

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST PHILIP'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Romsey Town, Cambridge

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110840

Headteacher: Mrs Jill C Pauling

Reporting inspector: John William Paull  
22028

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 247061

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary with nursery
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Vinery Way Romsey Cambridge
Postcode:	CB1 3DR
Telephone number:	(01223) 508 707
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Cheryl Lowe
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22028	John William Paull	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs The areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
14404	Alan Rolfe	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? (The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
22657	Mark Madeley	Team inspector	English Art and design Educational inclusion English as an additional language	
17757	Judith Willis	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31218	Tom Allen	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Philip's Church of England Primary School at Romsey Town in Cambridge was founded in Victorian times from funds in a 300 year old trust, which was to be used for the benefit of all local children. In recent times, governors have interpreted it to mean that all local children must be included as fully as possible, irrespective of race, religion, social class or special need. The school now has 307 full-time four to 11-year-olds on its roll. A further 40 three- and four-year-olds attend its nursery classes for half day sessions. It is larger than most other primary schools. Boys and girls on the roll are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and include several who have arrived in the country very recently. The largest group is white, including pupils from other European countries. Other sizeable groups are pupils from families that originated in the Caribbean islands or in countries on the Asian sub-continent. Over 15 per cent are from homes where English is not the pupil's mother tongue, which is high compared with most schools, and several of these pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. The main languages represented are Bengali, French-Creole, Chinese and Dutch. Currently, nearly 30 per cent of pupils are known to qualify for free school meals, which is above average. Furthermore, the headteacher has evidence that this figure might be an underestimate. About 42 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is well above average. Many of these pupils have learning difficulties with the potential to affect learning considerably. Another significant group includes pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs amount to over four per cent, which is above average. Many pupils' attainment on entry is very low and the socio-economic circumstances of families in the area are often much lower than average.

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

St Philip's is a good school. It has a 'Quality Mark' that recognises its commitment to the provision of generally good services to its community. This commitment is reflected thoroughly in all its work. Its care for pupils, including many in difficult circumstances, is excellent. Christian values are strongly evident in all its work. Standards in English, mathematics and science fall short of those found nationally, but pupils of all backgrounds and abilities make consistently good progress. The headteacher's remarkable vision is based on a mission to include all pupils. Very strong support from the assistant headteachers and commitment from all the staff have ensured good teaching and learning at all stages. Nearly all pupils, including many in difficult emotional and social circumstances, acquire very good attitudes to learning. They mostly behave very well. Taken together, these factors demonstrate good value for money.

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

- Good teaching ensures that pupils learn effectively, so their achievements, compared with what they knew when they first joined the school, are nearly always good.
- As a result of very good provision, pupils who have special educational needs and pupils from all ethnic groups, including those whose mother tongue is not English, make good progress.
- Excellent procedures are in place to ensure that all pupils benefit equally well from what the school provides, which includes those from difficult social or emotional circumstances.
- Planning and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are of a high standard, contributing to very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- What is taught benefits strongly from out of school activities and the involvement of the community.
- The children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress as a result of very good provision.

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

- Overall standards of attainment, especially in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6.
- Levels of attendance, which are well below national figures.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved well since its inspection in November 1997 and very good leadership and management ensures that the capacity to improve and succeed is also very good. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced well and the quality of teaching has improved. A small amount that was unsatisfactory has now been eliminated and the proportion of very good teaching has increased. In 1997, teaching was satisfactory in nursery and reception classes. It is now good in these classes and pupils are learning basic skills well. Improvements have been made in nearly all areas that were identified as key issues. For example, attainment is higher at the end of Year 2 and standards in mathematics, although still low, are improving in Year 6. Policies and schemes of work have been developed and introduced in all subjects. Work is adapted well to meet the different needs of all pupils. The school keeps copious records of pupils' academic and personal progress. It analyses and uses this information well. Features that were identified as strong in 1997 have been maintained. Others have improved further and are now outstanding. For example, procedures that enable pupils in difficult social or emotional circumstances to remain at school and learn are excellent. However, owing to the severity of some of these needs, the school has struggled to raise attainment by the end of Year 6, even though pupils' progress is good. For example, the 2002 National Curriculum test results were lower than those of 1997 and attendance remains a key issue. Although weaknesses in uses of literacy across the curriculum have been addressed, further development is necessary to improve consistency.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	E	E	E
Mathematics	E*	E*	E	E
Science	E*	E	E	E

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

The school's results in National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science have been well below average since 2000. In mathematics, they were in the bottom five per cent in 2000 and 2001; the same was true for science in 2000. The trend in results is rising slightly but is below that found nationally. Important factors affect the test results. Very low attainment on entry in the past has meant that, despite pupils' good progress, many struggle to reach average levels by the end of Year 6. A number of other pupils either leave or join the school each year, so they do not benefit fully from good teaching. The school also has a high proportion of older pupils either with special educational needs or from difficult social and economic circumstances that affect learning. In English, mathematics and science, standards in the present Year 6 are broadly similar to the previous test results. The school has challenging targets for these pupils, but under the circumstances these are unrealistic and unlikely to be met. Nevertheless, many pupils reach expected levels in information and communication technology, physical education and music, and several know more history and geography than they are able to write down, owing to their difficulties in writing. The good teaching, coupled with a slight rise in attainment on entry to the nursery, has resulted in higher standards in Year 2. Compared with similar schools, the 2002 test results for reading were well above average and they were average in writing and mathematics. The improvement is also reflected in the work that pupils do in science. Standards at the end of the reception year are improving – they are now below, rather than well below, what is usually found.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good – pupils speak very highly of their teachers and are proud of what their school stands for and does for them. They work hard for their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good – as pupils grow older, they behave very well. By the end of the reception classes, nearly all of them, including many with emotional difficulties, show high levels of respect for adults in and around the building.
Personal development and relationships	Good – many pupils accept responsibility well. However, a significant number depend on the staff considerably for both self-esteem and understanding of positive values. Pupils' relationships with adults in the school are very good.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory – attendance is well below that of most other schools, although punctuality is reasonable and nearly all lessons begin and end on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery & Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching through the school is good. This quality is found in all age groups. It is reflected in the progress of pupils from many different backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language, special educational needs, pupils with higher attainment and pupils making a fresh start, following difficult social or emotional circumstances elsewhere. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants work very hard to ensure that all the school's pupils are included in what is taught. A high proportion of very good teaching also takes place. All other teaching is at least satisfactory. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are generally planned carefully, so the teaching of English and mathematics is good and pupils learn the basic skills of reading particularly well. Classroom assistants use their day-to-day knowledge of pupils skilfully, enhancing the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers have generally good knowledge of the National Curriculum and use it effectively to plan their teaching. Understanding of what should be taught in nursery and reception classes is also good. Management of pupils is very good throughout the school, and often excellent in classes for older pupils, which contributes strongly to pupils' good attitudes to learning, often despite their difficult social circumstances.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good – legal requirements are met and the quality of what is taught is good; adaptations to meet individuals' needs are very apt. Furthermore, measures to ensure that all pupils benefit from what is available are outstanding.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good – teaching assistants are very well trained to provide the support that pupils need. Teachers, led well by the co-ordinator and link-governor, draw up precise individual plans that are put into practice very carefully.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good – pupils' language needs are identified accurately and the quality of planning and adaptation of what is taught is strong. Senior managers are very sensitive to the wishes of pupils, consulting new arrivals from overseas about whether they should "have a go" at National Curriculum tests in Year 6, even to the detriment of overall results. Owing to such strong values, pupils of all groups mix well, supporting the learning of spoken English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good – strong Christian values permeate the school's provision. All staff themselves reflect carefully on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural implications of what they teach. All aspects of this provision are consistently very strong and include areas of excellence in teaching pupils how to behave morally and to think about the effects of their actions on other people.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good – senior managers and staff take all aspects of pupils' wellbeing, including the assessment of their academic progress, very seriously. Information is used well. Provision for pupils with statements of need is excellent.

Parents' views of the school, as expressed at the pre-inspection meeting and in questionnaires, are very positive.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good – the headteacher has an inspirational vision of including all pupils in what the school offers. The assistant headteachers and the special needs co-ordinator share and communicate it strongly. Subject co-ordinators understand their roles well and manage their responsibilities to good effect.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good – key governors understand their roles and responsibilities well. The chair is fully supportive and governors with particular responsibilities question and keep a check on how the school is progressing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good – systems for identifying and correcting weaknesses in teaching have been particularly effective since the last inspection. Pupils' work in literacy and numeracy is recorded copiously and the information is used to adapt teaching. In-service training and the induction of new staff are excellent.
The strategic use of resources	Very good – funds allocated for special reasons are used very effectively. The governors' Chair of Finance and senior staff ensure that new developments and priorities are resourced, and the school applies principles of best value well.

The adequacy of staffing to teach the National Curriculum is very good, owing to its match to pupils' needs. Learning resources and accommodation are adequate, although exterior playground space is limited.

