Stortford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115099

Headteacher: Mr Phillip Hays

Reporting inspector: Dr Vivien Johnston  
8402

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 193832

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: The Street  
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Bishop's Stortford  
Hertfordshire  
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. T Potter

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8402	Vivien Johnston	Registered inspector	English English as an additional language Equal opportunities Art Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? What should the school do to improve further?
9053	Vivienne Phillips	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20948	John Linstead	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education Religious education Special educational needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
31421	Susan Rogers	Team inspector	Science Foundation Stage Geography History Music	How well is the school led and managed?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This voluntary controlled primary school serves the village of Sheering and rural area to the east of Harlow. It has ninety-four pupils, and so is smaller than most primary schools. The size of year groups varies widely, from seven in Year 2 to nineteen in Year 3, and so all except the Reception children are taught in mixed-age classes. The total number of boys and girls is similar, though the proportions in each year vary. The pupils' social and economic background is above average, compared to schools nationally. Almost all the pupils are white. Two pupils speak English as an additional language. They are fluent in English, and need no extra help. Twenty pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, some for learning and some for behaviour difficulties. Their needs are not severe, and no pupils have a statement of special educational need. Overall, children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is above average.

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

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly average, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, although still unsatisfactory in the infants despite recent improvements in teaching. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. The school's leadership and management are also satisfactory, with a strength in the promotion of pupils' personal development. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils do well in mathematics, and results at the end of Year 6 are well above average. Pupils also do well in music.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are good, and their behaviour and relationships are very good.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good, and the school is a friendly, caring community in which pupils are valued.
- Parents make a very strong contribution to their children's learning, particularly in reading.
- The school has very strong links with the village community, particularly the pre-school.

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

- Standards in writing, information and communication technology (ICT), and science.
- The challenge teachers provide to pupils of different ages and attainment, including in the infants.
- Teachers' use of assessment information, to help raise academic standards.
- The rigour with which the work of the school is checked, and the impact of this monitoring on school improvement.

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

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

The school was last inspected in April 1997. Since then, the school has maintained its strength in providing a strong family ethos based on its traditional, Christian values. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour, the school's links with parents, and its provision for pupils' personal development also remain strengths. The staff have worked to successfully improve results in the juniors. The school also tackled the issue of improving the curriculum with some success, particularly in art and design and technology. However, the planning for ICT has not been updated as necessary, which has contributed to standards in ICT being lower than reported by the last inspection. Learning activities are still often not planned well enough for the needs of pupils in the different year groups in each class, and higher-attaining pupils are still not challenged enough. Results at the end of Year 2 are similar to those reported by the last inspection, whereas nationally results have risen. Pupils' writing is weaker than reported by the last inspection, particularly in the infants. Overall, the school's improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, even though for some time it was held back by staffing issues.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	D	C	D
Mathematics	E	C	A	B
Science	C	C	D	E

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

Results in the 2001 assessments at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading, and well below average in writing and mathematics. Compared to similar schools, the results were well below average in reading and writing, and very low in mathematics (in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally). The test results for an individual year need to be interpreted with caution due to the comparatively low number of pupils in each year group, but the trend over the last few years is for the Year 2 results to be below the national average.

Overall results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved broadly in line with the national trend during the last five years, and at a fast rate in the last two to three years. The 2001 results in English and mathematics were well above those attained nationally in schools in which pupils had gained similar (below average) results in the Year 2 assessments four years earlier. The school considerably exceeded its target for English results in 2001. It also met the mathematics target, which had been set at a much higher level than for English. The targets for 2002 are suitably challenging and attainable.

The overall standards attained by children at the end of the Reception year are above the expectations for their age, with strengths in the children's personal development, speaking and listening, reading, creative and mathematical development. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average overall. However, the achievement of pupils in the infants is unsatisfactory, despite the continuing strengths in their speaking and listening and reading. Standards in writing, science and ICT are too low.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are also average overall, with a strength in pupils' work in mathematics but a continuing weakness in writing, science and ICT. The juniors' achievement is satisfactory. They have had better opportunities for writing independently than in the infants, which has contributed to the recent improvement in standards and test results in this area of English.

Standards in music are above expectations in Years 2 and 6, while in other subjects standards are broadly in line with expectations. In general, pupils' factual knowledge is a strength but their skills in independent and investigative work are weaker because they have had too few opportunities for this.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and work willingly in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well, in lessons and around the school at other times of the day.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good, and so the school has a strong sense of community. Pupils' personal development is good. They respond well to opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative, when these are provided.
Attendance	Very good attendance and punctuality.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

All the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory or better. Nearly half was good or better, a lower proportion than in most schools. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory with strengths in the promotion of pupils' speaking and listening and their reading skills. However, the teaching of writing is unsatisfactory, particularly in the infants, because pupils are given too few opportunities for independent writing. The teaching of mathematics and numeracy skills is satisfactory.

Strengths in teaching and learning are that relationships are good, teachers manage classroom activities well, and pupils work willingly. They enjoy learning, and most join in oral activities keenly. They are sometimes less productive in group activities, including writing. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. However, the work is sometimes unchallenging, partly because teachers do not plan well enough for what pupils of different ages and attainment are to learn from the activities. This means that the needs of all pupils are not met equally well. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well when they are withdrawn for extra literacy support, and when learning support assistants work with them in lessons. Some marking is good because it is detailed and gives clear guidance on how to improve. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils in the infants learning to read confidently.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum covers all the National Curriculum subjects. A good range of extra-curricular clubs and sports activities is also provided. However, the statutory requirements for ICT are not met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. The pupils are given good support when taught in small groups, but class teachers do not pay enough attention to ensuring that this learning is built on in lessons when other support is not available.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, contributing to the school's strong and supportive ethos. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well overall. The staff know the pupils and their families very well, and are very supportive of their personal needs and welfare. Good behaviour is promoted strongly. However, teachers do too little to monitor and guide pupils' academic progress from year to year, in a systematic way.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very well. Parents' contribution to their children's learning is very good, and is valued by the school. Annual reports on pupils' learning are good overall, although the quality of the comments varies considerably.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher is very committed, and has been successful in creating a community ethos that promotes pupils' personal



headteacher and other key staff	development very well. However, the leadership and management of the academic aspects of the school's work have not ensured that pupils do as well as they should.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily overall. The governors are very supportive of the school, and provide much practical help to the headteacher and staff. Through regular visits, the governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths. They have not ensured that statutory requirements for ICT are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. Checks on the impact of new policies and initiatives have not been systematic enough and have lacked rigour.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school is well staffed, and has sufficient accommodation and learning resources. These and the financial resources are used satisfactorily. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily overall, although it is better at consulting than at challenging itself to do well academically.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good, and their children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The teaching is good, the school has high expectations of their children, and they get the right amount of homework.</li> <li>• The school is approachable and works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	No issues were raised in the parents' questionnaire or at the meeting prior to the inspection.

The inspection team agreed with many of the views expressed by parents. The team found that pupils' behaviour is very good, whereas teaching and pupils' progress are satisfactory overall. The team agreed with parents that the school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and personal development, but found lower expectations of their academic progress. The team found that the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, with strengths in the promotion of a caring, friendly ethos.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Results in the assessments at the end of Year 2 have varied since the last inspection, when they were below average overall. The percentage gaining the nationally-expected level 2 or above was about the same in 2001 as in 1996, the results reported by the last inspection, whereas nationally results have risen. As was reported by the last inspection, the 2001 results were better in reading than in writing and mathematics. The school's results were well below average compared to those of similar schools (based on the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) in reading and writing, and very low in mathematics – in the lowest five per cent of similar schools nationally.
2. The assessment results for Years 2 and 6 need to be interpreted with caution due to the comparatively low number of pupils in each year group. Nevertheless, the trend over the last few years is for the Year 2 results to be below the national average.
3. The number of pupils in each year group is too low to enable valid judgements to be made about the performance of boys and girls in the Year 2 and Year 6 assessments.
4. The school's overall results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved broadly in line with the national trend, although there has been considerable fluctuation since the last inspection. Results in English, mathematics and science have improved fast recently, after a low point in 1998. The 2001 results were higher than those reported by the last inspection.
5. In comparison with similar schools, the overall Year 6 results were below average in 2001. Pupils did best in mathematics, where the results were above average. In English, the results were below average. The science results, which were the weakest, were well below average.
6. In comparison with schools in which the pupils had gained similar results in their Year 2 assessments four years earlier, the results were well above average in English and mathematics and average in science. However, the inspection in 1997 indicated that standards in Year 2 were lower than they should have been, given the generally above-average attainment of pupils at the start of the infants.
7. The school's targets for English and mathematics results have been insufficiently challenging. For example, the 2001 target for English was that fifty-five per cent of the pupils would gain level 4, whereas ninety-three per cent did so. This result was well above average compared to schools nationally. However, comparatively few pupils gained level 5, and here results were well below those for schools nationally. In mathematics, a higher target was set for 2001 than for previous years, that seventy-eight per cent would gain level 4. This target was exceeded by eight percentage points, and the results at both level 4 and level 5 were well above those for schools nationally. The English and mathematics targets for 2002 are for eighty-two per cent to gain level 4. Bearing in mind the small number of pupils in Year 6 and their standard of work, these targets are appropriately challenging and attainable.
8. Overall, the children's attainment on entry to the reception class is above the expectations for their age. As was reported by the last inspection, overall the standards attained by children at the end of the reception year are also above expectations. The children do particularly well in their personal development, speaking and listening, reading, mathematical development and creative work, but standards in writing are weaker than expected for their age. Overall, the children's achievement during the year is satisfactory.
9. Standards in Year 2 are in line with the expectations for the pupils' age. Standards are higher than the test results for 2001 as a result of better teaching during this school year. Standards in speaking and listening and in reading are above expectations. The school has worked successfully to improve the quality of pupils' mathematical knowledge, and standards are in line with expectations – and higher than the results of the 2001 assessments. However, standards in writing, science and information and communication technology (ICT) remain too low. Pupils do well in music in both the infants and juniors, and satisfactorily in other subjects. In

general, pupils are strongest in the area of knowledge. They are weaker in the learning of skills because of a lack of opportunities for investigative and independent approaches to their work.

10. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 is above expectations overall, as most have attained the early learning goals for the foundation stage (reception year). This was shown by a range of evidence including discussions with staff, some planning and assessment records, and infants' written work including in their 'progress' books. When this is taken into account, the achievement of pupils in the infants remains unsatisfactory overall, despite the strengths in their speaking and listening and reading. In particular, the evidence of the pupils' written work and the lessons observed shows that they have not done well enough in writing, science and ICT. This is because the work has not extended their skills and experience sufficiently.

11. Standards at the end of Year 6 are also average overall, with a strength in pupils' work in mathematics but a continuing weakness in science and ICT. Pupils in the juniors have had more opportunities for writing independently than pupils in the infants. This has contributed to the recent improvement in test results in English. Although they are improving, standards in writing are still lower than they should be. Taking account of their attainment at the start of Year 3, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall in the juniors.

12. Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriately overall. They make good progress when they are given extra support. At other times, class teachers pay too little attention to adapting the work to meet the needs of the pupils, although they learn well when given individual guidance and help.

13. Higher-attaining pupils do well in mathematics, as is shown by the proportion who gain level 5 at the end of Year 6. Parents' strong support for their children's learning at home, supported by the school's policy of sending reading books home each day, helped many Year 2 pupils to gain level 3 in reading. However, higher-attaining pupils have done less well in other subjects. For example, in the Year 2 assessments no pupils gained level 3 in writing.

14. In general, pupils have good subject knowledge and vocabulary, and so speak confidently when giving information. They are weaker in independent and investigative work, particularly in science. Standards in writing are lower than they should be because the skills of literacy are not developed systematically in English and other subjects – partly because of a lack of planning for the promotion of literacy skills across the curriculum, and partly because teachers over-use worksheets that require only short answers. Standards in ICT are below expectations because pupils have not covered all that is required by the National Curriculum, although most have confident skills in using the keyboard and mouse as they have experience of using computers at home.

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

15. The strengths in pupils' attitudes, values and personal development identified by the previous inspection have been maintained. Parents commented that their children like school and are happy to be there. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They do what is asked of them with great goodwill, in and out of lessons. Pupils are co-operative and ready to learn. When lessons are lively, pupils' enthusiasm and involvement in activities is strong. For example, in a physical education lesson in which pupils were challenged to strive to do their best, their attitudes were outstanding. Even when lessons were less inspiring, pupils were very willing to work. Pupils with special educational needs are appreciative of the extra help they are given. They enjoy going to extra literacy support sessions, and try hard when given adult help.

16. Children in the reception class work confidently and with enjoyment. They co-operate well in whole-class and small group activities, which they join in willingly. They show good levels of responsibility and maturity in the way they behave in lessons, including working independently such as when using the classroom computers.

17. Behaviour is very good. Pupils of all ages are very polite and helpful. They take every opportunity to try to please their teachers by working hard or doing jobs in the classroom and around the school. Lunchtimes are very civilised occasions. Pupils play together very happily.

They manage the ups and downs of friendship, characteristic of their age, in a constructive way, with support from adults. As a result, bullying is most unusual. Pupils are very good at understanding and following the code of conduct, which they have helped to shape. There have been no exclusions.

18. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are involved well in the everyday routines of the school and enjoy the chances they have to make a contribution to school life by helping teachers or other children. They have fewer opportunities than might be expected to plan and organise their own work and to undertake independent research activities. As a result, pupils are better at taking responsibility than in using their initiative at school. Pupils of different ages enjoy being members of the playground committee, which gives them a voice in what happens in much the same way as a school council. A few older pupils have specific responsibility for working with and supporting younger children with a particular need for help. Others show visitors round the school, open and close gates and doors at break or lunchtimes, and help in assemblies. Pupils understand very clearly what effect their actions have on others as a result of the way that the home-school partnership works to reinforce moral principles and concern for others.

19. Relationships are very good. Pupils get on very well together. They show great respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs in response to the school's efforts to ensure that everyone values and respects each other. They are quick to include others in their games. They like to help anyone in need of a friend and to offer practical support in a lesson, when given the chance. For example, in a science lesson where pupils were asked to work in groups, individuals with good knowledge and understanding of the task made a point of showing those with special educational needs exactly what they needed to do.

20. Attendance is very good. Pupils come to school regularly and arrive on time, unless they have good reason to miss school or be late. Attendance is usually well above average, except where the effect of long-term illness depresses the rate significantly because of the small number of pupils who attend the school. Unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average.

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

21. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. They were satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed during the inspection, which is better than in many schools inspected. However, the proportion of good or better teaching, under half, was lower than in most schools, as was the proportion of very good teaching – about a tenth. The proportion of good or very good teaching was lower than that reported by the last inspection.

22. The teaching in all the lessons observed had several strengths. Good relationships between teacher and pupils characterised all the lessons. Pupils responded well to the praise they were given, and worked willingly. Teachers managed the learning activities well and had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Classroom routines were well-established, and teachers ensured that pupils behaved sensibly. Instructions were given clearly, and the teachers dealt firmly and fairly with the occasional, minor incidents of inappropriate behaviour such as not listening to others and taking turns in whole-class discussion. The good classroom management contributed to lessons being orderly, and helped pupils of all ages, including the children in the reception class, to develop their moral and social awareness.

23. The most successful lessons were characterised by a strong focus on pupils' learning. The teachers had high expectations of pupils' standards of work, and made very good use of time. They provided clear explanations and demonstrations of what pupils were expected to do. This meant that the pupils of all levels of attainment had a very clear grasp of what was expected of them. The teachers were also very good at motivating and stimulating the pupils, giving both praise for what they had accomplished so far and setting further challenges. The teachers also involved the pupils in thinking about what they were doing, such as through question and answer, and made the learning fun. In response, the pupils put a great deal of effort and concentration into their work. For example, in a physical education lesson, the pupils co-operated very well in pair activities and in working out sequences of balances, doing their best because they wanted to

succeed for the teacher. In a music lesson, the reception children enjoyed exploring how to make musical sounds, singing songs from memory and matching words, music and movement. The teacher also made very good use of the opportunity to reinforce the children's knowledge of numbers and vocabulary relating to size.

24. Other strengths seen in some lessons were that teachers checked pupils' understanding regularly and adapted the work when pupils found it too difficult. The teachers were good at eliciting pupils' own ideas. This was observed in an art lesson in which the pupils considered what a painting by Paul Klee might represent, and were skilfully guided towards an appreciation of the techniques he had used. The lessons had been planned carefully, and provided a sequence of activities that kept the pupils interested. This was observed when pupils with special educational needs received help with reading and writing, both when they were given extra help by a learning support assistant and when they were withdrawn from the class lesson for individual or small-group support. The pupils were keen to do well, and tried hard to answer correctly. Detailed records are kept of how well these pupils cope with the skills taught, which help with ensuring that the tasks are matched appropriately to the pupils' needs.

25. In general, teachers do not focus enough on planning what the pupils are to learn, and to adapting the work to meet the needs of all in the class. As a result, the average-attaining pupils tended to do best in the lessons observed, as the work was sometimes unchallenging for the older or higher-attaining pupils and too difficult for the lower-attainers or younger pupils. For example, some pupils were given texts that were too difficult for them to read, which held back their learning. In most lessons, the pace of learning was good in the oral sessions because many in the class were keen to answer the teachers' questions, but slowed when pupils were expected to work in groups. Although learning was satisfactory overall, teachers missed opportunities to challenge and extend pupils' thinking and understanding. For example, in discussion of pupils' work during the lesson they sometimes asked questions that required factual responses but did not expect the pupils to explain their reasons or extend their ideas.

26. The quality of teachers' marking is better than that reported by the last inspection. Teachers now generally mark conscientiously, and offer encouragement and praise. Some marking is good because it gives clear, detailed guidance on what to do to improve, as well as information on what has been done well. Occasionally, the marking of lower-attaining and special needs pupils' work is ineffective because it does not identify accurately what the pupil should focus on next – for example, when the pupils with difficulties in writing and spelling simple words correctly have been told to learn complex spellings.

