

# INSPECTION REPORT

**FORDHAM ALL SAINTS CHURCH OF  
ENGLAND (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Fordham, Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115078

Headteacher: Mrs Angela Konarzewski

Reporting inspector: Dr Vivien Johnston  
8402

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 194195

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:	Mill Road Fordham Colchester
Postcode:	CO6 3NN
Telephone number:	01206 240251
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Tony Fox
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8402	Vivien Johnston	Registered inspector	English Art Information and communication technology Geography Equal opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9391	Norma Ball	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31421	Sue Rogers	Team inspector	Mathematics History Physical education Foundation Stage	How well is the school led and managed?
30897	Jonathan Shields	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Music Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a small village school, with 85 boys and girls on roll. It serves a rural area to the west of Colchester. It is a voluntary controlled, Church of England school that takes pupils from the age of four to eleven. The pupils generally come from relatively advantaged backgrounds, and so the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is low. Almost all the pupils are white. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about average. Mostly, their needs relate to learning, but several have behavioural difficulties. No pupils have sufficient difficulties to have a statement of special educational need. The attainment of children on entry to the reception year is above average overall.

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

Fordham is a very good school. Overall, standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good. Teaching is also good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership, and the school is managed well. The school also has strengths in its care of pupils, the community ethos that promotes their personal development, and their attitudes and behaviour. Its costs per pupil are comparatively high, largely because of its small size. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

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

- High expectations, careful planning and stimulating teaching of the children in the reception year lead to their learning being excellent.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 do well in many subjects, including English, mathematics, science, art and music.
- Pupils enjoy school, and their behaviour and relationships are very good.
- The school has a strong family ethos, within which it provides well for pupils' personal development.
- The school is led very well by the headteacher, who has promoted very good improvement since the time of the last inspection.

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

- The use of assessment information to help teachers plan for pupils' learning.

*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 May 1997. Its improvement since then is very good. Results in the national assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 have gone up markedly, and the standards pupils attain have risen. The strengths identified by the last inspection have been maintained or further improved. The quality of teaching is higher than reported in 1997, and the school is led and managed more effectively. The issues for action identified by the last inspection have been tackled purposefully. Standards have risen in information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology, better arrangements have been devised for assessing pupils' attainment, and a monitoring programme identified where teaching needed to improve. Curriculum planning is better as it sets out clearly the content to be covered, and the school development plan provides a clear outline of what is to be done. Two new classrooms have significantly improved the quality of the accommodation. The school is well placed to continue the process of improvement.

### **STANDARDS**

Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were well above average in reading and mathematics in 2001, and above average in writing. Compared to similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals), the results were above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing. The proportion of pupils who gained above the nationally-expected level was well above the national average. The number of pupils is too small to enable valid judgements to be made on boys' and girls' performance. The 2001 results are higher than those gained at the time of the last inspection.

Results in the tests at the end of Year 6 have also risen, at a faster rate than nationally. The school gained a DfEE school achievement award for improvement in results between 1997 and 2000, and the 2001 results are

very much better than those gained immediately after the last inspection. Overall, in 2001 the pupils did better in English and science than in mathematics. However, the number of pupils in Year 6 was too low for their results to be analysed in detail and for valid comparisons with national results to be made. The targets for English and mathematics results in 2002 are higher than those for 2001, and the indications are that they will be met.

Standards at the end of the reception year are well above average, and the children's achievement is excellent. By the end of Year 2, overall standards are well above average and pupils' achievement is very good. There are particular strengths in the pupils' speaking and listening, reading, art, music and physical education. By the end of Year 6, overall standards are above average, with strengths in speaking and listening, reading, writing narrative, art, information and communication technology (ICT) and music. Pupils of all ages do well in gaining knowledge in subjects such as mathematics, science, geography and history. They have too little experience of investigative work, including in mathematics and science, and of writing independently other than to record information or to create stories. However, the evidence of their written work and the school's test information shows that the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good overall.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to learn and to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very well behaved around the school, including at lunchtime, and in most lessons. However, the older pupils occasionally become inattentive if the pace of the lesson is too slow.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are caring of others, and confident in how they carry out their responsibilities.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above average, with no unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive punctually in the mornings.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Very good or excellent teaching was observed throughout the school, and in all the lessons seen in the reception class. The most successful lessons were very well planned, and the teachers had high expectations of the pupils' effort and potential attainment. The pace of the lessons was fast, and all the pupils were engrossed in learning. They benefited from constant feedback on how they were doing linked to guidance on how to do yet better. Other strengths that characterise teaching throughout the school are very good relationships, teachers and support staff providing good role models, and calm management of learning activities. The work set generally challenges the pupils, who work willingly. They co-operate well in group and pair activities, and listen attentively to others' contributions to discussion. Written work showed that pupils take pride in doing their best.

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. Literacy skills are taught very well in that pupils have regular opportunities for writing independently, although mostly in narrative or to record information, and are encouraged to read widely. Numeracy skills are taught well within mathematics, and suitably reinforced in other areas of the curriculum.

Pupils' learning is excellent in the reception class, very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils enjoy learning, and do so confidently and independently. Occasionally, when the pace of the lesson was slow, the older pupils became restless. However, they got on well when given more demanding work. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well, in class and when withdrawn for support in literacy or numeracy.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall, and very good for children in the reception year. Curriculum planning sets out clearly what will be covered each year, and good links are made between subjects. A very good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities is provided.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The pupils are included in all that the school has to offer, and make good progress in their learning because of the support they are provided with.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils' spiritual development is well supported by the school's Christian ethos. Moral and social development are promoted through the clear expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and the good role models provided by staff. Subjects such as art and music encourage cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. The school provides a safe and caring environment. Good behaviour is promoted strongly. However, except in the reception class, staff make too little use of assessment information to guide pupils' learning and in curriculum planning.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good support is provided by parents. The school provides them with satisfactory information. Publications for parents are interesting and informative, but annual reports on pupils' learning are insufficiently clear about how well they have done.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very good leadership, and manages the school efficiently. She carries a very heavy burden of responsibilities. Other staff are very supportive. They have begun to carry out management responsibilities, but this is not yet well established.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors are knowledgeable, supportive and active. They do much informal monitoring, and have a clear view of how the school should develop. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher has monitored the school's effectiveness, identified areas for improvement and taken action to improve them. The school development plan is very straightforward and clear, but lacks detail.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school has sufficient teachers, although a high proportion work part-time which places extra burdens on the full-time staff. The accommodation is satisfactory, and resources for learning are good. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily. It consults parents, budgets carefully, and is setting itself suitable challenges.



## 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.</li> <li>• Behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• The teaching is good, and their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• Their children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework that is set.</li> <li>• Information on how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The closeness with which the school works with them.</li> <li>• The range of activities provided outside lessons.</li> </ul>