## 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, work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and their children make good progress.</li> <li>• Their children learn to grow in maturity and responsibility, and behave well at school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school works closely with them, keeps them informed and the staff are approachable.</li> </ul>	<p>General satisfaction with this good school is at a high level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A significant proportion would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• A few feel that their children do not receive the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agreed strongly with parents' overall positive opinions of this good school. Several activities are available to pupils, such as a choir, a band and sports clubs. Others, such as *Happy Sad Club* are very relevant to many pupils' needs, so inspectors feel that the provision is very good overall. At the meeting, parents were divided about whether homework is too much or too little. Inspectors judge that it is usually about right. Furthermore, the school's policy invites parents to discuss homework if it causes concerns for a child.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In Year 2, standards of attainment in the 2002 National Curriculum tests improved dramatically compared with those reported in 1997. The proportions of pupils attaining what is expected for their age or above rose. The gains are particularly large in writing and mathematics, far outstripping those made nationally. In 2002, teachers' assessments in science indicate that attainment is average compared with the average of all other schools, and above the average of similar schools, which is also an improvement.
2. The Year 6 results in 2002 were not as good as those of 1997 in either English or mathematics, although an improvement was made in science. Furthermore, the 2002 results were better than those of 1998, which was the group that left the top of the school in the year of the last inspection. Trends since then have been erratic, including a sharp rise in 1999, followed by a sharp fall in 2000. Slight rises have then occurred in mathematics and science. Wide variations in the numbers of pupils with identified special educational needs are the main reasons for these fluctuations, although pupils leaving and joining the school have also contributed to differences. Owing to a combination of all these factors, the school's trend is below the national trend. Although the school's targets in recent years are undeniably challenging, they are also unrealistic for the same reasons. Because pupils' starting points were often low, they achieved well in comparison with their starting points or, in the case of pupils who joined in later years, with their levels of attainment when they first came to St Philip's.
3. Currently, overall attainment on entry to the nursery remains low, especially in the important areas of communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. Good teaching and provision through the nursery and reception classes result in good progress. However, in these areas, attainment is still below what is normally found at the end of the reception year, which is confirmed in baseline tests. Nevertheless, the school has evidence to suggest that attainment at this age has risen in recent years, partly because teaching of this age group has improved since 1997, and partly because the proportion of more able children entering the nursery has grown.
4. The numbers of pupils with English as an additional language and of those with special educational needs form a large proportion of the school's intake. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress towards their language targets. For example, those pupils at an early stage of acquiring English quickly learn everyday language and are able to talk to their classmates well. The technical vocabulary of subjects in the National Curriculum understandably takes longer to acquire, but learning is steady. Pupils are well supported by all staff, who use language carefully and often mime a word, or ask other pupils in the class for a meaning. A preparatory reading session with Year 6 pupils was an excellent example of the type of support that is given. The school's social and educational inclusiveness is exceptional. It applies its policy rigorously, attempting to include all local pupils, irrespective of their ethnicity, social or emotional circumstances, special educational needs or previous attitudes or behaviour. An example is that fresh starts have often been offered to pupils, following permanent exclusion from other schools. Although this practice is thoroughly laudable, it has implications for the attainment on entry of pupils who are admitted in later years. Usually, the school's incoming pupils have lower attainment than its leavers. Nevertheless, arrangements to meet special educational needs, including those of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties, are very good. As a result, their progress is usually maintained at a similar rate to that of other pupils. Similarly, the proportion of pupils with statements of special need is above average, but excellent provision ensures that they too make good progress towards their targets.
5. Current attainment in English at the end of Year 2 maintains the recent improvements indicated by National Curriculum tests. Standards are higher in reading than in writing, although they are broadly average in both. Standards in speaking and listening are also broadly average, although many pupils have weaknesses in general vocabulary. Nevertheless, many are confident speakers, offering answers in lessons and pointing out to visitors, items of interest around the school. The school recognised that to improve standards in its current Year 6, it needed to put in a particular effort with boys, as they

were attaining a lot less well than girls. Considerable support and extra classes were established. These have had a noticeable effect and, while attainment remains well below average, it is certainly higher than what was indicated in last year's National Curriculum tests. However, formal elements of speaking and listening are weak. It is evident that when pupils speak, many use non-standard forms of English to the exclusion of other patterns of speech. Colloquial language is also often reflected in what they write, so extended sentences embedded within well argued paragraphs are rare, except in the work of a few higher attainers.

6. Attainment in mathematics is currently about average at the end of Year 2. A high proportion of pupils understand number and shape and space at levels normally expected for their age. Several higher attaining pupils go beyond this level, understanding and using numbers beyond 100. A few lower attainers struggle with mathematical skills, but make good progress, owing to good support. However, a relatively high proportion of pupils struggles with the application of their knowledge to problems set in words. This difficulty relates partly to weaknesses in general vocabulary that impair understanding of written and printed questions. Overall attainment of pupils towards the end of Year 6 is currently below average, which is better than was indicated in the 2002 National Curriculum tests. Most pupils understand number, shape and space and handle data reasonably well. However, only relatively few pupils attain at higher than normally expected levels for their age, and a larger group than in most other schools falls short of expected standards. The main difficulty, as in the lower age group, is the understanding and solution of problems that entail words, rather than simply mathematical signs and numerals.
7. Uses of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are satisfactory overall. For example, pupils use reading to find information in a range of situations in other subjects. They count and use their knowledge of numbers on appropriate occasions and use measurement in, for example, science and geography. However, shortages of available time restrict the use of different types of writing to record facts and outcomes in other subjects. Conversely, information and communication technology is often used well to support other subjects, while only a few opportunities to use it are missed.
8. Attainment in science is average by the end of Year 2, but well below average at the end of Year 6. Nevertheless, pupils achieve well throughout the school. This apparent contradiction is superficial for the same reasons as in other subjects. Many pupils in Year 6 had low attainment when they entered the school, including many with special educational needs. Furthermore, incidences of pupils leaving or joining the school are higher in older age groups, which has affected overall attainment further.
9. The development of knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects less dependent on the development of language and writing often matches normally expected levels. For example, skills in information and communication technology, music, art and design and physical education are around average at the end of Years 2 and 6. In history and geography, pupils' understanding in a discussion with an inspector was at expected levels, although what is written down in their books does not reflect this knowledge. Attainment in design and technology was broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2, but fell below the standard for the age group in Year 6, largely owing to weaknesses in evaluations and the quality of finish of products.

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

10. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, and relationships are all very good. They make good progress in their personal development. All these factors have a positive impact on pupils' learning and the climate for learning in the school. High standards of behaviour and good attitudes noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and, in some respects, even improved further, for example, in the readiness with which pupils volunteer for and take pride in the achievements of working parties in their own time to improve environmental appearances around the grounds. However, attendance is unsatisfactory. It is well below the national averages, which represents a decline since the last inspection. It is largely because unauthorised absence is well above the national average. Part of the reason is that the school does not remove pupils from its registers when they spend extended amounts of time on family trips overseas, preferring not to signal that they might not be re-included on their return. Pupils are generally brought to school on time and lessons usually begin and end punctually.

11. Pupils' very good attitudes to work make a positive contribution to their learning. Discussions with pupils in all year groups indicate that they have a very high regard for their teachers and their school, which reflects parents' opinions that their children like school. The majority of pupils are interested in what they do and enjoy learning, identifying favourite subjects. They listen attentively to their teachers' instructions, maintain concentration for appropriate periods of time and make a positive contribution to classroom discussions. For example, in a Year 2 design and technology lesson, pupils were fully engrossed in attaching wheels to their products. They worked very well together, sharing ideas and helping each other. Pupils with special educational needs generally show good attitudes to work and behave well in lessons and around the school.
12. Behaviour of almost all pupils is very good. A significant minority of pupils has been identified with behavioural difficulties. These pupils are offered excellent support and counseling and, as a result, usually conform well to what is expected, so other pupils are not disrupted. In the large majority of lessons, behaviour is good. In a significant number, it is very good and is maintained at these high levels even in groups that are not directly supervised. Good attitudes and behaviour are usually the case in nursery and reception classes. However, on occasions, children's early stage of personal and social development affects this and they find it hard to sit still and listen or to share properly. Good teaching improves this aspect as they grow older.
13. Pupils' behaviour has a positive impact in lessons. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson, behaviour was very good, so learning about the germination of seeds benefited strongly. Pupils are involved in drawing up classroom rules, which helps them to develop a good understanding of what is and is not acceptable. They are well aware of the school's system of rewards and sanctions, and readily accept the principle of sanctions as an appropriate response to poor behaviour. Whilst incidents of racist name-calling occur only rarely, these are taken very seriously and are recorded and reported to parents. As a result, overall racial harmony is good. The school takes a similar line with bullying, to the same effect. Pupils treat the school's accommodation and equipment with care and respect and the lack of litter around the site is noticeable.
14. No exclusions occurred in the last academic year. However, two fixed-term exclusions have been necessary recently. Records indicate that these exclusions were as a result of over-aggressive behaviour and that the action taken was appropriate and followed considerable thought in light of the school's inclusive policies. The school has very good procedures to reintegrate pupils into mainstream education, as it offers fresh starts to pupils who have been permanently excluded elsewhere. These procedures held it in good stead in these fixed-term cases of its own.
15. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, as are relationships between pupils. These very positive relationships mean that pupils have good social values and enjoy each other's company, respecting differences and accepting each other into working groups and playground games. Pupils' general morale is good, so they show a willingness towards additional responsibilities, undertaking a range of duties as classroom monitors, buddies and helpers of younger pupils, members of the school council, and members of working parties alongside the parent-teacher association. Year 6 pupils help to supervise younger pupils and help in the school office.

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

16. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching was sound in the nursery and reception classes. It was good in other stages of education, including a significant proportion of very good teaching. A small quantity of unsatisfactory teaching was also identified. All other teaching was satisfactory. Teaching has improved since then. It remains good overall, but it is now also good in the nursery and reception classes. The proportion of very good teaching has almost doubled and occurs in all stages through the school. Unsatisfactory teaching has been eradicated. This overall good quality reflects the opinions of parents, both in their responses to questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting. It is resulting in good learning amongst pupils. One of the strongest features is the planning of work and use of systems that ensure that all pupils are included fully in lessons. For example, the co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. The specialist teacher of pupils with English as an additional language is very experienced and uses her knowledge well to motivate and stimulate her

pupils. A session with five pupils who were reading Jamaican poetry in preparation for a class lesson was a case in point. This session enabled the pupils to make contributions to a later discussion in the classroom. Class teachers also make a big effort to explain vocabulary used in lessons and try to avoid idioms that may be meaningless to pupils who do not have English as their mother tongue. Similar strengths are found in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Not only are tasks adapted well, so they can understand what to do to learn and make progress, but the co-ordinator regularly checks that provision is suitable for particular individuals. Teaching assistants are well trained and included in meetings to ensure that they understand the extent and implications of pupils' needs. As a result, support for pupils is of a high quality and learning is good. Another example of the extent to which teaching is adapted to pupils' requirements was the introduction of a special class. This class ensured that pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, including a few who were making a fresh start after being excluded from another school, were not excluded again. Careful records of these pupils' progress were kept and these show that all of them benefited from this outstanding provision.