27. A scrutiny of pupils' written work showed that teachers have relied too heavily on using worksheets, including in science and for writing activities in the infants. Identical sheets have been given to all in the mixed-age classes, with the result that lower-attaining and younger pupils have tended not to complete them because of lack of time or because they were too difficult. As a result, pupils have very little record of what they have learned in subjects including geography and religious education.

28. The over-use of worksheets requiring only short answers has contributed to the weakness in pupils' writing. Teachers have not expected pupils to write independently often enough. For example, in English pupils have practised skills such as using descriptive words or verbs in the past tense, but have not then applied these skills in their own writing. Links have not been made to pupils' reading, to promote skills such as researching information in subjects including science, geography and religious education. Overall, despite some recent improvement in teaching pupils in the juniors how to write narrative, the teaching of literacy is unsatisfactory.

29. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The introduction of the national strategy for numeracy has helped teachers to provide better for this aspect of the mathematics curriculum, and to practise number skills in other subjects.

30. Pupils with special educational needs make significant gains in their learning when they are taught in small groups withdrawn from class lessons. This is because the work they are given is well matched to their needs and understanding. In addition, they are stimulated to do well because varied, interesting activities are provided. In class lessons, learning support assistants give good

support to individuals and small groups, helping them to take part. For example, they offer discreet advice that encourages pupils to offer answers during class discussions. When extra adult support is not available, class teachers sometimes adapt the work appropriately, particularly in mathematics. In general, however, class teachers pay too little attention to adapting the work for pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, the work is sometimes inappropriate, such as when they are expected to use a worksheet that they cannot read independently without extra adult support, and so it does not build well enough on the good learning that takes place in supported sessions.

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

31. The curriculum provided to children in the reception year is satisfactory. It is planned to cover the national guidelines for children of this age. A strength in the provision is that some good links are made between areas of the curriculum, including in number work.
32. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is also satisfactory overall. In response to the findings of the last inspection, the school worked to improve curriculum planning for subjects such as design and technology. It also introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Literacy is allocated a greater proportion of the school day than in many schools, but the school lacks overall planning for teaching and developing the skills of reading and writing in other subjects. This has led to unsatisfactory teaching of literacy, and has contributed to the weakness in writing standards. The provision for teaching numeracy skills is satisfactory.
33. The organisation of the classes has been revised recently, making it easier for teachers to plan the work that is to be covered. In particular, the children in the reception year are now taught in one class, and Years 1 and 2 are together in another class. This is an improvement.
34. The curriculum provides satisfactorily for the mixed-age classes. The topics to be covered have been worked out within a two-year plan. This ensures that pupils cover different topics each year in subjects such as art, history and science. The school bases its curriculum on nationally-produced schemes of work, where these are available. However, teachers have not worked out what pupils of different ages and levels of attainment are expected to learn within the topics to be covered, for example by identifying the skills and concepts to be focused on as they are covering the content. This weakness was also reported by the last inspection, and contributes to some work not being well-enough matched to what pupils need to learn next. The planning for ICT is based on an out-of-date version of the National Curriculum, and has not been implemented systematically. This is the main reason why standards in ICT are below expectations. The school is aware of this, and intends to work out and introduce planning that meets statutory requirements.
35. The learning opportunities provided for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory overall. Literacy lessons given to small groups provide very good opportunities for pupils to do well. The quality of these opportunities is high, but attendance at these sessions means that pupils miss the experiences offered to the rest of their class during this time, and teachers do not do enough to ensure that they catch up on their return to the class. At other times, the work is not always well-matched to the pupils' needs. For example, the tasks given to some older pupils with special educational needs required them to use reading and writing skills they had not yet mastered.
36. The range of extra-curricular activities is good, particularly when the small size of the school is taken into account. Visits and visitors make a further contribution to pupils' education, and have included participation in a concert at the Royal Albert Hall. Performances, involving all the pupils, give them good opportunities to extend their learning particularly in the areas of speaking and listening, music and dance. Links with other schools and educational providers are promoted very well. The school has a close relationship with the pre-school group that meets in the village hall, adjacent to the school. For example, the children come to the school for music and movement sessions with the reception class. This ensures that they make a very good transition to full-time

education. Very good liaison with a local secondary school has supported work in mathematics with higher-attaining pupils in the juniors.

37. The provision for pupils' personal development is a more conspicuous strength of the school's work than was described in the last inspection report. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. It fosters spiritual, moral and social development very well. The provision for cultural development is good.

38. Parents believe that the school encourages their children to take pride in their efforts and to be very keen to show adults what they can do, as in regular performances and productions in which everyone participates. As a result, their children have very good opportunities to develop confidence in taking the stage, and to feel that their hard work is valued.

39. Assemblies are meaningful occasions that encourage pupils to relate their own lives and experiences to Christian principles, in line with the school's aims. The school helps pupils to understand the significance of special occasions and to explore their feelings about events such as the birth of a new baby in the family or the death of a pet. Within carefully-planned situations, teachers offer very good opportunities for pupils to be moved or be fascinated by experiences, for example in close observation of a highly-polished antique stone and the work of a paralysed artist. Circle time provides pupils with valuable chances to explore each others' feelings and ideas. All these factors contribute to very good support for spiritual awareness.

40. The school's work and routines support pupils' moral and social development very well. Extra-curricular activities, particularly a residential visit to Norfolk, make a very telling contribution to all aspects of personal and social development because of the rich range of group activities. Instead of a school council, the school has a playground committee that meets to find ways of ensuring that playtimes are a happy experience for everyone. Within each class, pupils have a chance to contribute to classroom rules and, beyond these, to the school's code of conduct. They were given the chance to shape the section within the home-school agreement that relates to what pupils agree to do.

41. The school is very successful in cultivating most aspects of pupils' personal development. It ensures that pupils have very carefully planned opportunities to take responsibilities and develop their confidence. Parents commented on the school's success in this. However, pupils are given less consistent encouragement to use their initiative, particularly in their academic work. There is scope for greater development of research and critical thinking skills, to help pupils take the initiative, ask questions and evaluate what they do.

42. The school fosters a very clear understanding of right, wrong and personal responsibility. It has a strong tradition of support for charities, which helps pupils to understand the needs of others and to think about those in less happy circumstances than their own. This involves not just fund-raising but also welcoming visitors to talk about the work they do for particular organisations and why such work is necessary and important.

43. The school encourages pupils' cultural development well. It is particularly good at giving pupils opportunities to enjoy music and take part in school productions that develop their enthusiasm for performance and appreciation of their cultural heritage. The school has good links with the village and local community. It uses these well to ensure that traditions such as maypole dancing, the local flower show and harvest festival are experienced and valued. Visits to places such as the National Gallery and Royal Albert Hall reinforce the cultural dimension of pupils' learning. The school has begun to develop pupils' understanding of the diversity and richness of other cultures, based on its policy statement of a positive approach to equal opportunities and multicultural education. For example, it includes Jewish and Hindu festivals in its assembly themes. Its approach to helping pupils to appreciate the richness of ethnic and cultural diversity beyond the immediate area is not yet as active as its lively promotion of the performing arts.

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

44. The strengths identified by the last inspection in the school's care for its pupils have been sustained.
45. The school takes good care to safeguard pupils' welfare, health and safety. Its arrangements for child protection are satisfactory, as the school has taken steps to enable staff to learn about recent changes in what is required of them and to be sure that they know the possible signs and symptoms of concern. The school's focus on creating a caring community helps pupils to feel safe and secure.
46. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. They are based on the fact that staff know pupils and parents very well, and there is a strong family feel to much of the school's work. For example, the older pupils love looking after younger children and are quick to point out any small success such as a smile instead of tears. This provides a very good foundation for pupils' learning.
47. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. These include checks on the first day of unexplained absence, and monitoring of school registers. Parents know that the school expects their children to attend regularly and punctually and that avoidable absences, including too many term-time holidays, will not be authorised.
48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying are very good, within a positive climate in which self-control is highly valued. The school uses a variety of rewards, including certificates, to encourage good behaviour. Displays and the children's notice board help to celebrate effort and achievement. The Octopus Group, so-called because it originally had eight members, allows selected pupils to explore aspects of their behaviour and experience when they find it difficult to fit in with what the school expects. The school uses behaviour books as a strategy for tracking and following up incidents that happen at playtime. Within circle time, pupils can learn about co-operative behaviour and adults can see the extent of their personal development. Sometimes, particularly with the youngest children, classroom assistants note responses to activities so that lessons can be planned to take into account levels of concentration and listening skills. Otherwise, monitoring of pupils' personal development is largely informal and based on the fact that the school is small and adults know children very well. Overall, procedures for monitoring personal development are good.
49. Teachers and learning support staff give good support to pupils with special educational needs, and so these pupils feel valued, are pleased with their successes and make good gains in their self-confidence and self-esteem. Targets and activities set out in pupils' individual education plans are reviewed well by teachers and learning support staff, and show good knowledge of what pupils have achieved or found difficult.
50. The school has made some improvements to its assessment procedures since the last inspection. The children in the reception class are now assessed during their first eight weeks in school, to gauge their attainment on entry and to identify pupils with special educational needs. Nationally-produced tests in English and mathematics have been introduced for pupils in each year of the juniors. Teachers also check pupils' reading, spelling and mathematics. This information, together with informal teacher observations of individual pupils, provides teachers with adequate information about how well pupils are doing in these subjects, particularly in the juniors.
51. The school has some detailed information on how well individual pupils have done in English and mathematics, based on samples of their work, but has not collated this information into class records that give teachers an overview of how groups of pupils and the whole class are doing. Assessment information on other subjects is very limited. For some subjects such as ICT, records have not been kept. This makes it harder for teachers to track pupils' learning over time and to build on what they have already attained, particularly when pupils change class and teacher at the beginning of a school year. For example, systematic records of the attainment of pupils in the infants during the last school year were not passed on to their teachers for this school year.