A high proportion of parents returned the questionnaires sent before the inspection. The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents in this questionnaire, and discussed at the parents' meeting. The team found that a satisfactory amount of homework is set, although they agreed that some very demanding work had been set for the older pupils for the Christmas holiday. The team found that the school provides satisfactory information on how pupils are getting on, although the annual reports tend to lack specific information on the quality of individual pupils' work. The team also found that the school's links with parents are satisfactory, and that parents provide good support to their children's education. The range of activities provided outside lessons is very good, given the small size of the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school has comparatively few pupils in each year group, and so its results in national tests need to be treated with caution when comparisons are made with national figures. For example, the number of pupils with special educational needs relating to learning difficulties, which varies in each year group, has an impact on overall standards and consequently on results. Numbers are too low for valid trends to be identified in the performance of boys and girls.
2. In 2001, the results in the national assessments at the end of Year 2 were well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. The trend is of an overall improvement since the time of the last inspection, when the results were broadly average. In all three assessments, the results were particularly good for the higher-attaining pupils. The proportion who gained level 3, which is above the nationally-expected level 2, was very high (in the top five per cent nationally) in reading and writing, and well above average in mathematics. In science, the results of the teacher assessments were well below the national results. Compared to similar schools (those in which a similar proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals), the results were above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing.
3. The results of the tests at the end of Year 6 have also improved over the last few years, at a faster rate than nationally. The rise in results between 1997 and 2000 made this school the most improved primary school in Essex. Due to the small number of pupils in Year 6 in 2001, the results for that year have not been analysed in detail. However, general trends were identified. The combined results for English, mathematics and science were better than the national results for 2001, with pupils tending to do best in English and science. The overall results for the last three years have been average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. The school's results indicate that the pupils have achieved well during Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6). The 2001 results are very much better than those gained immediately after the 1997 inspection.
4. Due to the small number in each year group, one or more pupils joining or leaving the school may have a major impact on whether the targets for Year 6 results are attainable. Pupil movement had an effect on the results in 2001. In mathematics the target for those gaining level 5 was met, but not that for level 4. The targets for English were met. The targets for 2002 are much higher, at 90 per cent gaining level 4 or higher English and 83 per cent in mathematics. The indications are that these challenging targets will be met, and that over half the pupils are likely to gain level 5.
5. The evidence showed that the children enter school with skills and knowledge that overall are above the expectations for their age. Standards in the reception class are well above average. The indications are that the children will start Year 1 having well exceeded the national expectation in all of the areas of learning that they are expected to cover. Their achievement is excellent, because of the high quality of the teaching. An additional factor is that the reception class is comparatively small, enabling the teacher to give the children much individual attention.
6. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) are well above average overall, and pupils' achievement during the key stage is very good. By the end of Year 2, almost all are confident readers, speak clearly and well, and have a good mathematical knowledge. In science, they have developed a good knowledge of the topics covered, and have made satisfactory gains in their understanding of investigations. The evidence indicates that there are also strengths in pupils' work in art, music and physical education, and that standards in the other subjects meet national expectations.
7. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6) are above average overall, and well above average in speaking and listening, reading, writing narrative, mathematical and scientific knowledge. The evidence also showed that pupils do well in art, music, ICT and religious education. However, pupils have had too little experience in mathematical and scientific investigations, and in writing in a variety of styles other than narrative. Standards in design and technology, history and geography meet national expectations. It was not possible to determine standards in physical education as no lessons could be observed. Pupils' achievement is good overall. The school's results of annual tests in English and mathematics shows that all pupils have made at least the expected gains in the last two to three years, and some have done considerably better. This indicates good achievement.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. The support of teaching assistants often enables them to participate well in lessons, and their learning of literacy and numeracy is helped by some small-group teaching of these skills. Gifted and talented pupils are also encouraged to do well, including by some extra opportunities for learning, although in class teachers are sometimes less successful in adapting the work so that it challenges and extends these pupils' learning.

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

9. Overall, pupils show a very positive attitude to school and their behaviour is very good. This represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection.

10. Pupils of all ages respond well to the school's strong moral and social ethos, and to their teachers' calm and encouraging management of their behaviour. They know what the rules are, and are happy to comply with them. Parents are very appreciative of pupils' very good behaviour in and around the school. Pupils show a good awareness of the needs of others, and of how their behaviour can affect people. There is a very good absence of oppressive behaviour and bullying. In the playground, pupils mix well, and enjoy lively and happy play. There were five fixed-period exclusions of short duration in the last school year, for repeated poor or dangerous behaviour that might put the pupils at risk of harm.

11. Pupils like school and learning. They want to work well and are keen to do their best. Their very positive attitudes and attentiveness in class make a very positive contribution to their learning and achievement. They have a clear understanding of the standards of behaviour expected of them and the vast majority live up to these expectations. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were judged very good in about half of the lessons observed during the inspection, and good or better in four-fifths. These are high proportions, compared to most schools inspected.

12. Overall, pupils show good interest and involvement in their work, especially when they are engaged in interesting and stimulating tasks. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were deeply involved in creating a story in an English lesson, using models taken from a magic box to help them build on the plot. They listened very attentively and showed real interest and enthusiasm in this whole-class activity. In an art lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 listened with great attentiveness to a local milliner, who gave an excellent demonstration of hat making. They then worked enthusiastically to create their own hats for a Mad Hatter's tea party. They shared resources well, and their behaviour and co-operation with others were excellent.

13. A few pupils with special educational needs that relate to behaviour are sometimes inattentive in lessons, and need firm management to ensure that they concentrate on their work. Their behaviour is sensitively and well managed by staff, and does not affect the learning of other members of the class. Occasionally, pupils in Key Stage 2 are restless because the pace of the lesson is too slow, or they are over-enthusiastic and inattentive. For example, in a science lesson on magnetism, the teacher's good, clear introduction was interrupted by pupils playing with their magnets. Their behaviour was gently but successfully managed by the teacher, who ensured that overall the class gained a satisfactory understanding of the topic.

14. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy their work and show good levels of interest. An important factor is the skilled work undertaken by learning support assistants. Teachers and learning support assistants show that they value the pupils' work. This builds up pupils' self-esteem and so they tackle tasks with confidence. In turn, they feel good about themselves and continue to work hard.

15. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good, and are underpinned by the emphasis the school places on encouraging their social and moral development. Pupils mix well in lessons and at play. They follow the role models provided by adults, who show mutual respect, care and courtesy in their relationships with pupils and each other. Pupils notice others' needs and show initiative, for example in opening doors for each other. Pupils of all ages act in responsible ways. For example, they work well in collaboration in pair and small group activities, without needing to be reminded to respect others' views. Pupils of all ages are keen to be given responsibilities, both in class and around the school. They very willingly undertake a range of tasks, and carry them out with confidence and enthusiasm. The interest that older pupils take in the care of younger pupils, such

as helping at lunch time and play time, is an especially strong feature of pupil's personal development.

16. Attendance is very good as it is well above the national average. There is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality to school is very good, and so lessons start promptly. Very good attendance has been maintained since the last inspection.

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

17. In all the lessons observed in the reception year, teaching and learning were judged to be very good or excellent. In Key Stage 1, teaching and learning were satisfactory or better in all the lessons observed, good or better in almost all, and very good or excellent in a third. In Key Stage 2, the range was from very good to unsatisfactory. A third of the lessons were good or better, and only one was unsatisfactory. The evidence of pupils' written work and in the school's assessment records for Key Stage 2 was also taken into account when making the overall judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. Overall, the evidence showed that teaching and learning are excellent in the reception year, very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2.

18. The excellent and very good teaching had several key features that led to high-quality learning. The teachers had high expectations of the standard to be attained in the work and of the pupils' effort and commitment. They planned and organised the lessons in a way that enabled all in the class to rise to the challenge. The work was very well matched to the pupils' needs, and gave just the right balance of challenge and support to everyone. A variety of activities motivated the class, and pupils were engrossed in learning. The activities were managed firmly, with plenty of encouragement and praise, and the pupils knew exactly what to do. The teacher and other adults in support gave good, clear feedback that helped the pupils to improve their performance throughout the lesson.

19. Pupils enjoy learning, and they worked willingly in the lessons observed. They co-operate well in group and pair activities. For example, a small group of lower-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked very well together to prepare a dramatic reading of a conversation from an extract of 'Alice in Wonderland'. They gave each other good feedback on how to say their lines well, and helped each other sort out which parts of the text to read aloud. Their persistence in the task, which they found quite difficult, enabled them to give a good performance by the end of the lesson. In whole-class discussion, the pupils of all ages listen attentively to the teacher and to each other, and their responses are thoughtful. Pupils of all ages are confident learners, able to sort out many difficulties independently, for example by looking words up in a dictionary. They also use their initiative to ask questions of each other and teachers. Many pupils in Key Stage 2 have put much effort into completing the homework projects set in geography, over the Christmas holiday. Their reports, and much other written work, are carefully presented and show that the pupils have taken pride in doing their best. However, the tasks set were too broad, and the supporting information did not give enough guidance on what was expected. The opportunity to develop pupils' understanding of geographical processes was missed, and so pupils focused on recording information.