17. In the nursery and reception classes, considerable emphasis is placed on planning personal, social and emotional development. Many pupils start at the school with particularly weak skills in this area. At first, they find it difficult to settle and listen to adults. Good teaching, based on praise for those children who do settle, and good organisation of activities, gradually overcomes this difficulty. Nevertheless, it was still apparent that at times, especially in the nursery, adults have to work very hard to ensure that children share equipment properly and understand what it means to take turns. Teachers' planning of all the areas of learning is generally very good in the nursery and reception classes. One of the main reasons is that teachers plan together, so their individual strengths are reflected in the overall preparation of activities in all the classrooms. Teachers' knowledge of the needs of children in their classes and of what is nationally required to teach the age group are also very strong. Management of children and the contributions of other adults are also very good. A particular feature is the skill and confidence contributed by all the nursery nurses. Their work is consistently of a high professional quality, supporting teachers and accepting the leading role when asked.
18. Good teaching continues through the main school. In common with nursery and reception teaching, the use of support staff and resources and the management of pupils, several of whom have quite severe social or emotional difficulties, are very good. Management of pupils is often excellent in classes for older pupils. As a result, relationships between teachers and pupils are very strong and pupils both appreciate what their teachers do for them, and try hard to co-operate with them. Skills are therefore acquired well, bearing in mind pupils' starting points.
19. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced well since the last inspection. Teachers have good knowledge of both. As a result, teaching in English and mathematics is good. In both good and very good lessons, teachers are very clear about what pupils needed to learn, having assessed how well pupils have grasped teaching points in previous lessons. Each lesson has a start in which the point of the session is carefully explained, so pupils know what skills they are expected to acquire by the end. Tasks during the middle section of lessons are nearly always finely adapted to the needs of different groups of pupils. The ends of lessons nearly always consist of good summaries to reinforce learning, and often have brief explanations of what might be coming next. These good strategies support the learning of skills well and the teaching of basic reading and number is often very good in Years 1 and 2, which is one reason that both standards in reading and understanding of numbers are now matching expected levels by the end of Year 2. However, opportunities to bring pupils' attention to alternative, more precise vocabulary are sometimes missed in lessons through the school. Opportunities to develop literacy in other subjects, which was identified as in need of development in the last report, remains a weaker area. However, the reasons are different from those of 1997. Owing to the amount of time that is spent directly on literacy and numeracy lessons and related additional initiatives, such as additional literacy and extra literacy strategies and springboard mathematics, less time is available for these other subjects.
20. In science, teaching is also good. Teachers' clear explanations and good use of questioning develop pupils' ideas and understanding to good effect. In response, pupils learn to use technical language appropriately. However, opportunities to develop scientific styles of writing are limited. Although

teachers often design good worksheets to ameliorate this difficulty, these do not fully compensate for pupils' lack of knowledge of formal styles of English.

21. Teaching of information and communication technology is consistently good in lessons. Teachers are confident to explain how to use programs and to support pupils in their use. Another good feature is that programs are introduced at relevant times to support work in other subjects.
22. All the good features of teaching that are found in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are reflected in other subjects. Teachers plan well, establish strong relationships with pupils and are strongly supported in the classrooms by their teaching assistants. Pupils from a wide range of different backgrounds and ethnicity therefore learn well and put in a good effort. Marking frequently follows the school's policy well, although not entirely consistently. It is nearly always up to date and offers appropriate praise and encouragement. However, in a few classes, explanations of what might be done to improve are too infrequent.
23. Other elements of the school's provision that are strongly reflected in teaching are uses of verbal praise and positive attempts to build pupils up personally. The headteacher's frequently used slogan, "We try to go the extra mile" is born out in what teachers do. If any pupil seems uncertain, unhappy or worried, he or she is immediately asked whether everything is all right. At break times, teaching assistants, nursery nurses and other staff around the school, including the caretaker, are constantly available to pupils, sharing displays and helping to promote interest and making a contribution to teaching and learning. Such positive role modelling has a positive impact on pupils' responses to teaching in the classrooms, helping them to benefit from it.
24. Homework is also used effectively. In English and mathematics especially, pupils are given work to take home that supports the work of classrooms adequately. Pupils who were asked felt that their homework was usually enjoyable and they were keen to do it. In cases when pupils have made a particularly successful effort at home, teachers celebrate the result. A good example occurred at the end of a lesson in Year 4, in information and communication technology. Time was found for a pupil to share with her class a *PowerPoint* presentation that had been produced at home.

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

25. Overall, what is taught at the school is good. It offers pupils a wide range of opportunities to learn from well-planned schemes of work and experiences. Provision for the teaching and learning of dance is good and provision in music is clearly improving again, after falling back when a specialist co-ordinator left the school. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced well since the last inspection. Nevertheless, a very strong emphasis on these aspects is reducing time available for other subjects. This shortage of time restricts the teaching of language and writing across the curriculum and has made it harder for the school to meet one of its issues of the previous inspection: to improve the uses of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Although the school has clearly addressed this weakness, the result still lacks consistency. The same strong emphasis is also causing constraints on available time for speaking and listening in English lessons and, owing to pupils' weaknesses in general vocabulary, this is significant. Nevertheless, what is taught meets statutory requirements, including all subjects of the National Curriculum. Religious education follows the Church of England's diocesan requirements. The school has successfully addressed issues raised in the previous inspection by ensuring that schemes of work are in place for all subjects and their implementation is monitored by subject co-ordinators.
26. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is good and fully covers the six areas of learning, taking account of nationally recommended stepping stones and leading to early learning goals. It provides a wide range of challenging and stimulating activities that are well matched to young children's needs. The good ratio of adults to children ensures that a good variety of activities is offered in each session, with appropriate support according to pupils' needs. Strong emphasis is placed on personal and social development that prepares children well for the next stage in their education.

27. Clear policies and good schemes of work are in place for all subjects of the curriculum (another issue in the previous report), although what is taught in design and technology does not yet consistently match the new scheme in aspects of evaluating products, so a few pupils do not fully develop their potential. The school has devised a good two-year rolling programme to accommodate mixed-age classes. This programme ensures that no pupils waste time in unnecessarily repeating work and careful planning identifies what pupils of different levels of attainment are to learn. An appropriate emphasis is placed on recognising links between different areas of the curriculum. An example is that pupils learn African dance in physical education at the same time as studying an African country in geography. Similarly, programs that are used to acquire skills in information and communication technology are introduced at times when they can also support work in other subjects.
28. The school provides personal, social and health education to a very high standard. The importance of healthy living including cleanliness, a good diet and physical exercise is emphasised across the curriculum. For example, during the inspection, pupils were actively encouraged to take part in *Walk to School Week*. Sex education and drugs awareness form an integral part of lessons and are supported by visits from the community nurse, local health visitor and community police officers. *Cops Club* aims to raise pupils' understanding of the positive role of the police in the community. In a discussion with inspectors, police officers stated that this provision has gone far beyond its original aim and has helped them in return to understand the implications of some of the social and emotional difficulties of pupils. They expressed the view that the club has made a difference to policing the community as a whole, building mutual respect and trust. Throughout the school, emphasis is placed on developing pupils' sense of self-worth and valuing their achievements. Experience of the processes of democracy is available from the School Council.
29. Arrangements to ensure equality of access and opportunity are excellent, so all pupils benefit from what is provided. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English at early stages of development are very well integrated and supported, as are pupils with challenging social or emotional circumstances. All pupils are valued regardless of race, background or level of attainment and they learn to appreciate what it means to be a member of a diverse, multicultural society. The school works hard to ensure that the needs of higher attaining and talented pupils are met through careful planning of activities and learning experiences. During the inspection, a group was practising a version of *Cats* led by a girl in Year 6 who is a talented dancer. The other pupils including boys and girls accepted her direction with good grace. The school succeeds in providing excellent provision for social and academic inclusion, principally because the staff are united in embracing the school's extremely challenging policies. Setting pupils by prior attainment in mathematics and the many English support groups are examples of arrangements to support a wide range of different needs. Pupils with English as an additional language receive high quality support from a specialist teacher and from other pupils. The school also welcomes pupils who have been excluded from other schools and those with quite severe medical needs and parents speak positively of this provision.
30. A significant minority of parents, in responses to questionnaires, indicated the view that the school does not provide sufficient activities outside lessons. However, inspection evidence found that the provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Activities include a good range of sports clubs, musical groups, including a choir and a band, French, art and science. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school also contribute strongly to what is taught. However, other than guitar lessons, which a parent provides, no instrumental music lessons are available. An annual residential journey takes place for pupils in Year 6. The school grounds have been well developed to include an environmental area and a *Peace Garden*. A herb garden has been developed outside the reception classes. In Year 6, *Succeeders Club* is currently engaged on further improvements to the school grounds. Links with the wider community are very good and are used well to enrich the curriculum. For example, sports activities are supported by Cambridge United Football Club, the British Hockey Association and Elysium Sports. The Parish Church of St Philip's, with which the school is linked, runs a Christian Club for local children of school age and school services are regularly held in the church. Strong links have been established with Homerton College and the Cambridge University Institute of Education. These links have a positive impact on teaching and learning in the school. Pupils put on performances for local playgroups and a mother and toddler club is held on the premises with support from teachers in the school. A tutor from the local college offers English language classes for parents from time to time. Liaison with local schools is also very good. Pupils have opportunities to visit the secondary school and experience lessons in French and in the science

laboratory. Previous pupils have written guides for new pupils on entering the secondary school and opportunities arise for the school to support its pupils after transfer. Romsey Mill, the church-based youth organisation, works closely with the school to support pupils with difficult social and emotional backgrounds.