52. Pupils with special educational needs are tested in literacy skills, but mathematics and other areas of learning are not focused on sufficiently. Tests to diagnose individual pupils' specific needs are not used sufficiently to identify particular learning difficulties.

53. The most effective use of assessment information in planning work that meets pupils' needs happens in mathematics, in the juniors. In this subject, the results of the national tests taken by Year 6 pupils have been analysed to determine which areas of the curriculum were taught well and which needed more focus. This has helped to raise standards in the juniors and so contributed to the improved results in the Year 6 tests. Similar analyses have not been carried out for other subjects. In other subjects, including English and science, the work is less carefully matched to pupils' needs. This weakness in the use of assessment to help pupils learn has contributed to standards not being as high as they should have been. For example, assessments recorded on teachers' lesson plans often comment on what pupils have covered and whether they enjoyed the work, instead of evaluating what they understood or could do. Overall, the use of assessment information to improve teaching and the curriculum is a weakness.

54. The school has introduced 'progress books' for all pupils, with examples of their work and the targets they have been set for the school year. Some of the most recently-added work is matched to National Curriculum levels, and annotated with very good, clear comments on its quality. This is helpful practice. However, the work is restricted to writing, from English lessons, which limits the usefulness of the progress books as a means of tracking pupils' learning. The school has not developed portfolios of exemplar work in other subjects, to show the standard of work expected and so raise teachers' and pupils' expectations. Assessment information has not been kept for some subjects, including ICT, geography and history, making it difficult for teachers to build on pupils' previous learning and to identify gaps in their knowledge and skills. Overall, the use of assessment information to check pupils' academic progress and support their learning is unsatisfactory.

55. The school has introduced a system of termly and annual target-setting for all pupils. This is potentially good, but has been used inconsistently. Many of the targets shown on annual reports are well-focused, and give pupils and their parents useful information on how improvements can be made. Most termly targets relate to reading and writing, with some on mathematics and some to do with attitudes and behaviour in lessons. Some are specific and attainable, but others are imprecise and so do not help pupils focus on the next steps in their learning.

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

56. Since the last inspection, very good relationships with parents have continued to be a significant factor in the school's happy atmosphere and pupils' learning.

57. Parents' views of the school are very positive. They feel welcome in the school and well-informed about its life and work. They are pleased with what the school does for their children, particularly in providing a wide range of opportunities for their personal development. Parents and children value the school's family atmosphere.

58. The school has very effective links with parents as a result of the good quality information it provides and the great willingness of parents to become involved in the life of the school. A strong core of parents is very active in fund-raising, helping in school and working on the governing body or parents, teachers and friends' association (PTFA). Other parents respond very well to requests for help and support on trips, visits and events or specific projects. There is high attendance at parents' meetings and at annual reviews for children with special educational needs. The school has worked hard to establish a very good relationship with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are encouraged to play a full part in helping their children at home, and in contributing their ideas and opinions at the reviews of individual education plans.

59. The school provides a very useful range of information for parents, including termly letters outlining what each class is studying and homework arrangements. It sends regular letters home so that parents know what is happening in school and what is asked of them by way of voluntary

contributions or specific help. Outside the entrance used by most parents is a useful notice board with school news and reminders of local events and support services.

60. The regular flow of information about children's progress ensures that there are no surprises when parents receive written reports. Parents find the reports informative and personal. This is because there is a great deal of detail about what is covered and pupils' approach to their work. Comments about what each pupil knows, understands and can do in English and mathematics are usually clear and helpful, sometimes with sharply-focused targets for improvement. In other subjects, the emphasis is on describing what has been covered, rather than the individual pupil's strengths and weaknesses. References are rarely made to whether or not the pupil is making progress at an appropriate rate, or reaching the standards expected of someone of that age or with similar capabilities. Otherwise, the quality of reports is generally good because of genuine efforts to encourage pupils' to assess their own progress and to evaluate progress in English and mathematics.

61. Parents make a very significant contribution to children's learning at school and at home. This has an impact on the standards they reach, especially by the end of Year 6. Parents listen to children read and encourage them to enjoy books. Most families have access to computers so children become used to using a range of software from experience at home. Parents are very keen to support their children and the life of the school in any way they can, and so they are happy to offer encouragement for extra-curricular activities and homework tasks.

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

62. The headteacher is very committed to the school. He is supportive of the staff and knows the children and their families very well. He has been successful in creating a school that has a happy and caring atmosphere. The staff share his vision for the school as a community. By contrast, though, the headteacher's vision for raising academic standards is not focused well enough. Weaknesses in the management of the curriculum noted in the previous report have not been fully resolved, and standards remain lower than expected as a result particularly in Years 1 and 2. Nevertheless, the headteacher has worked with the recently-appointed deputy headteacher and the staff to improve standards, particularly in writing and mathematics in the juniors, with success in the results at the end of Year 6. Staff are committed to raising standards and the school now has a sound capacity to improve.

63. As this is a small school, each teacher manages two or more subjects. They carry out this role conscientiously, and have identified the areas in their subjects that require attention. This is a good start. However, the staff need more guidance in how to carry out monitoring and how to use the findings to bring about change. For example, observations of the teaching of investigative science were carried out, as this was correctly thought to be a weakness. As a result, staff were given useful feedback on what was observed, but follow-up action was not implemented consistently, and this reduced the effect of the monitoring.

64. The governing body is committed and knowledgeable. Governors are very positive about the school and very supportive of it. They help the school to maintain its strong links with the local community and its liaison with the pre-school. Governors have had suitable training, including in interpreting the results of national tests. Some governors make particularly valuable contributions because of their specialist expertise. For example, some governors have taken a very strong role in setting the school's budget, including working out projections and costings. Governors understand the principles of best value, though these do not yet underpin their work, for instance in comparing the impact of their decisions on academic standards. Governors receive useful and thorough reports from the headteacher, and have a good knowledge of the school's strengths. Governors make frequent visits to see the school at work, including some monitoring visits linked to improving aspects of the curriculum such as literacy. Nevertheless, all the recommendations of the last inspection have not been followed through rigorously enough. Statutory requirements for the teaching of ICT have not been met, and the governors have not reported annually to parents on the implementation of the action plan drawn up after the last inspection.

65. A school development plan is drawn up each year. The current plan is comprehensive in its detail, and some governors have been involved in its production. The plan includes targets that relate to improving standards of work, but some of these are not challenging enough. For example, it is planned to ensure that all pupils in Year 2 attain at least level 1 in English by 2003, though the national expectation for Year 2 pupils is level 2. A more challenging target would be for all pupils to attain level 2, particularly when the above-average standard attained at the start of Year 1 is taken into account.

66. Separate plans are drawn up for the development of each subject, and this ensures wide coverage. The headteacher writes the subject development plans himself, after discussion with subject coordinators. The intention is to reduce their workload, but it deprives teachers of the opportunity to learn how to plan for improvements to the quality of education. They also have less ownership of their plans and awareness of the links between them and the plans for whole-school improvement. For example, the school has recognised for some time that pupils' writing is a weakness, but subject plans have not reflected this whole-school priority by identifying the contribution to be made by each subject.

67. Regular reports on the implementation of the school development plan are made to the governors. These reports are informed by informal monitoring of the school's performance, but this needs to become more systematic and rigorous. For example, monitoring of teaching focuses mainly on the requirements of the performance management cycle, with the observation focus being suggested by each teacher. This is good for their individual professional development, but the lack of explicit links to the school development plan makes it much harder to track and evaluate the implementation of the plan. The performance management targets relating to teaching are well linked to class performance. By contrast, the targets relating to monitoring and the role of the subject coordinator are not specific enough. For example, they do not say exactly when monitoring is to take place, nor what is to be monitored, and this has slowed the rate of improvements in teaching and learning.