20. All the lessons observed were characterised by very good relationships between adults and pupils. Teachers and support staff provide good role models, in their use of language and in the calm manner in which they conduct lessons. They have high expectations of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and effort, and generally set work that challenges them. Examples of very effective demonstrations of what pupils were expected to do were observed, including in physical education and music. Teachers often read aloud interestingly, holding the attention of all in the class.

21. Links between subjects are a strength throughout the school. Several examples of this were observed in the lessons seen during the inspection. For example, the children in the reception class practised their counting and addition during a physical education session. Teachers had planned connections between science, reading and physical education for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Older pupils' work showed good connections between art, English and history. These links have helped the pupils' learning because of the reinforcement of knowledge, and the opportunity to apply their skills in a different context.

22. In some lessons, a minority of pupils were restless. Sometimes, these were pupils with special educational needs relating to behaviour difficulties. They were managed firmly and positively,

and rewarded when they focused on the work they were supposed to be doing. This strategy, together with giving much praise for other pupils' good behaviour and effort, successfully kept the class working well and created a safe, supportive learning ethos. It was implemented particularly well in the reception class, where some of the boys find the afternoon session very tiring. For example, a small group were initially irritable with each other when set the task of using construction materials to build a bed and chair for Goldilocks, but with adult guidance became fully involved in imaginative play, and were then keen to have their turn at a painting activity.

23. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning in Key Stages 1 and 2, and work very effectively with the children in the reception class. The support staff know pupils well. During whole-class teaching, such as question-and-answer sessions, support staff often give unobtrusive support to pupils, including those with special educational needs, enabling them to follow the discussion and sometimes to contribute to it. The support role is being extended to observing and noting pupils' responses during whole-class discussion. This is a worthwhile development, which has a good potential for improving learning.

24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, particularly when the work has been adapted to meet their individual needs. Teachers and support assistants maintain close links. Teachers now have copies of the pupils' individual education plans, which is helping them to ensure that the targets in the plans are worked towards. Occasionally, pupils are withdrawn from class lessons, to work in small groups on literacy or mathematics. These sessions are good. They are well planned, and help the pupils' progress in reading, writing and numeracy.

25. ICT is taught very well to small groups of pupils in Key Stage 2, and teachers make satisfactory use of ICT within most other subjects. Reading skills are taught and promoted well, with regular opportunities for reading for information in subjects other than English. Parents also make a good contribution to pupils' learning to read, through the support provided at home. Writing skills have been taught very well in that pupils have had many opportunities to write independently, from Year 1 onwards, but with the weakness that pupils have not been taught to write in a wide enough variety of styles. Most of their writing is narrative, with some recording of information but too much copying. This means that pupils have not been challenged enough to think for themselves in subjects including science, geography and history. The school is aware of this, and is broadening the range of written work covered.

26. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall, with some good practice particularly in Key Stage 2. The most effective marking seen had given pupils helpful information on what they had done well and guidance on what to improve. It was sometimes linked to the targets written in the front of pupils' exercise books. The work showed that pupils have responded well to the guidance. However, much marking is not as informative, although it gives praise and encouragement. Parents attending the meeting prior to the inspection raised a concern that written homework is not always marked. Inspectors found that significant pieces of written work are assessed, although opportunities to link homework closely to pupils' work in lessons are sometimes missed.

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

27. The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage is excellent. It is planned carefully to cover all the areas of learning for children in the reception year, although the provision for religious education is less thorough than the other areas. The planning enables all the children to work quickly towards achieving the learning outcomes for this stage, and to prepare for the work they will meet when they enter Year 1. Those who are ready for it move on to work drawn from the National Curriculum. This contributes to the children's excellent progress and enables them to attain well above average standards by the end of the reception year.

28. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum, with the addition of religious education and personal, social and health education. The oldest pupils are introduced to French in the summer term, after the national tests have been completed, which broadens their experience and is a good extension to their cultural development.

29. The curriculum has been considerably improved since the last inspection. Whole-school curriculum planning shows what will be taught in each year, thus making sure that pupils in the

mixed-age classes do not repeat work. Nationally-produced planning has been adopted in several subjects, and this has helped the school to improve the quality of pupils' work in design and technology. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have helped to improve planning for English and mathematics. All the areas expected within ICT as a subject are covered, with some good links to other subjects, although too little use of computers within science investigations. Many other links between subjects are planned for, enhancing pupils' learning.

30. The promotion of numeracy skills is good as other subjects make effective links to the mathematics curriculum. Reading is also promoted well, as in many subjects teachers plan for pupils to carry out reading and research activities, sometimes using CD-ROMs or the Internet. However, opportunities to develop pupils' skills in writing are missed. Overall, though, the provision for teaching literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory.

31. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is appropriate. Extra support to develop literacy and numeracy skills is given where necessary. Pupils are sometimes withdrawn from class lessons, to teach them individually or in a small group. This is planned sensitively, and teachers make sure that the pupils do not miss aspects of the curriculum as a result of being withdrawn. The school identifies particularly gifted pupils and is beginning to ensure that their needs are met through an appropriately adapted curriculum.

32. Equal access to all areas of the curriculum is provided for all pupils, including activities outside the school day. A good programme of educational visits enhances pupils' learning. For example, the school organises a residential journey each year for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Visitors to the school add expertise, such as the demonstration of hat making by a milliner, for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The teachers plan carefully for these visits and visitors, and so make good use of these opportunities to widen pupils' learning.

33. Pupils have very good opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities, when account is taken of the small size of the school. These activities include gymnastics, recorder, choir, orienteering, football, rounders, netball and an English-speaking club. They are mostly available to older pupils, but younger ones have a gymnastics club. An 11+ club is open to the highest attaining pupils in Year 6, offering them good challenge academically. These opportunities help to support pupils' personal development very well, and give them good opportunities to extend the skills learned in lessons.

34. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' spiritual development is supported well by the Christian ethos of the school community, which pervades the school day. Pupils are given good opportunities for reflection in lessons, and to experience pleasure and surprise at events. For example, reception children showed joy and delight in exploring darkness and light. They were thrilled by the sudden transformation in a dark tent when they switched on flashlights. Listening to music and appreciation of works of art also support pupils' spiritual development.

35. There are clear moral overtones in much that happens in the school day, including the staff's clear expectations concerning how people will treat each other and of what is expected in terms of personal responsibilities. Staff and older pupils provide very good role models for younger pupils, which promotes the perpetuation of this ethos. Pupils are expected to be helpful and to offer mutual respect. The provision for pupils' social development permeates everything that happens in school. Relationships between adults and pupils, and between pupils of all ages, are of a high quality and this is part of the school's expectation of how things are done. A personal, social and health education programme builds explicitly on these expectations. Visits, including a residential trip for older pupils, and visitors give good opportunities for pupils to gain confidence in interacting with other people.

36. Pupils' cultural development is encouraged through the curriculum, particularly subjects such as art and music. Extra-curricular activities, including school performances, also encourage pupils to develop a love of the arts, together with confidence and a sense of responsibility that supports other aspects of their personal development. The summer show is a particular strength, as it involves everybody. Pupils' awareness of past culture in Britain is promoted satisfactorily through many subjects including geography, history and science. Multi-cultural awareness is encouraged through some art topics, as part of geography work in Key Stage 2, and in some music work. The

special days of the Christian religion, such as Christmas and Easter are celebrated, and school also marks the special days of other religions, for example Diwali and Hanukah.

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

37. The school provides a safe and caring environment. All pupils are valued and their confidence and self esteem are well promoted. The very good relationships that teachers and support staff have with pupils contributes to the good level of care for the pupils. The recognition of the value of the individual and awareness of individual needs is a strong part of the social and moral code of the school. First aid provision is good, as are the arrangements for caring for pupils who are unwell. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, including the school's arrangements for child protection, are good. The designated person for child protection has not had update training recently, but plans to do so in the near future. The school follows local guidelines for child protection, and procedures within the school are good.