31. The school's provision for pupils' overall personal development is very good and includes elements that are excellent. It has improved from an already strong position, since the last inspection. For example, arrangements for pupils' moral and social development are now excellent.
32. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Class and whole-school assemblies of good quality make a positive contribution to pupils' beliefs of their own worth and the worth of humanity. Themes for assemblies seek to explore the values and beliefs of others and give pupils opportunities for reflection on those values and their own. In *Happy Sad Club*, pupils are encouraged to share feelings and to predict how others might respond to them and why. This club is an example of outstanding provision and no subject is seen as either taboo or too difficult to tackle. In the recent past, for example, pupils have spoken about personal bereavement and their feelings of loss and sorrow. Others have tried to offer support, understanding and comfort. It is very popular with pupils and, during the inspection, a well-attended session took place. Times are also set aside when pupils sit in a circle with their class and share their values, beliefs, and ideas for the future. The programme for religious education, which is the responsibility of the governors, also contributes strongly, promoting opportunities to explore spiritual aspects of Christian belief and other world religions. Many other planned opportunities arise to promote pupils' spiritual development in art, music, English and science, and in personal, social and emotional development in the nursery and reception classes.
33. Provision for moral development is excellent. The school promotes the principle that pupils should be valued and that they should value other people as the underpinning for decisions about understanding of right and wrong. The whole staff provide very good role models and consistently reinforce such ideas. Pupils know what is expected of them. For example, they are involved in drawing up classroom rules, which helps them understand why they are needed. Teachers apply rules and principles with sensitivity and fairness, producing a climate of respect and courtesy from which pupils learn to reciprocate. Opportunities for pupils to contribute to the upkeep of the premises promote respect for property and the environment. Pupils choose and raise money for charitable organizations and are taught to accept responsibility for those less fortunate than themselves. In their pre-inspection meeting, parents commented on the school's strong Christian influence, and its effects on creating a climate of moral values such as honesty and truth. Parents were also clear that this teaching had a strong effect on their children's general behaviour. Inspectors agree fully with these important comments.
34. Provision for social development is excellent. The school promotes a sense of community in which everyone has responsibility for looking after each other. Planned opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively occur in all subjects and were a feature of nearly all lessons that were observed. A school council provides opportunities for pupils to raise matters that affect them all and gives them an effective voice in the management of the school. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibilities in lessons, undertaking a range of duties as classroom monitors. These responsibilities increase as they move through the school. Pupils in Year 6, for example, help supervise younger pupils in the playground and assist in the school office at lunchtimes. Field trips, educational visits, team games and a residential school journey in Year 6 are further examples of specifically planned social activity. The quality and impact of what is provided are thought out carefully, so helping pupils to become more reliable, mature and independent people. Along with the school's moral teaching, it contributes strongly to good behaviour in lessons, and thereby helps pupils to learn more effectively.
35. Provision for cultural development is very good and is successful in broadening pupils' positive views of customs and ideas that are different from their own. In English, for example, they have studied African poetry and opportunities to explore music from other countries are planned. Similarly, in art, the work of famous artists is emphasized. Study of the world's major religions is included in the scheme for religious education and celebrations of festivals and dance are included in what is taught. A wide range of visitors, including poets, artists and storytellers has been invited to the school, introducing information about Ghana, Ireland, India and Bangladesh. During their teaching, teachers use displays, choices of books and stories, and artefacts that help pupils to appreciate the richness

of modern Britain's multi-cultural society. Visits to galleries, museums and theatres are also planned and organised.

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

36. Procedures for child protection are very firmly based on local guidelines. As the designated officer, the headteacher has received recent training and attends case conferences as appropriate. However, her knowledge of families and children on roll is exceptional. Arrangements have also been established to ensure that other staff fully understand the implications and procedures. St Philip's is a remarkably caring school where pupils can learn and develop academically and emotionally. Pupils are provided with strong educational and personal support and its positive impact on their learning is recorded and monitored effectively. Very good, thorough procedures exist for monitoring and promoting attendance, although these are not always successful. Careful monitoring indicates correctly that this is largely because of extended holidays, often when families visit relatives in their countries of origin. Excellent procedures to promote pupils' behaviour are, however, very successful and arrangements to support pupils with statements are excellent.
37. Those pupils who were asked indicated confidence in their teachers, and were clear that they would seek help from them if problems about either their schoolwork or personal lives were to arise. The school provides a remarkable level of support for vulnerable pupils. *Succeeders Club* is one example of enhanced provision where pupils' academic and personal development are promoted and monitored.
38. The school is committed to providing a safe working environment for staff and pupils. The health and safety policy meets statutory requirements. The headteacher is responsible for the application of this policy on a day-to-day basis. Risk assessments are undertaken on a regular basis and first-aid arrangements are in place.
39. The headteacher checks all class registers on a weekly basis, looking out for patterns of absence, reasons for absence and analysing the records of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. Parents of pupils who have poor attendance records are always contacted on the first day of any absence when no reason has previously been given. The headteacher has a fortnightly meeting with an education welfare officer (EWO) to discuss and agree action to be taken in relation to pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. However, a significant number of pupils take holidays in school time; a few of these holidays are of an extended nature and have a detrimental impact on the school's attendance figures. The school actively seeks to inform parents of the negative impact of absence on children's learning. A system of rewards to recognise both good and improved attendance has been introduced.
40. Systems of assessment are very thorough. Considerable amounts of informal information are recorded and exemplified with samples and are collected into subject portfolios. This information is used to show that challenge and difficulty of tasks increase as pupils move through the school. It also provides a good record of what has been studied. More formal information about test results, including National Curriculum tests, and teachers' assessments is used well. Results are analysed to track pupils' progress and to discover whether individuals are achieving as they should. Overall and individual targets for pupils are also set. However, some of the latter lack precision, which lessens their usefulness, although they are shared with pupils. Targets for pupils with special educational needs are often much better. These pupils' progress is also carefully monitored and used to keep their individual education plans up to date. The information is passed on to class teachers and teaching assistants, so provision is constantly checked and adapted very well to meet requirements. What is outlined in statements of special need is provided with great care. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are accurately assessed on their arrival. The specialist teacher closely monitors their progress through a series of targets. While pupils' English remains at an early stage, they receive specialist support from this teacher or from a bi-lingual assistant. Once they are sufficiently fluent in English, specialist support reduces and class teachers assume the role. The school monitors the achievement of different ethnic groups carefully and, again, discussion and decisions about whether action is needed follow.

41. The school has especially thorough systems for the monitoring and promoting of good behaviour. A well established behaviour policy provides a system of rewards and sanctions. The merit system is popular with pupils, who also accept the principle of sanctions in response to poor behaviour, because time is always taken to explain. Class teachers record all incidents of unacceptable or anti-social behaviour and provide a copy of these records to the headteacher on a weekly basis. The headteacher discusses such incidents with other senior managers and parents are informed if it is considered that their children's behaviour is a cause of concern. Similarly effective measures are in place to deal with bullying, racial incidents, or oppressive behaviour of any kind.

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

42. Discussion at the pre-inspection meeting and responses to questionnaires about the school were overwhelmingly positive. Parents' views of the school are very good. Parents are pleased with the progress that their children make, the quality of teaching and the expectation that their children will work hard. Parents at the meeting were emphatic that their children enjoy coming to school and this response was reflected in the large proportion that agreed with the relevant statement in the questionnaire. Parents also indicated that the school is helping their children to become more mature and responsible. In the meeting, they expressed their awareness that many pupils who attend the school contend with social or emotional difficulties or have special needs. However, they were confident that behaviour is good and the school is well led and managed. Evidence from the inspection supports these positive views of the school. A few parents expressed concerns about the amount of homework provided, although parents were divided about whether it was too much or too little. In questionnaires, a more significant proportion expressed the view that the range of extra-curricular activities is limited. Inspectors do not agree with these views. They consider that homework is usually provided satisfactorily and draw parents' attention to the school's policy about how to deal with stresses caused by homework. The provision of extra-curricular activities is similar in range to that provided in most other schools, except that it includes other activities that are very relevant to its pupils' needs, such as *Happy Sad Club* and *Succeeders*.
43. Good open relationships are sought and established with parents, which begin when their children first enter the school. Before entering nursery and reception classes, for example, home visits are made and parents are given information about what will be expected. Parents at the meeting were impressed with the school's "...open door policy". They felt actively encouraged to discuss any concerns that might arise about their children's progress. A significant number of parents help with workshops around the premises, in classrooms and on school trips. The school provides basic training and information about such activities. Curriculum evenings are also held and have included information about numeracy, drugs and reading. Parents with particular skills are also invited to help with teaching. They include a scientist, a paramedic and a guitarist. An active Parent and Teacher Association organises fundraising and social events. It has provided valuable learning resources that have had a positive impact on provision. The school nurse attends a weekly "drop-in" session, offering advice and guidance. Overall, parents' involvement in the life of the school has a positive impact on their children's education.
44. The school provides good quality information about the school and its activities through the prospectus and the governors' annual report, although the latest examples of these documents did not include necessary statutory information in the way that it is required. Newsletters and other letters regarding specific events ensure parents are aware of current school issues, including the topic and themes that their children are studying in lessons.
45. Parents with English as an additional language are kept fully informed of their children's progress. As far as possible they are involved in learning. Some documents are translated into Bengali and the extension of this service into other relevant languages is currently under consideration. Information is often swapped with the help of the bi-lingual support assistant. Parents with only a little English are particularly encouraged to attend English classes. Occasional use is made of translation services, but financial cost is an issue. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly informed of their children's progress and achievements and their statutory right to be invited to all review meetings that affect provision is met fully. Pupils' annual reports are of good quality and written clearly. They provide details of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do to improve.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. At the time of the last inspection, leadership and management were described as very good. The headteacher gave a firm lead and excellent direction and received good support from the Chair of Governors. All of these strong features have been maintained and, in some respects, improved upon. The headteacher's vision of how the school should accept all children living in the area, whatever their social class, religious belief, attitudes to school, emotional or behavioural state, levels of prior attainment, ethnicity or special need, is inspirational. It is followed through with provision such as counselling, activities to meet specific needs and a staff that shares the school's aims and mission wholeheartedly, so pupils with a wide range of requirements make good progress both academically and personally. Two assistant headteachers support the headteacher very strongly, taking responsibility for pastoral care, assessment and similar aspects that are delegated to them. All teachers who have specific responsibilities to manage aspects of what the school provides or to co-ordinate subjects carry them out effectively. Issues that were raised in the last inspection report have generally been addressed successfully, although standards of attainment and attendance remain issues. The management of provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. Accurate and detailed records are kept of initial standards and pupils' progress. The special needs co-ordinator also contributes strongly to effective management. The headteacher maintains a very supportive environment for her staff and pupils, who in turn feel secure and valued, and repay her caring approach with commitment and strong support. Their work reflects the school's aims closely and includes a strong emphasis on personal as well as academic development.
47. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well and makes an important contribution to overall leadership, sharing the headteacher's vision and communicating it well to parents. Several individual governors visit the school frequently, maintaining good relationships with members of staff and gathering information. This information is used to good effect in monitoring what the school provides and ensuring that issues and important priorities are identified and addressed successfully. Link governors and chairs of committees are influential, show much commitment and are willing to use their personal areas of expertise to support the school. In discussions with inspectors, governors, including the chair and chair of finance, displayed a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They acknowledged the openness of the school's staff and the quality of reports that are provided by senior managers as contributory reasons for their knowledge. The chair of governors is clear about pupils' standards of work and the reasons for them. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs has been particularly effective in her links with both parents and the special needs co-ordinator.
48. The headteacher and assistant headteachers with the support of key co-ordinators and the local authority have set up very good systems for keeping a direct check on the quality of teaching and what is taught. The co-ordinator for special educational needs joins them in this important activity. Given the school's high proportion of pupils with special needs, this arrangement represents good practice, enabling her to contribute her expertise at this strategic level of management. This process is related to formal arrangements for performance management, which are very good. The co-ordinators of literacy and numeracy also maintain a clear focus on the development of what occurs in literacy and numeracy hours. Plans have been made to extend these systems to other co-ordinators, releasing them periodically from their own teaching responsibility to observe lessons in their subjects. The overall approach has been successful in improving teaching since the last inspection. Progress in meeting the priorities of the school's action and development plans is regularly checked and reported to governors. This process has led to the clear identification of further priorities and how each agreed aim is to be realised, monitored and by whom. Morale amongst all staff and support for aims and identified priorities are very high and the commitment and capacity to work hard and succeed are very strong. The school has excellent arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers, teachers new to the school, and all other staff. Staff development is built into the school's development plan and performance management procedures are robust. The school has received a *Quality Mark* for its work in this area. All identified priorities are costed effectively, with sources of finance clearly identified. The headteacher, with the support of governors, uses contingency funding very well, ensuring that emergencies or unexpected needs are funded quickly. An example occurred in the nursery during the inspection and the outcome was very successful. The effects of such spending are also checked carefully to ensure that a good return is achieved.