68. The school has sufficient teachers and support assistants. In the last school year, staffing difficulties after the resignation of a full-time teacher led to the employment of two part-time teachers on a temporary basis. The school's view is that the infants did not do as well as they should under this arrangement, and that it has contributed to the pupils' unsatisfactory achievement. The present staff work well as a team, of which the support staff are seen as an important part. They too are conscientious. There are plans to involve support staff in the performance management arrangements. Support staff and teachers are given good opportunities for training to develop their expertise. This has proved successful in improving the teaching of writing and mathematics in the juniors, and in raising standards in design and technology.

69. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The main school building is cramped, but the outside area is pleasant and has plenty of play space for the infants and juniors. However, the reception children do not have an enclosed area large enough for outdoor activities such as the use of large wheeled toys, and so have to use the main school playground. This limits the opportunities for planned development of their skills in movement. Overall, the school has sufficient resources for the needs of the curriculum, including computers and books in the library and classroom collections. History and geography lack resources for some aspects of their work, limiting opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in these subjects.

70. The school's budget is based on the priorities identified by the headteacher. Money has sensibly been allocated to staffing and to ensuring the headteacher has enough time to manage the school. Grants have been appropriately used to support training. A budget for curriculum resources is set and amounts are allocated to subject leaders, but this is not guided by a rigorous audit of needs. At fourteen per cent, the carry-forward in the school budget is high. As was reported by the last inspection, this is because the governors are fearful that a fall in pupil numbers will deplete the budget in future years, leading to staff redundancy unless cash is saved now to cushion any such fall in income. Day-to-day finance and administration matters are dealt with capably and efficiently.

71. The school's aims are strongly focused on pastoral issues, and the school succeeds in creating a warm and caring atmosphere. Everyone, staff and pupils and their parents, feel an important part of a friendly community. However, it is possible to achieve high standards as well as maintaining this ethos, and the school has not yet got the balance quite right. More rigour is required, especially in monitoring and bringing about changes in pupils' learning and the standards they attain.

72. Some of the weaknesses identified by the last inspection remain areas for improvement. As the school is aware, standards are not high enough particularly in the infants. The overall improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory, despite the continuing strengths in the school's ethos and promotion of personal development. However, there are recent signs of improvement, most notably in standards in mathematics in the juniors. Here, a detailed analysis of test results led to well-informed changes to the teaching approach and planning of work, with a significant improvement in results as a result. The school has reason to be pleased with its success in this respect, and the more rigorous and systematic approach adopted here indicates the way forward for improvements in other areas of its work.

73. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money, when account is taken of its strengths, pupils' achievement, the satisfactory teaching and learning including in the infants, and the present quality of leadership and management.

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

74. To raise standards and improve the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) improve standards in writing, ICT and the investigative area of science by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities for writing independently, in a wider range of styles [*paragraphs 14, 27-28, 32, 77, 82, 92, 96, 95, 107, 114, 125*];
  - ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT are covered, both as a subject and within the teaching of other subjects [*paragraphs 14, 34, 99, 107, 114, 129 – 135*];
  - giving pupils more opportunities to build up their skills, including through independent and investigative work in science and other subjects [*paragraphs 14, 104, 110, 114, 122, 123, 127*].
  
- (2) provide greater challenge to pupils of different ages and levels of attainment, so that the work meets their needs better, by:
  - planning for what pupils will learn, as well as the content they are to cover, taking account of the needs of pupils of different ages and levels of attainment [*paragraphs 25, 34, 78, 98, 110, 111, 114, 118*];
  - providing more challenging work to higher-attaining pupils [*paragraphs 13, 25, 98*];
  - in class lessons, adapting the work for pupils with special educational needs when no adult support is available [*paragraphs 30, 35, 98*];
  - ensuring that all marking is as informative and helpful as the best marking [*paragraph 26*].
  
- (3) use assessment information to help raise standards, by
  - developing overview records of how well pupils have done, to make it easier to track their learning over time and plan future improvements [*paragraphs 51, 53, 55, 121*];

- making more systematic use of the assessment evidence, including in examples of pupils' work and progress books, to check pupils' learning and to identify targets for future improvement *[paragraphs 54, 115, 135, 141]*;
- ensuring that specific learning needs of pupils with special educational needs are diagnosed and met *[paragraph 52]*.

(4) improve the rigour with which monitoring is carried out, and its impact on school improvement, by:

- linking monitoring activities to the school development plan, including the targets set within it *[paragraphs 65, 66, 67]*;
- giving more guidance to subject co-ordinators in how to monitor systematically and effectively, to bring about change *[paragraphs 63, 100]*.

75. Other, minor issues that the governors may wish to include in the Action Plan to be drawn up after the inspection:

- provide additional resources for geography and history *[paragraphs 69, 123, 127]*;
- report annually to parents on the implementation of the Action Plan *[paragraph 64]*.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	8	13	0	0	0
Percentage	0	9	35	56	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	94
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	20

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

In the two tables on this page, data on boys' and girls' performance has not been included as few pupils took the tests.

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	8	10	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	13	13	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (70)	72 (70)	89 (70)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	14	12	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (70)	67 (80)	78 (90)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	10	4	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	13	12	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (75)	86 (80)	100 (90)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	11	13	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (65)	93 (60)	86 (70)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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



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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	75
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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

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

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

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	23

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	262,491
Total expenditure	248,521
Expenditure per pupil	2,589
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,772
Balance carried forward to next year	37,742

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	93
Number of questionnaires returned	41

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	39	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	37	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	53	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	51	5	5	0
The teaching is good.	65	32	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	26	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	24	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	26	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	29	5	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	73	21	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	29	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	52	13	3	3

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

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

76. The school has one class of children in the reception year (the Foundation Stage). Children attend part-time for the first term, and then full time. Four children joined the class in January 2001, attending in the mornings only. The other children now attend full time. Almost all the children attended the pre-school in the nearby village hall. Excellent links with the pre-school are a great aid to enabling the children to settle in quickly.

77. The evidence showed that children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are above the expectations for their age. For example, they are well behaved, confident, and listen well. The indications are that by the end of the school year the children now in the reception class will have exceeded the national expectations in most of the areas of learning they are expected to cover. Standards in personal and social education, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and aspects of creative development and communication are above expectations for the children's age. Standards in reading are well above expectations, whereas in writing they are below expectations.

78. Children's achievement in the reception year is satisfactory, because teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are generally well planned and prepared. The best lessons observed contained activities that built well on preceding work. For example, a good numeracy lesson included a number of activities that involved the skills of weighing, measuring and counting. These were demonstrated for everyone, and were linked to songs as well as to the week's storybook. The teacher and class assistant work well together, to promote the children's learning. For example, some purposeful dialogue with children were observed, especially in whole-class sessions, though at times opportunities for purposeful discussion were missed during group activities. Higher-attaining children are not always challenged enough. For instance, some could count and manipulate numbers much higher than those that were used in the lessons seen.

79. Assessment is carried out in all the areas of learning, but the forms currently being trialed are complex and too time-consuming. The children are known well by the reception year staff because their partnership with parents is strong and parental support is very good. Overall, the Foundation Stage is led and managed satisfactorily. Although the quality of teaching is less high than was reported by the last inspection, other evidence shows that improvement since then is satisfactory. The curriculum has been revised and now covers the requirements for the Foundation Stage satisfactorily. However, as reported by the last inspection, the children still do not have an enclosed area for outdoor activity.

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

80. The children generally behave well. They have good relationships with each other and with the staff. They take turns and are learning to take responsibility, such as when they give out fruit at snack time in the morning. Concentration is very good and the children stick to their tasks and work well together. They listen well and are so interested that they often interrupt with very good questions. The classroom is well organised to enable the children can find the resources they need independently. Allowing them to choose their own activity at times also fosters their independence and confidence. For example, they are responsible for recording the fact that they have done all that was asked. This system is still developing, to good effect. Most of their work in this area is above average, except that the evidence indicates that the children do too little on religious beliefs and other cultures.

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

81. The literacy hour structure is used well to teach the children English skills. They speak very confidently, although they need more structured support to develop their vocabulary. They listen

well, with good understanding. Standards in reading are well above the expectation for their age. Most are very confident readers who already recognise a large number of words on sight. They have made good progress in learning the skills necessary to read new words. They enjoy books and participate with enthusiasm in whole-class story sessions. Reading records are kept but the comments in them do not contain enough detail about the next steps to take in learning.

82. Writing is comparatively weak. The children are unlikely to reach the expected level by the end of the school year as they have insufficient opportunities to write independently. Too much time is spent tracing letters and copying and there are too few resources, such as flashcards and word mats, to support independent writing. The teaching of this aspect of communications, language and literacy is unsatisfactory.

### **Mathematical development**

83. Children have a good understanding of number. They can all count to ten, many to twenty and some to a hundred. They understand counting backwards and mathematical ideas such as "one less than". They enjoy the subject. The teaching is thoughtful. Good use is made of opportunities to teach mathematics throughout the day, and the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy are drawn on well. Nevertheless, higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged enough. For example, the activities in the mental mathematics sessions are aimed too much at the middle of the class.