38. A few parents expressed some concern for the safe dismissal of pupils at the end of the school day and the effectiveness of the new school crossing facility. The inspection found that these areas were sound, and that the new crossing service is providing an increasingly good service to pupils at the start and end of the school day.

39. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Registers are taken efficiently, and attendance information is reported clearly to parents. As attendance is very good, sophisticated monitoring is not required, but registers are checked several times each term by the education welfare officer.

40. The school monitors pupils' behaviour well. Records are kept of sanctions and any inappropriate behaviour. The behaviour policy is clear, and is consistently applied. It is well linked to the school's promotion of social and moral values, and reflects the school's ethos of valuing and respecting others. A suitable variety of strategies are employed to support pupils with difficult behaviour, and these depend upon the needs of the individual child. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. Staff ensure that pupils are fully aware that bullying and oppressive behaviour are unacceptable, and that they know to report any worries to staff.

41. Staff have a very good knowledge of pupils. The monitoring of their personal development, although largely informal, is good. Staff share information and concerns about pupils on a regular basis and work well as a team to support pupils and promote their personal development.

42. Target setting for numeracy is good. Most pupils have several, precise and attainable targets that relate to mathematics. Too little attention is paid to identifying the next steps in pupils' learning of literacy, particularly reading. Some targets on pupils' reports are too general, such as "to continue to try to do her best in all aspects of school life".

43. The care and attention afforded to pupils with special educational needs is good. The arrangements for identifying pupils who may have special educational needs are very good, and the school does its best to be flexible when meeting individual needs. This is a key element in the school's commitment to being an inclusive community that caters well for all its pupils. Pupils' difficulties are identified quickly and followed up by the headteacher, who is the coordinator for special educational needs. The pupils' progress is tracked carefully, and enabling the individual education plans to be reviewed and adapted to ensure that pupils continue to do well.

44. Assessment procedures are very good in the reception year. The results of observations and assessments undertaken when the children first enter the school are used to establish a baseline from which the work is planned. Regular assessments are made in all the areas of their learning, both informally during lessons and sometimes more formally. This ensures that the staff always know exactly what each child needs to focus on next. The strength of these arrangements contributes much to the success of the teaching and learning of these children.

45. In Key Stages 1 and 2, procedures for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory overall. The procedures relating to analysing how well pupils do in tests are good, and have helped to raise standards. Computerised records are kept of how well pupils have done in a variety of tests and in the national assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6. The headteacher keeps a careful check on what this information shows of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science, and uses

the information to set targets for their results in the national tests. The information has been used well to identify areas of weakness such as spelling, and successful action was taken to improve teaching and learning.

46. However, as at the time of the last inspection, the school has too little information on how well pupils do in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Teachers record comparatively little on-going information on the standard of pupils' work. A system of recording assessment information each term is being trialled. Staff have found it time-consuming to fill in the proforma, and the information has not yet been used when teachers plan their lessons. In ICT, each pupil's work in the small group sessions is summarized when the topic has been completed. This is potentially useful, but the comments are insufficiently evaluative of the standard attained and what pupils have learned. The school has not developed portfolios of exemplar work to illustrate standards, and thereby help teachers assess the quality of pupils' work consistently and accurately, as well as to show what is expected of pupils of different ages.

47. Teachers make too little use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning and to help pupils to improve the quality of their work. The school has not devised a workable system for linking assessment information to curriculum planning. This contributes to teachers not identifying clearly enough what they expect pupils of different levels of attainment to learn from lesson activities, and at times to the work not matching the range of pupils' needs. In general, staff make insufficient use of assessment information to track the progress made by individuals and to set targets for their future learning, although some targets are set for numeracy and writing. The school's assessment policy sets out good practice clearly, but does not show specifically enough how it is to be implemented in the classroom.

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

48. Parents think that the school is very good. They are appreciative of the standards of behaviour, and that their children like school and are encouraged to become mature and responsible young people. Parents also feel happy to approach the school with queries and problems, and that the school is well led and managed. The inspection supported these positive views. In the parents' meeting before the inspection and in questionnaire responses, some parents expressed concern about the amount of homework given to pupils. The inspection found that homework provision is satisfactory overall, but agreed with parents that major projects recently set for Key Stage 2 pupils during the school holidays were over-ambitious.

49. The school places a high priority on maintaining a productive partnership with parents, and has sound links with them. Parents receive regular information about the work to be undertaken in classes. Newsletters keep parents informed of routine matters, and are clear and helpful. The school prospectus is a friendly and informative document. The governors' annual report for parents is also interestingly presented, but has several omissions. These include a statement on the action taken since the last inspection report, information about special education needs, and the provision and policy for pupils with disabilities. The school is aware of these omissions and is planning to correct them in the next report.

50. A few parents help in school on a regular basis, especially with the younger pupils, and their contribution is valued by the school. The Friends of Fordham make a significant contribution to the school through regular social and fundraising activities. Overall, the impact of parents on the work of the school is good. The vast majority of parents also provide good support for their children's learning at home. Most parents help their children with reading and other homework and share with them in the projects that classes focus on during the year.

51. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory overall, with some very good features such as the induction for new pupils. Regular coffee mornings for parents provide informal and helpful links. Parents have two opportunities a year to meet staff and discuss their children's progress. Some parents were unhappy with the quality of information in their children's annual reports. The inspection supported some of their concerns. Reports are clear in their description of what pupils have covered, but have too little information on the strengths and weaknesses in their learning and the overall quality of their work.



52. The special needs coordinator ensures that parents are full participants in reviewing the progress their children make in relation to their individual education plans. These reviews meet the requirements of the new Code of Practice. They are handled flexibly by the school to ensure that the pupils' needs are met in the most suitable manner. There are good links to inform parents of their children's progress, and termly consultations with parents to review progress and needs.

53. Information for new parents is clear and helpful. Induction meetings for new parents and pupils are well planned and make a valuable contribution to the successful introduction of new pupils into the school.

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

54. The headteacher leads the school very well. She has achieved a great deal in her four years at the school. She has ensured that standards in English, mathematics and science have risen, improved the quality of teaching, and created a strong whole-school ethos in which all individuals are valued and encouraged to do well. Her management of the school is good. She has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done and how it should be carried out, but her effectiveness is lowered by the heavy burden of responsibilities she carries, which means that she has insufficient time for management tasks. Her two-day teaching commitment and her curriculum management responsibilities in important subjects make large demands on her time. Recent problems with building works have added considerably to this burden. It is hard for her to do more than at present to lead and develop the school because of this. For example, it has been difficult to involve other staff in monitoring how well pupils are doing in the subjects they co-ordinate, partly because the headteacher does not have enough non-teaching time to enable her to take their classes and so release them for this work.

55. The headteacher carries too many curricular responsibilities because of the current staffing arrangements. The headteacher's deputy is part-time and so can take on less responsibility than is usual for this position. Two of the other four teachers are also part-time, and do not have major responsibilities. Nevertheless, the staff share the headteacher's vision and are very supportive of her, within the time available to them. The headteacher's deputy communicates regularly with the headteacher and is supportive on a day-to-day basis. The senior teacher also provides valued assistance by taking on some administration and the role of health and safety officer.

56. Delegation of subject management is beginning but is not yet well established. Coordinators have written subject policies and schemes of work, but do not yet have budgets or defined monitoring responsibilities. The headteacher manages the provision for special educational needs well, and also the coordination of English, mathematics and religious education.