49. The headteacher and governors keep a regular check on income and spending, with good support from the governors' chair of finance. In accepting pupils with a wide range of needs, the school attracts specific funding to support them. This funding has an impact in increased levels of staffing and expertise. Forward planning is a good feature. For example, a large carry forward sum was accrued to the 2001-2 financial year to cover expected increased expenditure in 2002-3. Plans for capital expenditure are submitted to comparative estimates to ensure that good value is achieved and expert advice is sought. New technology is used well to support administrative systems and teachers often use computers to generate timetables, planning and to seek supporting information for use in lessons. Several also reported that they use e-mail extensively to pass information between them after they have gone home. Good and proper uses are made of funds that are given to the school for specific purposes. Administrative staff manage accounts effectively on a daily basis.
50. Staffing is very good. Training and careful appointments ensure a particularly good match of available expertise to meet the needs of pupils. As a result, personal development and behaviour are strengths of the school. The school's nursery nurses make excellent contributions to teaching, including the use of particular skills in music and dance. Teaching assistants are well trained and informed, enabling them to offer very good support to the pupils with whom they work, often establishing useful links with parents. Accommodation is generally adequate to teach the National Curriculum. However, playground space is limited. Nevertheless, the school's site has many small nooks and spaces that have been adapted well, such as an environmental area and the *Peace Garden*. Inside and out, accommodation is generally maintained very well under the leadership of the caretaker, who strongly supports the school's aims and mission statement. Furthermore, he is popular with pupils and presents them with a good role model. Learning resources and artefacts are also adequate, although the school's mats for physical education are in fact on loan. Kits, equipment and general resources in nursery and reception classes are of good quality and serve the age group well.

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

51. Since the last inspection, teachers, including the headteacher and senior staff, have worked hard to bring about improvements. Furthermore, they are aware of many of the following features that have been identified in this inspection and have included them in their developmental planning.
52. To improve the school further, its governors, headteacher and staff should:
- i. raise standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in design and technology at the end of Year 6, by:
    - placing a stronger emphasis on standard forms of spoken and written English, both in literacy hours and across the curriculum;  
*(Paragraphs 5, 20, 73, 76 and 78)*
    - placing a stronger emphasis on the enrichment of pupils' general vocabulary;  
*(Paragraphs 5, 6, 19, 25, 73 and 76)*
    - ensuring that pupils join their handwriting at all appropriate times;  
*(Paragraph 75)*
    - broadening the range of reading for pupils who keep it narrow;  
*(Paragraphs 77 and 80)*
    - using subjects such as geography and history to extend opportunities for pupils to write factually, expressively and descriptively;  
*(Paragraphs 111, 114 and 118)*

- in numeracy hours, improving pupils' use of English, so they understand how to apply their knowledge of number to solve problems that are set in words;  
*(Paragraphs 6, 88 and 89)*
  - in science, improving pupils' uses of writing down results of scientific enquiry;  
*(Paragraphs 94, 97 and 98)*
  - improving expectations of pupils' work in scientific enquiry; and  
*(Paragraph 98)*
  - in design and technology, increasing the time that is spent on written evaluations of products and the quality of finish.  
*(Paragraphs 9, 27 and 106)*
- ii. raise attendance closer to the national average for primary schools, by:
- bringing to parents' notice that authorised absences for holidays, even for ten days, are entirely at the school's discretion, not the parents'; and  
*(Paragraphs 10 and 39)*
  - reviewing whether pupils who are taken overseas for extended periods of time should be taken off roll and, if so, ensuring that parents are aware that they will need to reapply for a place.  
*(Paragraph 10)*

### **Other features that governors might wish to include in an action plan**

- iii. Ensure that those statutory requirements that were not fully met now are met.  
*(Paragraph 44)*
- iv. Review the allocation of time to subjects to see whether it is possible to increase the amounts available to subjects other than English, mathematics and science, without affecting the quality of what is provided in these three.  
*(Paragraphs 19 and 25)*
- v. Ensure that marking follows the school's policy consistently.  
*(Paragraphs 22 and 80)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	52
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	0	17	29	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	33	56	12	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	307
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	109

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	121

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	44

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.2

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	31	15	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	24	28
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	38	36	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (72)	78 (65)	89 (72)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	28	29
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	37	41	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (67)	89 (70)	91 (79)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	21	14	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	16
	Girls	7	5	10
	Total	17	17	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	49 (53)	49 (43)	74 (83)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	11
	Girls	5	5	6
	Total	15	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	43 (33)	49 (37)	49 (55)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

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

<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
226	0	0
0	0	0
15	0	0
13	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
12	0	0
8	0	0
1	0	0
12	0	0
0	0	0
10	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
4	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.9
Average class size	27.9

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

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	732

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	54
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.6

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	784,368
Total expenditure	804,392
Expenditure per pupil	2,690
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,042
Balance carried forward to next year	21,017

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	347
Number of questionnaires returned	175

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	31	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	40	5	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	50	3	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	42	11	5	1
The teaching is good.	63	33	0	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	39	5	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	22	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	48	42	7	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	64	29	4	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	37	2	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	43	18	7	7

## **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**

53. The nursery has 52 part-time places for three to four-year-olds, who usually attend either for a morning or an afternoon session. Currently 40 are on roll. Children are admitted in the term after their third birthday. The school makes careful plans to welcome each new intake of children. Parents' visits to the nursery with their children and home visits are part of the process. They are frequently followed up with another visit when children move into the reception classes. As a result, children and their parents have nearly always met their class teacher or nursery nurse and know some of the routines that are required before they come to school. A mother and toddler group also meets regularly in the school and a parent-governor, together with the special needs co-ordinator, helps to run it. These good practices help to ensure a smooth start. Entry to one of two reception classes takes place in September, following a child's fourth birthday. All classes are well staffed with qualified teachers and nursery nurses and, depending on numbers with special educational or other needs, a teaching assistant. At the time of inspection, an unusually high proportion of children in the reception class were young for their year, as they had a birthday in the summer term.
54. Overall, children's attainment on entry to the nursery is particularly low in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. It is also often low in mathematical development. Although teaching is good, sometimes very good, children do not have sufficient time to advance to what is usually found by the time they transfer to the reception classes. As a result, their overall attainment remains low at this age also. Evidence is available to suggest that this situation was even more apparent in the past. A few children, from homes where English is not the mother tongue, speak little or even no English when they first start school. A sensitive approach to these children helps them to settle quickly and they soon acquire enough spoken English to make themselves understood. Other children, from homes where English is their mother tongue, nevertheless use few adjectives and frequently lack standard forms of spoken English. Their attainment is also low with respect to what is usually found. Another group of children is identified with special educational needs. Early identification, coupled with good advice from the co-ordinator, results in effective modifications of what is taught, so progress begins quickly. Recently, owing to the school's good reputation for caring about all types and groups of pupils, more children of above average attainment are entering the nursery and joining the main school, which is the most important reason that overall attainment on entry has risen in the last year or so.
55. Teaching and learning are good in the nursery and reception classes and include a significant proportion that is very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Planning is thorough and provides an imaginative range of activities with clear intentions of what is to be learnt. In all classes, expectations of work and behaviour are strong and tasks match well to children's levels of understanding and skill. Teachers show good knowledge of how young children learn and adopt a stimulating approach. A good emphasis on encouraging speech is evident, meeting the main weakness of many of the children. For example, the provision of interesting home-corners, role-play and dressing-up offer opportunities for children to acquire new vocabulary and to talk to each other imaginatively. Teachers skilfully manage children with praise and encouragement. Parents are encouraged both to help at home and to support groups of children in their classes.