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

84. The children have a good general knowledge. They enjoy finding out about the world. Lessons are thoughtfully planned. Science work seen included experimental work such as using magnets to sort objects, which encouraged the children to observe carefully. Work in geography has made excellent links with personal education as each child has made a book of places and people in the school. Historical skills have been developed satisfactorily through activities such as a discussion of old toys. Children make regular use of computers for reading, number and other activities. They are good at using the mouse and following the program instructions. However, a science program seen being used by some children was too advanced for them to learn much about electric circuits.

### **Physical development**

85. Children are given plenty of opportunities to develop skills in the use of small equipment such as scissors, pencils and glue, such as by cutting and sticking activities, and tracing. They move reasonably well in whole-class physical education sessions but lack the confidence to move about independently, tending to crowd round the teacher. They also use climbing apparatus and bicycles at playtime, with enthusiasm and confidence. Their skills in movement and the use of large wheeled toys are average.

### **Creative development**

86. This area is a strength, as children's skills in music and art are likely to exceed expectations by the end of the year. Their artwork is linked well to themes from reading books and other topic work. At the time of the inspection, the task was to create "furry" textures using brushes and sponges. The children had been motivated by this, and produced some good quality work. Music is taught very well, and is used as a good opportunity to cement links with the pre-school. The children observed during the inspection greatly enjoyed singing familiar songs and learning to move rhythmically. They also explored how different sounds can have different meanings and uses, as they used different instruments to make sounds to accompany the song 'The Wheels on the Bus'. Good provision is also made for role-play, for example by creating a teddy bears' cave. However, the children need more guidance as to what they might do or say during role-play.

## ENGLISH

87. Results in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading and well below average in writing in 2001. These results were lower than would be expected from pupils' generally above-average attainment on entry at the start of Year 1, and indicate that their achievement in the infants was unsatisfactory.

88. The pattern in reading and writing results was different from that nationally. In reading, fewer pupils gained level 2 than nationally – they tended to get either level 1 or level 3. In writing, the proportion who did not reach level 2 was higher than nationally, and a low proportion attained above-average levels. These results indicated that the pupils under-achieved in writing, and that the school had been less successful than most other schools in enabling lower-attaining pupils to learn to read and write at the expected standard.

89. The percentages of pupils who gained level 2 or better in reading and writing were similar in 1996 (the time of the last inspection) and 2001. Nationally, however, the results have risen, and so overall results that were close to the national expectation in 1996 were below average in 2001. Because of the small number of pupils involved each year, it is not possible to comment validly on trends in boys' and girls' performance.

90. Pupils' attainment is above average overall on entry to Year 1. In Year 2, overall standards are now broadly average in English. Standards are above average in speaking and listening and in reading, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory in these aspects of English. However, standards in writing are well below expectations and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. This results from weaknesses in the teaching of writing. Overall, pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory. However, the school is working to improve learning in the infants, as it is aware that weaknesses in teaching in previous school years contributed significantly to pupils not doing as well as they should. These efforts are helping to improve the standards pupils attain.

91. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are fluent orally. They have wide vocabularies, and express their views confidently and clearly. They answer teachers' questions relevantly, showing that they have listened with understanding. Even the youngest pupils concentrate well in class discussion, listen to others and take their turn to contribute. Pupils with special educational needs do as well in speaking and listening activities as the rest of the class. Almost all enjoy reading, and make steady progress through the reading scheme. The system of taking books home every evening, so that parents can hear them read, contributes much to pupils' satisfactory achievement in reading as parents give good support. The higher-attaining pupils are enabled to move on to other books when they are ready, while extra literacy support helps the weaker readers to learn sounds and letters.

92. Pupils do less well in writing, largely because teachers have made too much use of worksheets and have given pupils too few opportunities to learn how to write independently. As a result, very few pupils in Year 2 have learned how to organise their ideas and to write at length. Most pupils' handwriting is uneven, and their spelling and punctuation of sentences are weak, despite the system for learning spellings for homework.

93. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were average in 2001. They were much higher than those reported by the last inspection – the 1996 results were below average, with few pupils gaining level 5. The results rose to above average in the following year (1997), but then fell back to below average in 1998. Since then, they have risen steadily. The school has focused on improving standards in the juniors, particularly in writing, and this has contributed to the recent improvement. As for Year 2, the pattern of Year 6 results differed markedly from that nationally in 2001 – almost all the pupils gained level 4 or better, but comparatively few gained level 5. This indicated that, as in the infants, the higher-attaining pupils did not do well enough.

94. The 2001 results were well above those for schools in which the pupils' Year 2 results had been similar four years previously. The school's Year 2 results in 1997 were below the national average, indicating that the pupils had not achieved well enough in the infants.

95. Standards at the end of Year 6 are similar to the test results, and are broadly average. As in the infants, pupils do better in speaking and listening and reading than in writing. Their achievement is satisfactory overall, when their weaknesses at the start of Year 3 are taken into account. Despite this, in the school as a whole the pupils have generally not fulfilled their potential, as indicated by their above-average attainment on entry to the school and to Year 1. This is similar to what was reported by the last inspection.

96. Pupils in the juniors speak articulately and enter into discussion well. They listen attentively to what others say, and build well on it in their own contributions. Their above-average standard of speaking and listening helps their learning in English and other subjects, for example because they are able to concentrate well in class discussion and remember what they have been told. School performances and productions give them additional opportunities for speaking to a larger audience, but too few opportunities for extension and more challenging activities such as drama and debate are planned within lessons. Most pupils in the juniors also enjoy reading widely. The older pupils tackle demanding books, helped by the support from home and encouraged by the range of books in class libraries. In lessons in English and other subjects, they are given too few opportunities to learn how to read for information independently, such as researching in books, CD-ROMs and the Internet.

97. Despite recent improvements, standards in writing remain below average overall. Pupils do best in writing narrative as most of the writing they are asked to do involves stories or recounting events. Their work here is of an average standard, and reflects the focus on improving this aspect of writing. However, pupils have had too few opportunities for writing for other purposes and in different styles, both in English and in other subjects. For example, in science their written work is almost entirely confined to completing worksheets, and has not covered recording their findings or writing explanations and scientific accounts. The exception is history, where pupils have been given good opportunities for recording information and writing about events and people. As in the infants, too many juniors' handwriting is untidy and uneven, although they have had handwriting practice sessions. Basic spelling mistakes are made by pupils of all ages, and many average and below-average attaining pupils have difficulty with sentence punctuation and paragraphing.

98. The teaching of English observed during the inspection was satisfactory overall, with good teaching of small groups withdrawn for extra literacy support. Learning was also satisfactory. Pupils were attentive and worked willingly. They responded well to teachers' and support assistants' encouragement and praise, and were usually eager to join in oral work. In group activities, the pace of their work often slowed down when they were not given adult attention. Lesson activities had generally been planned to include a suitable variety of activities that built up pupils' knowledge steadily. However, the planning did not focus enough on the skills that pupils were expected to learn, taking account of their different ages and levels of attainment. Consequently, teachers tended not to adapt the work sufficiently to ensure that all in the class were challenged – the work was sometimes too easy for older, higher-attaining pupils and too difficult for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. For example, Year 1 pupils who had been asked to cut out phrases and stick them onto a worksheet to complete sentences had to guess which went where because they could not read some of the words independently.

99. Good features of the teaching included positive relationships and effective classroom management. Teachers were well prepared with the necessary resources, and explained what to do clearly. They were good role models in their own use of language to pupils. They expected pupils to behave well and to contribute thoughtfully and confidently to discussion. Some marking is good, with detailed advice, but some is too brief and uninformative. Weaknesses in teaching include low expectations of the quality of pupils' written work, and a lack of focus on teaching independent writing. Teachers have not made enough use of ICT within English, as a tool for reading and writing and to broaden pupils' experience of and skills in ICT as a subject.

100. Appropriate priorities for improving standards and the English curriculum have been established. The school is aware that much still needs to be done to improve standards in writing. Some monitoring has taken place recently, but overall the arrangements for identifying what

needs to be done and for implementing the changes needed have lacked rigour. This has contributed to many of the strengths and weaknesses in English being similar to those reported by the last inspection. The improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. During the last school year, development in the subject was held back because of staff changes, which meant that the headteacher had to look after English as a temporary measure for two terms. However, work on improving the juniors' skills in independent writing of narrative has been successful. The leadership and management of English are now satisfactory, and the required changes are beginning to be made.

## **MATHEMATICS**

101. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were lower in 2001 than in 1996, the time of the last inspection. They were well below the national average, and very low compared to similar schools. Owing to the small size of the cohorts taking these tests, it is not possible to judge trends with any validity.

102. Results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 have risen over the last four years. In 2001 they were well above the national average, and above those of similar schools. Pupils did better in mathematics than in English and science. The pupils were helped to gain these results by being taught in smaller groups for the spring and summer terms, enabling more direct and focused learning to take place, and by additional lessons being provided for higher-attaining pupils. The school intends to make similar arrangements during this school year, for the pupils now in Year 6.