57. The governing body is very committed to and supportive of the school. Governors participate in training to develop their knowledge and skills in their role, and contribute much to the school's strong links with the local community. Some governors have worked very well with the headteacher in shaping the future direction of the school. Governors monitor informally, successfully, by talking to members of the school community. They have been involved in formal monitoring for some years, and regularly provide reports on what they have seen on their visits. Formal monitoring, however, is currently too descriptive, and is not specifically linked to the school's development plan.

58. The school development plan is very straightforward and clear, and is well understood by staff and governors. It is monitored informally, but lacks the detail needed for items to be tracked through to school targets and to specific improvements in different subjects. Because of this, it has been hard to measure how successfully the school development plan has been implemented, and whether the actions have led to raising standards. Nevertheless, improvements in standards have been made as a result of monitoring. For example, the headteacher analyses test results and looks at pupils' work, which led her to identify spelling as a weakness. A programme of support was set up, as a result of which teachers raised standards in spelling. The headteacher observes staff teaching. This monitoring has enabled her to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Targets for test results at the end of each key stage are now set using computer software. They are becoming increasingly challenging as the performance of each child is more carefully considered.

59. The school has sufficient teachers for its needs, and the staff work well as a team. The support staff are seen as an important part of this team. Teaching assistants are very well informed.

They operate very well in the classrooms and in teaching ICT to small groups of Key Stage 2 pupils. The staff have good opportunities for training. Recent input has centred on English, mathematics and science, and on training in computing skills, which has helped teachers to improve the standards in these subjects. Performance management arrangements are satisfactory.

60. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The new computer suite and the two recent classrooms are very beneficial additions. However, the hall is too small for gymnastics to be taught properly, especially as it also has to be used to store resources. The playground provides sufficient space, and the school field is convenient and of a good size. The accommodation for children in the reception class has been considerably improved, including by the provision of a well-equipped outside play area.

61. The school budget is managed carefully. It is based on priorities identified by the governors and the headteacher. A key decision has been to maintain four classes, instead of re-grouping the pupils into three, larger classes. This taken up almost all the surplus saved from previous years, and has meant that the headteacher has had to accept a heavy teaching commitment. However, the arrangement has benefited the pupils, for example in the quality of teaching provided. The money saved up for equipping the new classrooms has also been well spent as the new facilities are very good. Resources for learning are generally good, although a few areas such as history need more. Day-to-day finance and administration are dealt with capably and very efficiently. Sensibly, the school has bought in professional advice on the checking of financial procedures. However, the administration staff are part-time, and this leads to some loss of efficiency.

62. The school aims are focused on pastoral issues, including all children, and academic standards. The aims are continually at the forefront of everyone's mind. This ethos is reflected in all the work seen and in the atmosphere of the school. Due to the headteacher's success in leading and managing the school, its improvement since the time of the last inspection has been very good. The school has good capacity to maintain its many strengths, to improve the quality of education it provides and to raise standards further.

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

63. To raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

(1) make better use of assessment information to plan for pupils' learning, by:

- keeping systematic records of how well pupils do, in a way that is not overly time-consuming and that enables teachers to use the information to help them plan for lessons [paragraph 46];
- in lesson planning, giving more focus to what pupils are expected to learn from the activities, basing these decisions on assessment information [para 47];
- tracking pupils' attainment from year to year, to ensure that they make the expected gains in their learning in the foundation subjects and to inform the process of setting them targets [para 47];
- using the opportunity provided by marking pupils' work, to gather and record information on how well pupils have done [para 26].

64. The governing body may wish also to include the following minor points in the action plan:

- providing more opportunities for investigative work, particularly in mathematics and science, and for a broader range of independent writing [paras 7, 25, 30, 81 86, 93];
- improving the quality of annual reports on pupils' attainment, by making clearer comments on the quality of their work and the next steps in their learning [para 51];
- reducing the burden of responsibilities carried by the headteacher, to enable her to have more time for managing the school [para 54];
- increasing other teachers' responsibilities for managing subjects, including monitoring the standards pupils are attaining and how well they are taught [paras 54, 55];
- ensuring that statutory requirements for the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are met [para 49].

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	6	5	7	1	0	0
Percentage	10	29	24	34	5	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. The percentages do not add up to one hundred due to rounding.

### 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)	77
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

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	16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	4	8	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	10	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (100)	83 (100)	92 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (100)	83 (100)	83 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

The table for Key Stage 1 omits results for boys and girls because of the low numbers involved.

A table for Key Stage 2 has not been included because of the low number of pupils (5 boys and 5 girls) who took the tests in 2001.

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	68
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	5	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)	4.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17
Average class size	20

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

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	83

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	250,931
Total expenditure	261,522
Expenditure per pupil	3,346
Balance brought forward from previous year	24,746
Balance carried forward to next year	14,155

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.6

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	85
Number of questionnaires returned	63

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	32	8	2	3
My child is making good progress in school.	37	49	6	2	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	62	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	55	13	2	5
The teaching is good.	47	43	0	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	40	26	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	32	3	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	52	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	49	22	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	48	43	3	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	51	3	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	35	25	0	10

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

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

65. The school has one class of children in the reception year (the Foundation Stage). There are a wide range of ages in the one class as children attend part-time for the two terms before they are five, regardless of the year of birth. They then remain in the class until they are old enough to move to Year 1, and so some children have almost two years in this class. They have almost without exception attended some sort of pre-school provision. Most come from private nurseries, but there are strong links with the village Pre School too.

66. Standards in the reception class are well above average. The evidence showed that the children enter 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 they will leave the reception class having well exceeded the national expectation in all of the areas of learning.

67. The children's achievement is excellent because the teaching is so carefully planned and because the teacher and the class assistant know the children so well. Excellence shines through in all that they do. The staff have very high expectations, promote very good relationships and model exemplary, caring behaviour themselves. They are firm but fair, and prepare and use resources thoroughly. Their use of time is exceptionally good. Each child is continuously monitored to ensure that the learning experience is as appropriate as possible for that moment, depending on the child's physical abilities, knowledge and experience. This was demonstrated in a really useful numeracy lesson in the hall. The children were learning to count and add by recording their scores on games such as skittle bowling. At the same time they were developing their physical skills. When the younger children became tired and found teamwork difficult, they were given mathematics jigsaws to complete quietly.

68. Really thorough assessment is carried out in all areas of learning, with several different types of forms being used to record what the children could do in all areas. Children are encouraged to discuss their achievements at the end of lessons and agree what they can do to improve. The last inspection reported that the Foundation Stage was good, but it has since shown very good improvement. The quality of teaching is excellent in all the six areas of learning, and the reception class is very well managed.

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

69. The children generally behave very well and enjoy school. They have very good relationships with each other and with the staff. They take turns and are learning responsibility and ability to work independently. A group of five year olds, for example, did very well to count, record and work together unaided for half an hour in the mathematics activities described above. Concentration is very good and the children listen well and ask questions. They are keen to volunteer information and were able to speak sensibly about toys they had brought in to show the whole class.

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

70. The literacy hour is very well used to teach the children language and literacy skills. They speak very confidently and role-play is used exceptionally well to reinforce both speech and writing. At the time of the inspection, children were acting as doctors and nurses in a "hospital", making signs and creating labels to diagnose symptoms. Standards in reading are well above expectation for their age. Most are very confident readers who can recognise a large number of words on sight and are learning to use phonics to decode unknown words. Higher-attaining readers are already able to read small books fluently and with expression. The teaching of writing is very successful, with children being given a whole range of opportunities to write in real situations and to extend their vocabulary with the use of supporting texts. Examples include fold-out storybooks, Valentine cards and letters written as story characters.

## **Mathematical development**

71. Children have a very good understanding of number for their age. They can all count to ten, many to twenty and some up to one hundred with prompting. They sing songs to help them learn subtraction and most of them can add two or three numbers to make ten and even larger numbers. They are well supported in learning to record their sums but nearly all are still reversing some of their figures. Whenever possible, opportunities are taken to reinforce the children's knowledge of numbers.