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

56. Children make good progress in this area of development. Adults are particularly sensitive to the needs of children from homes where circumstances are challenging, providing good emotional support. Teaching in this area of learning is often very good. In the nursery, for example, very good teaching in an opening session encouraged pupils to settle into groups quickly. They took responsibility for their name cards, sticking them to a felt board to indicate their presence. Parents were welcome in the room and children joined a table almost seamlessly. This good organisation set a strong example of kindness and helpfulness, so children felt both happy and secure. Children learn to share and take turns. They are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can

achieve in a variety of situations, as varied as sharing refreshments daily and handling books. Nevertheless, it is clear that many children are very dependent on the praise and recognition of adults for their self-esteem. In an afternoon session, even though teaching was satisfactory, many children found it hard to co-operate and became noisy when not directly in the company of an adult. They were easily distracted from their activities. Owing to sound strategies, adults re-directed children's interest successfully, so learning was maintained at a sound rate, but it was clear that children needed an adult in order to work collaboratively.

57. Skills that are acquired in the nursery are developed further in the reception class. Children of all different backgrounds are encouraged to work and play harmoniously. Their confidence in trying new activities is developed well and children with more advanced skills are given opportunities to take a lead. A good example occurred when one child led a group in independent imaginative play. They mixed a "blue potion" that was intended "...only for bad people". This child was very clear that bad people were not found in school and the others in her group happily helped her to stir the brew. Children are effectively taught differences between right and wrong and are offered strong guidance about what it means to behave sensibly. The staff act as good role models, showing teamwork and helping children to form good relationships with others. This very good provision ensures that children's concentration grows and that they are ready to learn. As a result, children from the school's range of ethnic backgrounds and different attainments enjoy sharing their work with all available adults. By the end of the reception year, many children are matching the attainment that is nationally described for their age and a few exceed it. However, a significant minority still finds it hard to settle and work collaboratively, so overall attainment is a little below what is usually found.

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

58. A high proportion of children start at an early stage in language development, with a limited vocabulary. Only a few children extend sentences or use adjectives and adverbs. Many children typically answer questions with only one word or a very simple sentence. As others do not speak English as their mother tongue, only a small minority are likely to reach early learning goals (nationally produced descriptions of what children are normally expected to know at the end of the reception year). For example, although all children listen attentively to stories, even in the nursery, only a few have sufficient language and confidence to explain favourite parts of the story in any detail.
59. Good teaching in the nursery develops children's speaking and listening skills. Instructions for activities are very practical. Good methods such as demonstrations and uses of visual information enable all children, including those with only a little English or with special needs, to understand what they should do. Adults develop children's communication well, providing good role models in the way that they speak to each other. They question children in small groups and individually, and listen carefully to what they have to say. As a result, children grow in confidence, talking to each other or adults as they work. Further good strategies, such as the use of stories to increase children's vocabulary, are apparent. For example, *The Little Red Hen* effectively supported activities in this way, as children used vocabulary related to farms and baking. Samples of children's work suggest that with writing, as would usually be expected at this age, most are still at early stages of making marks and patterns on paper.
60. Good teaching and effective support for speaking and listening continue in the reception classes. Teachers plan well to develop children's talk and extend their vocabulary. Planning shows that appropriate opportunities exist for children to listen and respond to stories, songs and rhymes. Teachers develop children's knowledge of letters and related sounds. Samples of children's work demonstrated that good teaching encourages them to form letters correctly and that a reasonable proportion of children are beginning to develop emergent writing skills. Some children demonstrate the skill to produce strings of letters that form recognisable words. The few higher attaining children form simple sentences independently, using their knowledge of initial letter sounds well. Those children with special educational needs are supported well, as are those with English as an additional language. Adults give them time and care, ensuring that good progress occurs.

### **Mathematical development**

61. Based on good teaching, nearly all children make good progress from an overall low starting point on entry. While several are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they reach the end of their reception year, a sizeable proportion is not expected to do so. Overall attainment when pupils begin the National Curriculum at the start of Year 1 is therefore below average.
62. In the nursery, good teaching and opportunities are provided for children to match, sort and count using everyday objects. They recite number rhymes and sing counting songs to help them learn numbers. They use and match shapes and a few are adept at joining simple wooden puzzles quickly. Children gain simple ideas of capacity and weight from practical experiences with sand and water. During the inspection, they cut play-dough and weighed it, pretending that it was dough for bread.
63. Teaching is consistently good in the reception classes. Very good use is made of a range of resources, including wooden puzzles, jigsaw shapes, number games and interesting homemade items. These artefacts support children's counting and learning about shapes. However, many of them start from a low base. Nevertheless, they learn to make simple comparisons and develop mathematical ideas such as "bigger than", "smaller than", "heavier", "lighter" and "middle-sized". Children also used a computer program to learn more comparatives in other contexts. It is clear that a few higher attaining children count well for their age. In a good lesson, after singing *A Centipede has Lots of Legs*, children counted objects in tens. Although a few were simply saying numbers, rather than actually counting, others understood the idea and related each ten to a row of ten pegs, which is above what is usually found at this age. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are identified and supported well with resources and extra time with adults. As a result, they make good progress in relation to their individual needs. In the outside area, another group used naturally occurring objects, such as twigs, stones and leaves, and put them into tens.

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

64. The quality of teaching in this area is good throughout nursery and reception classes. Themes that last a fortnight are planned well and teachers make use of various resources that offer many experiences, supporting knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, teachers introduce many different materials, such as paper, card and textiles to develop early ideas of building and technology. Parents often help in the classrooms to support groups. Displays around the rooms contain many items from which learning can take place, as well as children's work. Teachers also plan the use of several good quality commercial construction kits. However, a significantly high proportion of children enter the nursery and reception classes with little general knowledge compared with what is often found at these ages. This feature, despite the good teaching, results in lower attainment by the time children begin the National Curriculum in Year 1.
65. In the nursery, in a very good session, the home corner, which was set up as a bakery, was used by a small group. An adult questioned the children well, encouraging them to develop and use vocabulary associated with buying and selling bread, keeping the shop clean and repairing the counter. Good links with mathematics were established when a child who had acted as the carpenter was "...paid by a cheque".
66. The skills that children learn in the nursery are built on well in the reception classes. Much of what children do in this area takes place in the afternoon, when the connecting doors between the two reception classes are opened and children have access to activities in both rooms and outside. Again, resources are well used. For example, children used a construction kit to make vehicles including a car and a boat. Good leadership by adults encouraged the use of vocabulary associated with transport and, in the case of the boat, ideas of floatation emerged. Another group of children noticed an unexpected smell as they passed a small herb garden just outside the door. A noteworthy moment of reflection occurred as one child in particular tried to establish which plant was producing the fragrance.
67. A good number of children in nursery and reception classes demonstrated the development of computer skills typically expected for their age. They showed increasing control in the use of a mouse, moving items and cursors to correct positions and then clicking.

## Physical development

68. Children are on course to meet national aims in this area. Children in the nursery have continual access to an area outside. This area is safely fenced and contains suitable large toys. This equipment is used well to promote children's climbing, balancing, running and other physical development, although in an afternoon session, children's weak social skills resulted in a lack of sharing. Conversely, children in the morning group played well together. Reception children also have access to an outside area and they have a regularly timetabled session in the school hall. In a good lesson, children used a range of small games equipment, such as a hockey slalom, sponge balls, hoops, bean bags and skipping ropes. The quality of teaching was good, so they developed skills effectively. Plenty of praise and encouragement was apparent.
69. In all classes, in nursery and reception, children receive good opportunities to develop hand and eye co-ordination, when they use pencils, brushes, small cutting tools such as scissors, and similar items. Overall, children are making good progress in this area of learning.

## Creative development

70. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants provide good opportunities for creativity. In the nursery, children draw, paint and make collages. Work on display and in a sample demonstrates that children are developing skills well. This progress continues in the reception classes and most children are likely to meet national aims by the end of their reception year. They experiment with paint and use their observations and imagination to create pleasing results. They work with a good range of materials. Adults in the nursery and reception classes often use nursery rhymes and clapping games to attract attention and to help children to enjoy themselves creatively.
71. Planning shows that nursery nurses with specialist skills in musical activity and dance share their knowledge well. As a result, children are working and learning actively and, compared with their starting points, their achievements are often good in this area.

## ENGLISH

72. Standards in Year 2 are in line with national averages, while standards in Year 6 are well below them. These judgements are similar to the school's National Curriculum test scores for last year. Pupils who remain at the school for all their schooling achieve satisfactorily and many achieve well. In Years 1 and 2, nearly all are now achieving well. Good improvement has occurred since the last inspection. Standards in Year 2, for example, have improved steadily over the last three years, partly because teaching and learning have improved and partly because standards at the end of the reception year are beginning to rise. However, overall standards in Year 6 have apparently not improved since the last inspection. This apparent lack of change is mainly due to high numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school in this year group. For example, of those 39 who took National Curriculum tests at St Philip's when they were in Year 2, only 22 remained in Year 6 and had been joined by 13 arrivals. However, all the pupils who were present for both tests made the nationally expected progress, except for those with severe special educational needs, and several exceeded this rate of progress. The statistics therefore hide the fact that overall achievement is satisfactory and often good. However, the school did not meet last year's target because of similar reasons. Targets for this year are also unlikely to be met, as they are unrealistically high.
73. In Year 2, standards are slightly higher in reading than in either writing or speaking and listening, but overall are broadly average. Many pupils have made good progress from relatively low starting points. Pupils show confidence when they speak and generally listen attentively, especially when the topic interests them. Most speak clearly. However, only a few pupils offer extended sentences or uses of examples to meet listeners' needs and to clarify meaning, preferring short sentences or even one-word replies to questions. A contributory reason is that general vocabulary is often limited. Nevertheless, a number of higher attaining pupils are evident in these younger age groups. These pupils are more aware of how to vary their speech patterns to meet formal situations and they use standard forms of English more successfully.