103. Inspection findings show that standards in Year 2 are in line with the national average. This is higher than last year's national test results, and reflects better teaching. When pupils start Year 1, however, their attainment in mathematics is above average. In relation to this, the achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 has been unsatisfactory. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is average across all areas of mathematics. For example, Year 2 pupils know much of the two and ten times tables, have an understanding of simple fractions and add and subtract two and some three-digit numbers successfully. They know the properties of common shapes and have learned how to display data they have collected themselves. Pupils in Year 2 used their own telephone numbers to help them learn about odd and even numbers, and made charts to show the result of investigating the numbers of vowels in their names.

104. Overall, standards in Year 6 are above the national average. Higher-attaining pupils' work is well above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when higher-attaining pupils were not doing so well. The difference between the overall standards attained and the test results is explained by the teaching in smaller groups and provision of extra lessons, in the months before the tests. Pupils' achievement during the juniors is good. Their knowledge of numbers and mathematical concepts are strengths. These concepts include the properties of angles and regular shapes, and more complex ideas about symmetry and co-ordinates in all four quadrants. However, pupils are given too few opportunities to apply their knowledge to solve problems and to interrogate and use data they have collected themselves, and so are weaker in these areas of the subject.

105. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make appropriate gains in their learning. The teaching observed had several strengths. At the start of lessons, teachers explained to pupils what they were expected to learn, reminded them of these objectives as the work proceeded, and checked their learning before moving on. This was well-illustrated in a lesson in which pupils in Years 1 and 2 used apparatus to help them add two-digit numbers. The teacher changed the direction of the lesson when it became apparent they were not understanding well enough. They were given work on a different but related concept more appropriate to their understanding, which allowed them to make gains in their learning. Teachers' planning for pupils' learning is good in the juniors, as it takes account of the needs of pupils of different ages and levels of attainment. For example, a class was observed being introduced to how to use a compass and practising turns to give directions. The group activities that followed were matched to their stage of learning, and included use of Logo on the

computer. A group with special educational needs received well-focused help from a learning support assistant, and so learned how to use compass points when giving directions on a map.

106. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and give them encouragement that motivates them. Pupils of all ages are interested in their work, settle quickly and try hard to accomplish their tasks. This was apparent in a lesson exploring the properties of three-dimensional shapes. Pupils were keen to answer in the initial oral session, and became completely absorbed in their tasks of constructing models using nets and art straws. They discussed their work well and helped each other when problems arose. Their positive attitudes contribute to the junior pupils' good achievement. Good use of homework also helps the juniors' learning.

107. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, the pace of the work is sometimes too slow and so pupils' work lacks a real sense of urgency. The evidence of planning and pupils' written work showed that teachers have made insufficient use of ICT within mathematics, especially in handling data and in exploring the area of shape. The extensive use of worksheets that require pupils to practise mathematical skills has helped to raise standards and pupils' results at the end of Year 6. However, the worksheets do not enable pupils to learn to explain their findings or reasoning in independent writing within mathematics.

108. The subject is well led and managed. This has led to an improvement in standards since the last inspection. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has improved curriculum planning. A very detailed analysis of the results of the national tests has been carried out, leading to work to improve the areas of weakness that were identified. The school has good liaison with a local secondary school. This school has given advice and work of a challenging nature for the highest-attaining pupils in Year 6, who benefit from weekly lessons from a visiting teacher using this material. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection is good.

## **SCIENCE**

109. In 2001, the results of teacher assessments in Year 2 were well below average, compared to national results. Results at the end of Year 6 were higher than those at the time of the last inspection, in the proportion of pupils who gained the expected level 4 or above. The trend in overall results is of a rise. In 2001, the school did well to ensure that all the pupils in Year 6 attained the national expectation of level 4. However, comparatively few pupils reached level 5. This is why the overall results were below average compared to national figures, and well below average when compared to similar schools (based on free school meals).

110. Pupils enter Year 1 with a good scientific understanding for their age. In relation to this starting point, achievement in the infants and juniors is unsatisfactory. Overall, standards in science are below national expectations for Years 2 and 6. Pupils in the infants and in the upper juniors have done too little experimental and investigative science. Written work showed that Year 2 pupils have acquired some knowledge in physical science and in biology. They have covered the topics of light and forces. In discussion, Year 2 pupils talked about having made electric circuits, and recalled growing bulbs. They were unable to recall many discoveries they have made through scientific investigation. Written work showed that pupils have had too few opportunities to record their learning in science. Much work has involved filling in words in sentences, limiting pupils' opportunities to think for themselves. The work seen was the same for all pupils in the class, and was too difficult for most of those in Year 1.

111. Year 6 pupils' attainment is highest in the area of scientific knowledge. Standards here are in line with national expectations. The pupils have a wide scientific vocabulary. For example, they were observed dissecting plants and knew such terms as "anther", "stigma" and "style." The balance of work done by pupils in the lower juniors is good, and investigations are taught well. However, the evidence of written work and discussions with pupils showed that the older juniors have spent too much time learning facts and completing assessment tasks, instead of extending their learning through investigations. As a result pupils' skills are below average in planning experiments, hypothesizing, predicting, observing and making deductions.



112. Pupils' attitudes to science are variable. They enjoy investigative activities, but Year 6 pupils said that science was much more boring than it used to be because they have spent too much time on work involving written tests of their knowledge.

113. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in the two science lessons observed during the inspection, although both had weaknesses that slowed pupils' learning. Teachers had prepared resources well, and relationships were good. In one lesson, the Year 6 pupils dissected flowers and the Year 5 pupils learned about magnets. The pupils were interested and worked willingly, and the tasks set were appropriate. The lesson was difficult to manage because the two practical activities were run concurrently, limiting the time available for teaching knowledge and skills in each activity. The magnet experiment was not brought to a useful conclusion, and so pupils' investigative skills were not developed. The flower dissection work was a practical assessment activity. Pupils' learning was satisfactory, but could have been better if their attention had been drawn to the books provided for support.

114. The evidence in pupils' books showed that teaching and learning in science are unsatisfactory overall. There are insufficient links with literacy and numeracy, and the requirement for ICT within science is not met. Measuring work is not a common feature of lessons, and computers have been little used for modelling, investigative work and research activities. Some work provides too little challenge to older, higher-attaining pupils, or is too difficult for the younger pupils. In addition, pupils are given insufficient opportunities to record in their own way and to think for themselves. However, some of these opportunities are provided to the lower juniors, and so teaching and learning are best in this class. For example, pupils are expected to write up experiments in their own words, using a series of frameworks.

115. The subject is led and managed conscientiously. Long-term planning of science is thorough, and much hard work has gone into revising the scheme of work and ensuring that it covers National Curriculum requirements. Assessment arrangements provide for recording pupils' achievement of investigative skills, but are not specifically timetabled and have been neglected. Some monitoring has been carried out, and the areas in which science needs to develop have been recognised. However, the monitoring has had too little impact on teaching and learning. The long-term planning and teaching in the juniors have improved since the last inspection, but overall improvement in science is unsatisfactory.

116. In the following subjects, few lessons were observed. Where possible, judgements have been made based on a range of other evidence that included the sample of work provided by the school, discussions with staff and pupils, and documentation such as curriculum planning. Judgements have not been made on standards and achievement, teaching and learning unless sufficient evidence was available.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

117. The available evidence indicated that standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with expectations, and that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The work seen during the inspection included a range of media for two-dimensional art, with appropriate opportunities to consider the work of other artists. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have worked on the theme of journeys, and considered Aboriginal paintings. During the inspection, this work was extended to looking at how twentieth-century artists such as Paul Klee represented journeys. The pupils were interested in the techniques used, and enjoyed making their own pictures based on shapes that they coloured in with oil pastels. This lesson was taught well, with a strength in the way the teacher discussed techniques before the pupils started their own work.

118. A small amount of three-dimensional work was also seen, and curriculum planning showed that other activities are provided within topics covered in different terms. The planning is satisfactory. It draws well on national guidance, and the sequence to be followed within the two-

year programme has been worked out carefully to ensure that pupils in each year group have a suitable range of experiences. It is less clear about the skills to be taught each year. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. The school has introduced more study of other artists' work, and the range of media used is now satisfactory except that pupils have not had enough opportunities for using computers within the art curriculum. The evidence indicates that the improvement in art since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

119. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 6 is in line with expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The pupils do best in the making aspect of the subject, as the areas of planning and evaluating designs are still weak. Year 2 pupils have used construction kits to good effect, designed food for a teddy bears' picnic, and learned how to make a pizza. They have also developed some design skills by making and cutting different paper patterns. Pupils in the juniors have made torches, musical instruments from recycled materials, and books to hold their work on Roman Britain. Older pupils have designed and made model Roman chariots from a variety of materials, and used hydraulics to design and make tip-up trucks.

120. No lessons were observed during the inspection and so no judgements could be made about the standard of teaching and learning.

121. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection is good. The school has improved its planning by introducing a scheme of work which covers National Curriculum requirements and provides for skills to be built on each year. Teachers are more confident in teaching design and technology as they now have firmer guidelines and have also received training. The lack of assessment of pupils' work is a weakness that is holding back further improvements in standards.