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

72. The children have an excellent general knowledge. Their studies of the world around them are very carefully planned. For example, they have studied history by looking at old toys and Victorian clothes and compared these with their own. Geography has included creating a holiday island and religious education studies have looked at other cultures and included the story of Noah and his ark. This programme has been very well complemented by work on the computer. Children control the mouse confidently and understand how to run the programmes. They have used ICT to word process signs and to produce pictograms that link with both science and mathematics. The children have already acquired some skills of careful observation and the idea of scientific investigation, and are doing very well to be able to discuss the idea of fair testing.

## **Physical development**

73. As with all the other areas of learning, the provision for physical development is very well planned. Children are given many opportunities for movement and practical activities. There is an outdoor area and bicycles and other play apparatus are provided, but the school is in an exposed situation and there is no shelter to keep off rain and the cold wind. This restricts the amount of time that the outside area can be used for physical development in poor weather. Nevertheless, the children's throwing and aiming skills are good for their age as the hall is regularly used for indoor activities. In their classroom, the children are given much encouragement to develop skills in using small equipment, such as scissors, pencils and paintbrushes.

## **Creative development**

74. Standards in art are high, and pupils' learning is excellent. The children have worked in a wide variety of media. For example, they have sewn using collage on hessian and used paint in a number of different ways. They have been taught how to mix colours, and showed very good skills in making shades of brown to paint teddies they had drawn. Artwork is well integrated with design technology. Music is used across the curriculum with songs used to enliven both mathematics and English lessons. Role-play is very well developed and supported and so the children make very good progress in this aspect of their creative development.

## **ENGLISH**

75. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have improved since the last inspection. In reading, the results have varied from year to year, but overall the trend is of a rise. In 2001, two-thirds of the pupils gained level 3 (above level 2, the national expectation) and overall the reading results were well above average. In writing, the results were not quite so good. They were above average as fewer pupils, a third of the year group, gained level 3. Compared to similar schools (on the basis of the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals), the results were above average in reading and average in writing.

76. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved since 1997, consistently and at a much faster rate than nationally. Taken together, the results of the last three years are broadly average in English, and less good than in mathematics and science.

77. Standards in Year 2 are well above average, with particular strengths in pupils' speaking and listening and their reading. Pupils' achievement is very good overall, as they build further on the



strong start made in the reception class. From Year 1, pupils of all levels of attainment listen with understanding and answer relevantly. The higher-attaining pupils are very articulate. By Year 2, most pupils read aloud with suitable expression, and the higher-attainers have successfully moved from the reading scheme onto children's fiction.

78. Standards in Year 6 are also well above average. Standards are higher than the results of last year's tests because of differences between the year groups – the current Year 6 class has fewer pupils with special educational needs relating to learning difficulties. Pupils' achievement is good. As in Key Stage 1, pupils are fluent and articulate. Almost all pupils have a good vocabulary and so express their ideas clearly and well. They listen attentively, and their answers to teachers' questions are thoughtful and well expressed. Most pupils present their ideas confidently and, given a suitable opportunity, at length. Almost all are keen readers of fiction, at home as well as at school. However, pupils who no longer need the framework of the reading scheme do not get enough guidance on choosing their books, and sometimes tackle texts that are not suited to their reading skills. This holds back their learning. In writing, pupils' strength lies in fiction. They have regular opportunities for improving their skills in planning and writing stories, most of which are lively and well-expressed.

79. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages, often helped by in-class support. This enables them to take a full part in lesson activities, which are usually adapted to meet their needs. Given work that poses challenges at the right level, these pupils work well. For example, a small group of Year 5 and 6 pupils worked hard to develop an entertaining dramatic reading of an extract from 'Alice in Wonderland'. The gifted and talented pupils are encouraged to read widely, and mostly the work set challenges them. However, the system of target-setting that is successful in mathematics is less well developed in English. Here, the targets are often too general. In the best practice, seen in Years 3 and 4, the targets are specific and attainable, and are referred to regularly in marking. They have helped pupils' learning of how to write, but do not cover reading or speaking and listening.

80. The teaching of English is good overall, with strengths in the promotion of pupils' skills in speaking and listening, and in writing narrative. Pupils are encouraged to write using joined-up style from Year 1 onwards, and given good opportunities for independent writing of narrative. Teachers are good role models in their use of language, and listen well to pupils' contributions to class discussion. This creates a climate in which the contributions of all are valued, from the highest-attaining pupils to those with learning difficulties. Teachers also have high expectations of pupils' effort and attainment, and manage classroom activities effectively. Interesting work is set, and teachers generally anticipate pupils' difficulties well. For example, the younger pupils were helped to understand the concept of a phoneme by the notion that there were 'buttons' to press that made the sounds in a word, and grasped this very practical idea quickly. Positive behaviour management strategies work well in encouraging pupils to act responsibly and to become confident learners, although occasionally the pace of whole-class activities was rather slow and led to some restlessness.

81. Literacy skills are promoted satisfactorily in other subjects, with many opportunities for pupils to record information. Teachers expect pupils to present their work attractively, and many do. However, pupils have too few opportunities to develop their non-fiction writing to the same level as their narrative. In several subjects, pupils have been expected to read for information, from CD-ROMs and from library texts. Teachers make satisfactory use of ICT within English, and links with taught ICT lessons further build pupils' skills in literacy. For example, as part of a lesson on using the Internet, pupils were reminded of how to select key points from a printed text.

82. The improvement in English since the last inspection is good. Standards are considerably higher than reported by the last inspection, and test results have gone up especially at Key Stage 2. The teaching is more consistently effective, and pupils' progress has improved. The school has introduced the National Literacy Strategy successfully, and ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are covered. Assessment procedures have improved in that pupils are tested regularly, but on-going assessment linked to evaluative marking and targets for pupils' future learning is still comparatively weak. Teachers' lesson planning rarely identifies what pupils of different ages and levels of attainment are expected to learn from the activities, based on an analysis of assessment information. The subject is well led and managed.

## MATHEMATICS

83. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have shown a very good improvement since the last inspection. For the last two years they have been well above average compared to schools nationally. The proportion of pupils achieving level 3 was very high in 2001.

84. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have also risen, and are considerably higher than at the time of the last inspection. Taken together, the results for the last three years are above average.

85. Standards in Year 2 mirror the test results, and are well above average. Pupils enter from the reception class with an exceptionally good grounding in number. Coverage of the mathematics curriculum continues to be very good and well balanced. Mathematics is lively, there are lots of investigations and the work is related to the real-life experiences of the pupils. As a result, they achieve very well during Years 1 and 2. For example, at the time of the inspection Year 2 pupils were succeeding in finding numbers that were multiples of two, five and ten. They had recently done an investigation that involved solving the question "Is size of wrist related to the size of head?"

86. In Year 6, the picture is slightly more complex. Overall, standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. This judgement is based on the work seen in lessons and their results in the tests the school sets annually. Standards are highest in the learning of number, shape and space, and data handling. Higher-attaining Year 6 pupils have very good mathematical knowledge. For example, they understand how to define probability, use ratio correctly, and know how to simplify complex fractions. Pupils are weaker in the area of mathematical investigation. Much of their work is based on worksheets or textbooks, and they have too few opportunities for practical activities and to consider problems related to the real world. The lack of problem solving and encouragement to use their own methods to record means that learning, for weaker pupils especially, is not properly consolidated.

87. Overall, teaching and learning are good. They are very good in Years 1 and 2, and good in Key Stage 2. Although teaching and learning were unsatisfactory in one lesson in Key Stage 2, the work in pupils' books showed that this has not usually been the case. Also, a scrutiny of annual tests carried out by the school showed that almost all pupils had made at least the gains expected over the year, and some had done better than this.

88. The most effective lessons were lively and teachers' questioning was very good. Pupils were encouraged to explain why they had offered a particular answer, and their answers were used as models to explain to the rest of the class. An occasional weakness in teaching was that the point of the lesson was not made clear enough to the pupils. Pupils generally enjoy mathematics, are well behaved and try hard. When they were unsure what to do, they did not listen so well and were easily distracted. Teachers set homework such as learning tables, which helps pupils' numeracy development, but the tasks do not always link clearly enough to the lessons being taught at the time.