74. Standards in reading are broadly average. Most pupils name and locate the title, author and illustrator of their book and several more able pupils know particular authors and say why they like them. They read with reasonable flow but not everyone fully understands the meaning of all the words. Nearly all pupils receive support from home, and read regularly to an adult in school. Higher attaining pupils read more accurately and with good understanding of more complex vocabulary and story lines.
75. Pupils' writing shows a generally sound understanding of how to construct stories with a clear beginning and end. Several higher attaining pupils use this structure well but others sometimes run out of time to complete work. The learning of spelling is inconsistent amongst middle and lower attainers. Again, many pupils find it hard to recall regular patterns in words. In handwriting most use a consistent style but, nevertheless, a relatively high proportion of lower attaining pupils find it difficult to control the size and form of their letters, despite good teaching and encouragement, and do not join their handwriting, even when they can.
76. The school recognises that boys in its present Year 6 did less well than girls when they were in Year 2. Reflecting strengths in dealing with matters of equal opportunity and inclusivity, extensive procedures were put into place as they moved through the school. For example, extra classes were arranged to improve matters. These have been reasonably effective. However, overall, speaking and listening are weak. Many pupils have not developed standard forms of English and a wide enough vocabulary to match different types of speech to different formal and informal occasions. When questioned in small groups they speak clearly but frequently revert to colloquial vocabulary and grammar to convey their thoughts and ideas. That said, a significant minority of higher attaining pupils organise their thoughts into sequences and then provide cogent arguments for their viewpoints.
77. Standards in reading are below average. Nevertheless, records show that many pupils have improved their reading skills considerably and select their own books with confidence. A few pupils, however, restrict their choices rather narrowly, which limits their exposure to new vocabulary. Most pupils discuss their favourite authors well and quote specific books that they like or dislike. However, several pupils in this year group report that their parents do not read regularly with them at home. Nevertheless, they all have a basic idea of how to use a dictionary or an index to locate information. Higher attaining pupils have read widely and cope easily with complex vocabulary and plot lines, while lower attaining pupils, of whom there are many, struggle with text at the expected level for their age.
78. In writing, standards are well below average. Nevertheless, higher attaining pupils write very well, showing good imagination and structure. They produced, for instance, a lengthy drama script, which included stage directions and clear instructions. However, many other pupils do not write this well, even though they try hard and show enthusiasm. The main reason is that weaknesses in vocabulary and grammar, which are apparent in their speaking, are frequently reflected in what they write. Their often good creative ideas are inhibited when they try to write them down on paper.
79. It is evident from assessments that pupils who remain at the school from Years 3 to 6 make good progress. They are well taught by committed teachers, whose teaching is enriched by visits from storytellers and visits to the theatre. Different types of writing are developed well in literacy hours, although less frequently in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils' confidence in their own ability is supported and fostered. Learning support assistants work very well with pupils with special educational needs, because they frequently encourage independent thinking, rather than giving pupils the answer straightaway. Additional programmes for weaker pupils, such as *Additional Literacy Strategy* or *Reading Recovery*, are well taught and very effective in supporting these pupils and helping them to make progress.
80. Teaching and learning are good overall, with very good teaching in Years 2 and 6. In lessons, teachers manage pupils very well, often by making lessons interesting and setting tasks appropriate to pupils' ability and needs. A very good example of this was the Jamaican poetry lesson, which captured the pupils' imagination. Support staff are fully involved in lesson planning and know exactly what is required, and how to support, as in a Year 5 lesson on persuasive argument, when the support assistant helped pupils to paste their answers together. Homework was used well to support learning in the class. Teachers' marking praises quality work or ideas and generally gives pointers for improvement. However, it is occasionally inconsistent and, at times, does not follow up to ensure that

pupils finished their work. What separates otherwise satisfactory teaching from good teaching is an occasional lack of pace in the teacher's questioning or instruction, causing pupils to become restless. In a letter writing lesson in Year 3, a completed letter would have helped pupils to understand what the teacher was after more quickly, and would have saved time. Not all teachers check frequently on the titles of books that their pupils are reading. As a result, several pupils choose the same author or type of book constantly and miss out on opportunities to broaden their vocabulary across a range of authors and subjects.

81. Nearly all teachers are confident users of information and communication technology, so pupils learn to use CD-ROM and the Internet to read information successfully. Skills in word processing support writing successfully through the school, at relevant levels of difficulty for the different age groups.
82. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils co-operate well in small groups, sharing their knowledge. Older pupils occasionally read with younger ones. They are awakened to the major authors of British literature, such as Shakespeare, and also read works from other cultures, including *Handa's Surprise* and the poetry of Benjamin Zephaniah. Pupils enjoyed hugely the story told in Bengali by a parent, a visit to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the school's own book week.
83. The *National Literacy Strategy* has been introduced effectively since the last inspection. Teachers understand how to develop phonic skills well, which has underpinned much of the improvement in standards in the early years, including Years 1 and 2. Pupils are also shown how to choose books that are hard enough, but not too hard, so they can practise their reading with enjoyment and a fair degree of independence.
84. The management of the subject is good overall. The co-ordinator has been active in its monitoring and evaluation. Close links are maintained with a very well informed link governor, who has made a large number of visits to the school and thus knows the subject's provision well. Assessment procedures are thorough and used well to evaluate the programme and teaching. The co-ordinator's action plan is suitably focused on raising standards, although some of the success criteria are neither succinctly written nor sharp enough. Action to emphasise speaking and listening in all lessons has not yet influenced standards, partly because it has not been monitored closely enough. Work on language in other subjects, such as descriptive or factual writing in history and geography, is restricted by shortages of time.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. The standard of attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 is in line with expectations nationally. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is below national expectations. A number of factors contribute to the lower standards attained by the end of Year 6. These factors include the generally low starting points of these pupils when they first enter the school, the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs (including those with individual educational plans for emotional reasons), and the high proportion of pupils who arrive in school part-way through the school year. An example of this last feature occurred during the week of inspection, when a new arrival from Brazil joined Year 6. All pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching and the very good support provided by learning support assistants and senior managers. Pupils work to individually agreed targets and evaluate their achievement on a daily basis. Analysis of data indicates that pupils who remained at the school throughout their education are currently making good progress.
86. Significant improvements have been made since the last inspection. The school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy well, which forms the basis of planning. As a result, many pupils work out simple sums in their heads quickly and competently. In Years 4 to 6, classes are reorganised for mathematics, so they are taught in different classes that are based on their prior attainment in the subject. These groupings are referred to as "sets" and because work is planned carefully to meet the needs of pupils in each set, this arrangement is beginning to have a positive impact on achievement. On the evidence of what is in their books, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 attaining expected levels is considerably higher than in the 2002 test results. Appropriate resources have been provided and the quality of teaching is much better than that at the time of the last inspection. Special groups for pupils who need a little extra help to reach expected levels for their age have also been introduced.

These groups are known as *Springboard* and *Zoomers*. Optional national tests are taken in Years 3, 4 and 5. The results are analysed and used to set targets for each pupil and to establish any areas of mathematics that pupils do not understand well enough. This information is then used to adapt teaching. Pupils' progress is then tracked systematically to ensure that teaching is having the desired effect on the quality of learning.

87. Pupils have a very positive attitude to their work, which is directly related to good teaching and to the caring, family climate for learning that is created with such provision as *Happy Sad Club* and *Succeeders*. Nearly always in lessons, pupils take pride in success and work productively throughout.
88. At the end of Year 2, pupils understand place value up to 100 and order numbers correctly. They add and subtract two digit numbers, using the method known as "partitioning", particularly well. Higher attaining pupils are good at using mathematical vocabulary in their work. Nearly all pupils estimate and measure accurately in length, weight, time and capacity. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson, when they estimated how many small containers could be filled from a litre of water. They measured 500 millilitres accurately and explained that it is half a litre, fully recognising that a measured litre of water in a broad container does not change its capacity as a result of its appearance when it is poured into a narrower one. Pupils' familiarity with two- and three-dimensional shapes enables them to recognise common regular and irregular polygons, noting the number of edges, corners and faces. In presenting data, they make a survey of favourite crisp flavours and record the information as a bar chart. They are beginning to perform simple problem- solving exercises in shopping simulations, often using a computer program. However, they experience difficulty in determining strategies for solving more complex problems. The main reason is that a significant number do not understand problems when they are set with words, partly owing to weaknesses in their general vocabulary, and partly because a few less able pupils remain unsure of the basic methods of computation.
89. In Year 6, most pupils understand place value into the hundreds and perform doubling and halving of two-digit numbers mentally. They order numbers up to three places of decimals and convert simple fractions to decimals and percentages. In a lesson in Year 5, pupils showed enthusiasm for calculating percentage parts of money, decimal notation and work with the numerators and denominators of fractions. They used new technology when they checked accuracy using the calculator on an interactive whiteboard. Simple methods of data presentation are used to show hours of sunshine and statistical terms such as mode, mean and average are appropriately used. A significant proportion of pupils used negative numbers on temperature graphs from different parts of the world, which was also a useful link with geography. In a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, pupils confidently located lines of symmetry on a variety of polygons and completed symmetrical shapes by reflecting them. They extended their learning through homework, completing the other half of selected famous paintings. The relevance of what is taught to the everyday lives of pupils was emphasised when they calculated the perimeter and surface areas of places known to them. They know the main characteristics of two- and three-dimensional shapes, and measure angles accurately. A weakness, standing in the way of raising attainment further for many pupils, including even a few with very good understanding of purely mathematical ideas, is the continued difficulty that they experience in relating their knowledge to the solution of problems in words.
90. Numeracy is frequently used in subjects across the curriculum. Opportunities are planned in history, for example, using time-lines to calculate passages of time or the age of artefacts. In geography, pupils in Years 5 and 6 co-operated on a traffic survey in the roads in the immediate vicinity of the school. They demonstrated effective uses of tally charts and presented their findings on bar graphs and pie-charts. They also used their graphs to draw conclusions for a display. In science lessons, pupils make accurate measurements and present data mathematically. The use of computers to improve mathematical skills and for data handling is developing well.
91. The quality of teaching and learning is good and includes examples of very good teaching. Pupils' work is thoroughly planned, following the pattern of the National Numeracy Strategy. The pace of lessons, with brisk mental mathematics, maintains pupils' interest and enables them to consolidate previous learning and develop new skills of calculation. Pupils show good attitudes to this aspect of their work and rise to the challenge of mental mathematics. Teachers' good questioning frequently helps pupils to think quickly and respond logically. Work is adapted well to match the level of ability

of different groups in the class, including those with special educational needs, who are also well supported by knowledgeable teaching assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language are also known to assistants, who check that they understand what is taught. The school's excellent practices to ensure that all pupils can be included fully in lessons contribute strongly to the range of management strategies at teachers' disposal that ensure very good behaviour. As a result, pupils' effort and productivity are also strong. Ongoing assessment is used effectively to check the level of understanding before proceeding to the next stage of learning. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and use it effectively to guide pupils' thinking. The quality of marking is consistently good and pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve their work. Homework, which is set regularly, has a positive effect on standards.