## **GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY**

122. Standards in geography are broadly in line with the expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6. There is very little work in this year's books. Books from the last school year showed satisfactory coverage of geographical knowledge about places. Year 6 pupils, for example, had studied islands of the Caribbean. The books showed that mapping skills have been developed satisfactorily. Pupils in the infants have made a plan and then a model of the school, and have looked at maps of the locality. Pupils in the juniors have looked at Ordnance Survey maps of local areas, and worked with country and world maps. They understand the use of simple co-ordinates. Pupils have had too few opportunities to apply this knowledge to making their own maps.

123. The available evidence indicated that standards in history are also broadly in line with expectations in Years 2 and 6. Very little written work has been done in the infants this year. The pupils can recall studying different kinds of transport from the past and can talk about Queen Victoria. They possess some historical knowledge and understand what history is. Work done by pupils in Year 2 during the last school year showed that they had studied Ancient Egypt, and had learned to use evidence through looking at pictures of the past. By the time they leave the school, pupils have covered all the historical periods recommended in the National Curriculum. Year 6 pupils know about the lives of the Tudor kings and Victorian people. At the time of the inspection, all the juniors were working on the Romans and the Celtic invaders. Good links had been made with art, such as to create artwork based on Celtic shields. Pupils in the juniors are given good opportunities for independent writing in history, which has contributed to the rise in standards in writing in English. Their accounts draw on the information they have studied, to recount events and to write imaginatively.

124. From a good base in the Foundation Stage, pupils' achievement in geography and history is satisfactory in the infants and juniors. Teachers are good at imparting facts, and so the main strength lies in pupils' knowledge, which is good in history. Pupils' written work in both subjects is

generally well presented, but they have had too few opportunities to develop their skills and understanding. For example, in history pupils' sense of time is not consolidated enough by the use of timelines, and worksheets do too little to stimulate thought and to develop literacy skills. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their understanding of how to use evidence from texts and pictures, although too few artefacts are available. The older pupils have not been extended to understand that written or oral sources of evidence can be questioned, and that reports can contain bias. In geography, good use was made of a Year 3 and 4 visit to Harlow to study geographical change, but pupils have had too few other opportunities to examine environmental issues and to pose geographical questions such as "How and why are these places different?", and thereby to cover National Curriculum requirements. More globes and atlases are required in order that pupils can find out for themselves.

125. Improvement in geography and history since the last inspection is satisfactory, though with some continuing weaknesses. Standards are as reported by the last inspection, with similar strengths and weaknesses in pupils' skills and in the quality of provision for geography and history. The work is often not adapted enough for pupils of different ages and attainment. However, both subjects are now led and managed satisfactorily. The recently-appointed co-ordinator has identified the deficiencies in resources and the imbalance in the curriculum, but has not yet had time to develop the subjects.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

126. Pupils were observed using ICT on several occasions during the inspection, occasionally within lessons in other subjects and sometimes using the group of computers in the entrance corridor. These observations, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils showed that standards in Years 2 and 6 are below national expectations and the infants' and juniors' achievement is unsatisfactory. This is because pupils have had too few opportunities to use computers in other subjects, and have not been taught the range of ICT work required by the National Curriculum.

127. Most pupils have computers at home, and so they are confident in using the keyboard and mouse. This was also reported by the last inspection. The older pupils know how to use menus to navigate within programs, and are familiar with operations such as opening software, saving their work and printing it out.

128. Pupils have done most work in the area of communications. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have recently been taught how to enter text such as their names, and to change the colour and size of the font. The juniors have used computers to present work that is already hand-written, by copy-typing and making some editing changes. Some older pupils have printouts from their use of the Internet or CD-ROMS at home, but these skills have not been taught systematically in school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have learned how to integrate text and graphics, through making front covers for their work in mathematics, and some have used a computer program to create a newspaper-style front page. Pupils of all ages have had too few opportunities to learn the skills of creating and manipulating text and graphics, for example to compose their own writing using a computer.

129. In connection with work in mathematics, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have learned how to enter survey data about themselves and to obtain graphs or bar charts of the results. The higher-attaining pupils have understood what the graphs show, but most have not learned how to interrogate the information. The inspection did not find evidence that these skills have been built on in the juniors.

130. In the area of computer control, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were observed learning how to use Logo, by typing a sequence of commands that made the computer draw a shape on the screen. The pupils were following exercises set on a worksheet. Their learning was satisfactory and they enjoyed the activity, but its standard was low as the pupils were not challenged to write their own sequences for drawing particular shapes. Some of the pupils said that they had done similar work

the previous year, when giving commands that made a computer-controlled toy move about the floor, but this work was not being built on explicitly.

131. No sessions in which ICT was taught were observed for long enough to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. The pupils seen using computers learned satisfactorily, particularly when given adult guidance. This was usually confined to supervising and helping pupils when they had difficulties, rather than being focused teaching and extension of ICT knowledge and skills.

132. The improvement in ICT since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Curriculum planning has not been updated since the National Curriculum requirements were changed in 1999, and provides an inadequate basis for class teachers to plan for their pupils' learning. Too little use has been made of the computers that are available. In the inspection, the computers in classrooms were used infrequently. The subject has not been led and managed effectively. For example, records of how well the pupils have done have not been kept, making it difficult to track their learning from year to year. The school is aware of these weaknesses, and some improvements have recently begun to happen. For example, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 now have an ICT book in which copies of their work are kept. Staff training is expected to be carried out shortly, to raise teachers' confidence and expertise.

## **MUSIC**

133. Only one music lesson was observed. The available evidence indicates that standards in music are above expectations for Years 2 and 6 and that pupils' achievement is good. Singing, composing and performing are all of good quality. Pupils have good opportunities to appreciate music, such as through listening to the composer of the week in assembly. Pupils sing well in assembly. The singing is usually accompanied by pupils playing tuned and non-tuned percussion instruments. In the lesson seen, pupils in Year 6 demonstrated their abilities both in singing tunefully and with enthusiasm and in composing several part accompaniments to the reading of 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin'. They enjoyed the work. The teaching was knowledgeable and well planned. The teacher was skilled in introducing musical terminology such as "presto", and had high expectations of the pupils. This resulted in high quality learning, good performances and gains in pupils' understanding of the meaning of changes in tempo.

134. The subject is well led and managed. The scheme of work has been adapted, and a music planning sheet devised to ensure that all aspects of music are taught. The improvement in music since the last inspection is good. The standards reported then have been maintained, and the previous imbalance between performing, listening and appraising music has been corrected. Opportunities to perform remain a strength that parents speak highly of.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

135. The lessons observed during the inspection showed that pupils' attainment in gymnastics in Year 2 is in line with the expectations for their age. Pupils in Year 2 held a variety of balances individually and when working with partners. They paid attention to the quality of their body shape and tried hard to improve it. Year 6 pupils' attainment was above the expectations for their age in a lesson on combining balances and movements to form simple sequences, which were refined and carried out in synchronised performances.

136. In the games lesson observed, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used hockey sticks appropriately to dribble, pass and shoot, gaining confidence in controlling the ball. No swimming lessons were seen, but other evidence indicated that most pupils have learned to swim 25 metres by the time they leave school. Dance forms a significant part of school productions, and many pupils attend the school's dance club.

137. The teaching and learning observed ranged from very good to satisfactory. Teachers gave clear instructions and demonstrations of what pupils were to do. In the most successful lessons, they involved pupils well in evaluating the quality of others' performances, and then extended

these responses by adding more explicit advice on how to improve. Pupils were managed well, and the activities were carried out safely. Pupils enjoyed these lessons, behaved very well and tried hard to improve, using the advice and suggestions made.

138. The improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory overall. A scheme of work has been introduced that covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum, and plans appropriately for skills to be built up year by year. As yet there is too little formal assessment, although a systematic scheme identifying specific skills and knowledge is being considered.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

139. Inspection evidence showed that Year 2 pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations for pupils of this age. Pupils have an understanding of the rudiments of the beliefs and symbols used in some religions. For example, they know about the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah and Hindu Rangoli symbolism. Pupils also know what constitutes a good or bad deed and consider how they might try to 'do better' themselves. Their achievement in the infants is satisfactory.

140. Standards in Year 6 are in line with expectations. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Their understanding of other religions has developed appropriately, although evidence suggested that more work had been done in Years 3 and 4 than in the final years in the school. Pupils explore the Hindu, Jewish and Christian faiths in some detail. They learn of the history and legends of Hinduism including the work of Rama, Shiva, and the story of Hanuman. They have studied the lives of Abraham and Moses and a little about the composition and history of the Bible.

141. Only one lesson was observed, and so it was not possible to make judgements about the overall standard of teaching and learning. In the lesson seen, the teaching was satisfactory and pupils made appropriate gains in their learning. They learned of the teachings of Jesus to 'love thine enemy'. Their understanding of this difficult idea was advanced well by relating it to real life situations. Their discussions were managed well by the teacher, who skilfully used one response in particular to help pupils understand the feelings of someone being bullied about their choice of clothes.

142. The school has recently introduced new schemes of work that meet the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus. The improvement in religious education since the last inspection is satisfactory, as the strengths identified then appear to have been maintained.