89. Check lists are used to record what pupils have learned but the information is not used sufficiently to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. A good feature of the use of assessment to raise standards is that pupils are set targets, some of which are specific and relevant. Sometimes, targets are linked well to marking and to identifying what pupils should focus on in the work to come, but this is not done in all classes.

90. Numeracy across the curriculum is well developed for the younger pupils. For example, wall displays encourage pupils to think about mathematical vocabulary such as 'heavier' and 'lighter', and linked to science they have measured the size of parts of the body. In Key Stage 2, pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop their number skills through other subjects, including in practical work in art and design and technology. The use of ICT does not feature in enough mathematics lessons, although some database work is carried out.

91. Mathematics is well managed. The subject has received considerable attention since the last inspection. Consequently, results have risen markedly. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced, and is used successfully as a basis for lessons. Resources have been updated, and are now good. The policy for mathematics is clear, and monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has taken place. The subject is prioritised for further, appropriate, development. Its improvement since the time of the last inspection is good.

## SCIENCE

92. There are no national tests in science for pupils in Year 2, but the results of the teacher assessment were well below average in 2001, compared to schools nationally. In the tests at the end of Year 6, pupils have tended to do better in science than in English and mathematics. The overall results for the last three years are above the national average.

93. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above expectations, and pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is also above average and their achievement is good. Throughout the school, pupils' written work shows that they are receiving a good balance of work in the areas of life processes and living things, materials, and physical processes. The older pupils have had insufficient opportunities to experiment and investigate, and so their skills in scientific enquiry are weaker than their knowledge of the topics they have covered.

94. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a secure grasp of the principle of a fair test. In their work on forces, for example, they showed that they understood that equal pressure needed to be used to explore properly the effect of pushing and pulling toy cars. Pupils have a good understanding of the conditions for growth in plants and humans. They have classified food correctly, when considering healthy eating and how diet affects growth. They used this knowledge well to produce advice and a display about what to do and what not to do in order to stay healthy. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are encouraged to record their observations in a variety of ways, including drawings, and this enables them to demonstrate a sound understanding of scientific ideas.

95. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed a good understanding that science is about establishing connections between cause and effect, and that it is best to test ideas with evidence from observations. In work on materials, for example, pupils had predicted which materials were effective thermal insulators and conductors, and then set about proving their hypotheses. Their folders and displays showed that a wide range of work had been covered, with a strength in recording scientific information. However, there is very little difference in the written work carried out by the higher-attaining and lower-attaining pupils, which indicated that some have not been challenged appropriately.

96. Work in science makes a satisfactory contribution to developing pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. For example, topics are often researched in reference books, and simple graphs are created to record information. ICT is used for finding out information from CD ROMs, but too little other use has been made of ICT within investigations, for modeling and control.

97. The teaching of science is good overall, as is pupils' learning. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and expect high standards of behaviour and interest. They manage the learning activities confidently, and give clear explanations of the work. Through questioning, they reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge, making some good links to real-life experience. These help pupils to understand the concepts they are learning about. Pupils enjoy science lessons and are keen to contribute to discussions and explore ideas. They work very well in small group and pair activities, and are respectful of others' contributions to the lessons. The work in pupils' books and folders is neat and well presented, showing that they have taken pride in it.

98. The content to be covered and the sequence of lesson activities are carefully planned. However, teachers do not make enough use of on-going assessment to identify what pupils of different levels of attainment should learn from the work. They generally set similar work to all pupils, and give extra help to those with the special educational needs. With this support, these pupils make good progress, but the work is occasionally insufficiently challenging to older and higher-attaining pupils, as was observed in a Key Stage 1 lesson on forces. Teachers' marking of pupils' work gives encouragement, but insufficient guidance on how to improve in future.

99. Overall, the improvement in science since the last inspection is good. Year 6 test results have risen considerably. The subject is led and managed satisfactorily. Monitoring has started, including a subject review last autumn term. The policy is up-to-date. The school now has an appropriate scheme of work, which was an area for development identified by the last inspection. Appropriate resources have been purchased and are put to good use in lessons.

100. In the subjects that follow, few lessons were observed and so it is not possible to make overall judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' work was scrutinised, including from displays around the school, and policies and teachers' planning were examined. Some pupils also talked to inspectors about their work, and teachers were interviewed about the subjects they manage. This information enabled inspectors to make some judgements on standards and pupils' achievement.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

101. Art is a strength of the school. The evidence of pupils' work on display in classrooms and around the school, together with some photographs of previous work, showed that standards are above expectations for Years 2 and 6, and that pupils' achievement is good. Pupils enter Year 1 with very wide experience in art, and have good opportunities to build further on their skills. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have painted landscapes with very good use of colour mixing to create atmosphere. The older pupils' sketchbooks have a range of design and pencil drawings, including of still life, although few examples of experimenting with styles and techniques. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 have good skills in observational drawing, as was shown by a display of their pencil sketches of chairs. This work led to some three-dimensional work, as they made model chairs from card. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have painted accomplished portraits in the style of the Tudors, with close observation of details of clothing and facial characteristics.

102. Good use has been made of other artists' work, as a model for pupils' own artwork. For example, in ICT lessons, pupils in Key Stage 2 have successfully created computer art based on Seurat's paintings. Very good links are made with other subjects. For example, younger pupils had listened to music and interpreted what they heard in line drawings. A fabric hanging in the school hall showed that pupils had done textiles work in connection with religious education, depicting scenes such as the Last Supper.

103. The improvement in art since the last inspection is good. The weaknesses identified by the last inspection have been dealt with, and standards are considerably higher than was reported in 1997. The subject is managed well, as is indicated by the consistently good quality of pupils' work throughout the school. Art makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. Displays of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school add to the ethos and reinforce the school's high expectations of pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

104. A scrutiny of pupils' work, including photographic evidence, indicated that standards are in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. The evidence indicated that pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. It is good in Key Stage 2, when account is taken of the weakness in design and technology reported by the last inspection.

105. Teachers provide pupils in Years 1 and 2 with good opportunities to develop a variety of skills such as cutting, sticking and joining. They use construction toys and plasticine regularly but the lack of space in the classroom is an inhibiting factor as it reduces the opportunities for practical work. In Key Stage 2, pupils have applied basic scientific ideas when making models work, such as by using a battery and a circuit. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have designed and made Tudor slippers out of felt. This culminated in a high quality display of their work, including written descriptions, plans and good evaluations as well as the finished slippers.

106. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in design and technology. Pupils now attain the levels expected nationally. A policy and scheme of work have been introduced, and sufficient time is allocated to teaching the subject. Coordination of the subject is satisfactory. There is appropriate breadth of coverage of the main elements of the curriculum, and good links are made to other subjects.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

107. The evidence indicates that standards meet national expectations for the end of both key stages and that pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

108. Throughout the school, pupils do best in recording geographical information. This was particularly evident in the work in Key Stage 2. Here, for example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have recorded much information on rivers, the water cycle, mountains and climate. Some of this work was done as a homework project, set over the Christmas holiday. Many projects were beautifully presented, and had involved research in books, on CD-ROMs and via the Internet. Parents' support in this work had been very good, as some parents who attended the meeting before the inspection commented. However, much of the written work has been copied, missing the opportunity to develop pupils' skills in writing independently.

109. Pupils are weaker in geographical enquiry and skills, because they have had too few opportunities for activities such as collecting and recording evidence, drawing their own maps, and drawing conclusions from the evidence or information collected. A few examples were seen of this kind of work. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have compared a village in India with Fordham, and have explained changes in the local area.

110. Developing the subject has not been a recent priority, and in many respects the provision is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. Overall, the improvement in geography is unsatisfactory. Standards are the same as reported in 1997, and the subject has not been managed purposefully enough. However, responsibility for managing geography has recently changed, and an improvement in the curriculum has taken place. The school now has an overview of what is to be taught when, and nationally-produced schemes of work are being followed.

## **HISTORY**

111. The evidence indicates that standards meet national expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6. There is not a great deal of written work in the books of pupils in Key Stage 1, but the work done shows that Year 2 pupils have acquired some useful historical knowledge and are learning to record this. They have begun to ask historical questions such as how our clothes are different to those of people long ago. Through looking at artefacts such as old clothes, they have begun to learn about interpreting evidence.

112. By the end of Year 6, pupils have covered all the historical periods expected by the National Curriculum. At the time of the inspection, all the Key Stage 2 pupils were working on the Tudor period. Good links had been made with other subjects, particularly art, with portraits of Tudor kings and queens being painted, and design and technology, through designing Tudor-style slippers. Occasionally, very useful links with ICT are made when historical reports are word-processed, but databases have not been used to research historical information.

113. The evidence indicates that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The teaching showed a strength in promoting pupils' historical knowledge but insufficient emphasis on developing their historical skills. For example, pupils' sense of time is not consolidated enough by the use of timelines. Pupils make satisfactory gains in their understanding of how to use evidence, based on texts or pictures – they were seen discussing Holbein's portraits of Henry VIII – but there are insufficient artefacts to develop this work properly. Written work is presented to a high standard, but too much of it is copied. This contributes to the older pupils not having enough opportunities to think for themselves. Sometimes, pupils record their own thoughts and research, and higher attainers are encouraged to extend their historical vocabulary. However, 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.

114. The history coordinator is relatively new to the school and has needed to concentrate on developing other areas. Consequently the management of history is unsatisfactory at the moment and the report on history is not as positive as at the time of the last inspection.

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

115. The provision for ICT has improved greatly since the last inspection, and so standards have risen. The school has invested in new computing equipment, and established a suite of ten computers near to the library. These computers are soon to be networked to those in the new classrooms, further improving Key Stage 2 pupils' access to classroom-based facilities.

116. The evidence of previously-completed work and some observations of pupils using computers during the inspection showed that standards in ICT meet national expectations for Year 2 and are above expectations for Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, and good in Key Stage 2. This difference is because the older pupils have been taught ICT in small groups in the computer suite, by a teaching assistant. The younger pupils make occasional use of the computer suite, but more often work on the computer in their classroom while other learning activities are going on.

117. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory use of computers to support their learning in other subjects, as well as to develop their ICT knowledge and skills. For example, they have carried out surveys of characteristics such as shoe size, and graphed the results from a simple database. They have learned to make repeating patterns and to use commands such as to fill with colour, in computer art. In word processing that supports their literacy development, pupils have cut and pasted text, and learned to use the keyboard and space bar.

118. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have made rapid gains in their knowledge and skills as a result of the very good teaching of ICT in small groups. Most become confident and quick in using the keyboard, and develop very good knowledge of how to use programs. Folders of their work show that they cover all elements of the National Curriculum systematically. Good quality work seen included the work in data collection, computer art, the use of spreadsheet to cost the food for a leavers' disco, and evaluations of web pages. Some computer art is very good, such as the Islamic carpet designs in the folders of pupils in Years 3 and 4, and designs for stained glass windows in the style of Mackintosh. Until the recent move to the new building, the classrooms in which pupils in Key Stage 2 were taught did not have computers and so teachers made little use of ICT on a day-to-day basis, within the curriculum. This is why standards are not even higher, as pupils have not had enough opportunities to apply and extend further the skills they are taught in ICT lessons.

119. All the pupils observed using computers did so confidently and independently. They were keen to learn new skills. Many have computers at home, giving them a good basis of experience on which to build. For example, many older pupils have used the Internet, but they benefited from being taught how to look up information and select from it, instead of printing out everything that they found in their search of a website.

120. The subject is managed satisfactorily. Weaknesses identified by the last inspection have been tackled, with some success. Curriculum planning has been improved, and has been checked to make sure that it covers National Curriculum requirements. Some assessment records are kept, but only for the taught sessions in Key Stage 2. Folders to collate pupils' work have been introduced, enabling teachers to review the quality of the work, but more remains to be done to link assessment to curriculum planning and to give pupils feedback on how to extend their skills further.

## **MUSIC**

121. Music is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy singing, and they sang well in the three assemblies held during the inspection. The older pupils sang the chorus in a two-part harmony, which lent a real style to the music. A group of sixteen pupils play the recorder at an advanced level, including descant, tenor and treble recorders. During an assembly, they played a piece of music composed by Henry VIII, and the rest of the school listened very attentively and appreciatively. Two music lessons were observed. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 gained an understanding of rhythm through clapping, by mimicking the teacher. This then progressed into using tuned and untuned percussion instruments to play simple rhythms. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were observed rehearsing a piece to perform in assembly. Their learning was very good. They interpreted curwin hand signs given by the teacher, with confidence and ease. They then practised singing their song accompanied by instruments and by the teacher playing the piano. Features that made the teaching very effective were the good, clear instructions given to pupils, demonstrations of the key points, and opportunities for the class to appraise their work and identify ways to improve it.

122. The evidence indicates that pupils' attainment in music is above the levels expected nationally for Years 2 and 6. This standard has been maintained since the last inspection. The subject is led and managed well, and its improvement since the last inspection is good. The coordinator has good musical knowledge, and trains the two recorder groups and choir to a very high standard. Music resources are good, and easily accessible. Music is a major factor in school productions and services throughout the year, and makes a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

123. It was possible to observe lessons only in the Year 1 and 2 class, and so no judgments could be made for the older pupils. Two lessons were seen. Standards in gymnastics were in line with the expectations for pupils' age, and in dance they were well above expectations. In gymnastics, pupils in Year 2 successfully linked movements together in stretching and rolling, first on the floor and then on apparatus. They understood the reasons for exercise and for warming up and cooling down. In dance, the work was very well linked to a book the pupils had read in class and to a science lesson, as pupils imagined pushing and pulling. The quality of their final work, when they set their movements to music, was very good.

124. The evidence indicates that pupils' achievement is good overall. However, in the gymnastics lesson the pupils' learning was slowed by the comparatively small size of the hall, which restricted their movements. The pupils' learning in the dance lesson was exceptionally good, because of the teacher's high expectations, the constant expressive modeling of what pupils were expected to do, and feedback that challenged pupils to do yet better.

125. The evidence indicates a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The physical education curriculum covers a good variety of activities, and is supplemented by a range of clubs. These include gymnastics, netball and football, with rounders in the summer. The school's football and netball teams engage in league matches. Pupils from Year 2 onwards have the opportunity to swim at a local pool, and to attain the expected twenty-five metres. The policy for physical education is clear, but because of the time constraints on staff the subject is currently not managed as well as it could be.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

126. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. They make good progress in learning about the world's major religions, their festivals, holy books and different ways of life. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 know the significance of the Hindu festival of Diwali and have compared it with the Christian festival of light – Christmas. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' folders include work on major Christian celebrations and Diwali, and older pupils have learned about Judaism and God's covenant with the Jews. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but a scrutiny of written work and displays around the school indicated that teaching and learning are good. The school successfully implements the two strands of implicit and explicit religious education. A wide range of tasks and opportunities are organised for pupils to support their learning, for example visiting the local church and synagogue.

127. Through the teaching of religious education, the school fosters a genuine search for integrity, wisdom and truth that underpins its Christian ethos. For example, the Lord's prayer is laminated and displayed in classrooms, and grace is said at the start of lunchtime. The improvement in religious education since the last inspection is good. The subject is well managed by the headteacher, who has a deep personal knowledge of religious education and gives other teachers good support in developing their knowledge and understanding. The subject is now well resourced, with a variety of Christian and other artefacts.