92. The management and co-ordination of mathematics are good. The present co-ordinator assumed responsibility only recently but is well supported by his predecessor, who is a leading mathematics teacher. The level of resources is good and has been improved since the last inspection. Information and communication technology is being used effectively to promote standards, both in classrooms and in the computer suite.

## SCIENCE

93. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and well below average by the end of Year 6. Improvement since the previous inspection is, however, very good. In terms of Teachers' Assessments and National Curriculum tests, results in Year 2 and Year 6 respectively are considerably higher than they were. Standards of work seen in Year 6, relating to the knowledge and understanding of forces and of investigative procedures, are similar to those described in the previous inspection report. However, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good through the school. Teachers have higher expectations of pupils and use assessment information well to guide their planning. Information and communication technology is now appropriately used to collect and present data and other information. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use text and graphics programs to present their learning about the lifecycle of a plant.
94. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a sound understanding of the lifecycle of plants and know that plants need light, water, air and warmth to grow well. They know that the sun is a star and understand that the earth and other planets orbit it and that the moon orbits the earth. They carry out tests and investigations, changing one factor and keeping others the same to control a test. They understand the importance of repeating tests to gain accurate results. Pupils record collected data in tables and charts and transfer data to appropriate graphs. For example, they drew line graphs to show times of sunrise in September. They wrote simple statements of what they did. However, only a few put their descriptions into the style of written scientific enquiry that they had previously been taught. Nevertheless, higher attaining pupils, especially, are able to draw implications from their findings. For example, when investigating how well magnets attract a paperclip through pages of a book they concluded that the thicker the book, the stronger the magnet needs to be. Work in books demonstrated a sensible balance between individual recording and the use of worksheets to support their learning, although the amount and depth of work recorded vary across classes.
95. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 identify the different types of food that make up a healthy diet. They showed a solid understanding of the importance of the skeleton for movement, support and protection. They carried out successful investigations, measuring in Newtons, the strength of the force that is required to drag different objects across a surface. They concluded that the size, mass and texture of an object affects the amount of friction between the object and the surface. However, their understanding of air resistance and of upthrust in water was sketchy. They understand the importance of scientific predictions, record their results in tables and state what they find out. They are able to identify factors that they keep the same in fair tests.
96. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of the investigative process. With good support from teachers and, in a lesson that was observed, a learning assistant, they investigated different factors that affected how far a toy car travelled from the end of a ramp. They made verbal predictions, carried out a fair test with help, measured the distance travelled in metres and centimetres and recorded their findings in a table. In their books, drawings of electrical circuits show

a good understanding of the connections needed to make a bulb light. They know that they need a healthy diet and plenty of sleep to stay healthy.

97. Although teaching is generally good in Years 3 to 6, insufficient opportunities are planned to develop a range of strategies for writing scientifically. For example, although experiments are written up, they tend to follow a similar, given form. As a result, pupils do not fully understand that reports, explanations and presentation of information with sub-headings, bullet-points and captions for pictures or diagrams have particular purposes. Nevertheless, appropriate links with numeracy are established. Pupils in Year 2 are encouraged to measure accurately as part of fair testing procedures; pupils in Years 5 and 6 used a stopwatch to measure time in seconds and hundredths of a second and, throughout the school, pupils present and read data in charts, tables and simple graphs.
98. In most lessons, teaching and learning were good. In a few lessons, very good or satisfactory teaching and learning were observed. Schemes of work cover a two-year cycle because of the mixed-age classes, which prevents unnecessary repetition of work, but still allows revision at an older age. Furthermore, activities are carefully planned to match pupils' different levels of prior attainment, so they progress from their own level of understanding and knowledge. Teachers produce good quality worksheets to support pupils in recording their work. Marking nearly always indicates where pupils have achieved well and, often, how they can improve their work, although this latter feature is more frequently apparent in some classes than others. Teachers' clear explanations and good use of questioning are effective in developing pupils' understanding of scientific ideas. Good support from teachers and classroom assistants enables pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language to make good progress. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of the knowledge and understanding that pupils will acquire. However, what separated the satisfactory teaching from that of higher quality was an insufficient expectation of pupils' skills in scientific enquiry. As a result, although lessons were well planned to provide opportunities for investigation and experiments, the required skills to carry out the investigations were not systematically taught. Consequently, pupils do not always make progress in the skills of planning investigations, and considering and evaluating the evidence they collect, as quickly as they might.
99. The co-ordinator for science has recently taken on the role and has not yet had opportunities to monitor teaching and learning of the subject. Nevertheless, she has taken good initial action, drawing up a clear action plan and introducing an appropriate system of assessment, to track pupils' progress as they move from class to class. The analysis of existing information has identified the need to develop the teaching and learning of skills in scientific enquiry and to monitor the effect of any action taken on standards of attainment. Adequate resources support teaching adequately, including an appropriate range of information and communication technology software. The environmental area and wildlife pond in the school grounds provide good opportunities for the study of environments and habitats.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

100. Standards in Year 6 have slipped back a little since the last inspection and are now broadly average. The main reason is likely to be shortage of time, as art and design is amongst the subjects that receive the least amount in the school's timetables. Nevertheless, improvements have been made to the school's scheme of work and policy.
101. In Year 2, pupils have worked creatively with textiles and ink to make striking patterns on fabric. They explore different styles of portrait including montages. Their work matches national expectations. In Year 6, pupils successfully develop their skills with watercolours. For example, their landscapes with a building demonstrated good links with science, when many of them painted an accurate reflection of the building in a lake. They had previously used sketchbooks well to experiment with wash effects and different uses of brushwork, as well as to compose their original picture. Pupils also develop skills satisfactorily in three-dimensional collage, moving on from what they have done at a younger age.
102. Pupils join Year 1 with sound skills and much enthusiasm for the subject, having experienced a rich programme in nursery and reception classes, and they make steady progress through the school to Year 6. A good range of media, such as fabrics, different papers and cards, and malleable materials

is used, so pupils develop skills successfully. Opportunities to work with tie-dye and to shape objects in plasticine and clay are made available. In drawing and painting, pupils develop increasing accuracy and learn to use shading and hatching techniques to produce depth and perspective. Good examples of this type of work were apparent, for example, in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that those pupils who find artistic skills difficult are strongly encouraged to take part and express themselves, without undue pressure that might result in self-consciousness. This is often achieved by allowing these pupils to work with someone else. Other pupils are very tolerant of such arrangements, and teachers and even other pupils demonstrate and encourage them to "have a go". Pupils in difficult emotional or social circumstances, who find concentration difficult, are encouraged to settle well within this less personally demanding situation. These features all reflect the school's outstanding efforts to ensure equality of opportunity and inclusive practices. Some teachers play gentle music to accompany such lessons, having identified that it helps not only pupils with identified behavioural difficulties, but their whole class to focus attention on artwork.

103. Owing to the school's timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe lessons directly. However, other evidence suggests that the overall quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory. Display and photographs of recent work indicate that teachers are knowledgeable and confident within a good range of media, including clay. As a result, pupils learn at a sound rate and develop skills and enjoyment of the subject. In conversations with inspectors, pupils pointed out their appreciation of what they have done and especially enjoyed the contribution of visiting artists. Teachers also plan for a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. For example, well-known artists such as Jackson Pollock and Mondrian have been studied recently and computers are sometimes used to generate particular effects. Cross-cultural links are also planned, so when pupils worked on African studies, they explored patterns and made African masks.
104. The management of the subject is sound, with several good features. For example, the co-ordinator shares her expertise with colleagues well and has organised a clear two-year rolling programme of work that focuses the development of skills. This aspect was missing at the last inspection. She arranges for visiting artists to contribute to and broaden the programme. The school's art event effectively promoted the subject and pupils enjoyed the range of activities and techniques they learned like wool winding, tile painting and creating clay fish. Photographic records of displays are kept to guide staff and a recent promotion of the use of pupils' sketchbooks has had a positive impact in Years 5 and 6, which is another indication of improvement since the last inspection. Nevertheless, the co-ordinator is aware that further work is required to develop strategies for assessment. A co-ordinator's portfolio of pupils' work is being gathered, but it has not yet been related to the expected levels of attainment in the National Curriculum. An art club makes a very positive contribution to overall standards as it further developments the skills and learning of those who attend regularly. Displays in several classes and around the school are a strong feature. However, as at the last inspection, the opportunity to use labels that explain techniques, thereby helping other pupils to understand how the work was achieved, is often missed.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. Standards are in line with nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2, as they were at the time of the last inspection, and pupils have achieved well. They are below expectations at the end of Year 6, which is a decline from the sound standards in 1997. The small amount of time allocated to the subject is a factor that hinders higher attainment. However, several pupils in the older age groups have joined the school from overseas, where they have not experienced the subject previously. Bearing this factor in mind, pupils achieve satisfactorily after Year 2.
106. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 explored cam and follower mechanisms in lessons during the inspection. They showed sound understanding of how the turning mechanism of the cam could be used to produce an "up and down" movement and produced mechanisms in card to demonstrate this effect. Pupils in Year 6 designed a moving toy in a box, incorporating the mechanism. However, a weaker element was that most pupils' designs focused on the generalities of the toy, rather than on how the mechanism was to be utilised in practice. The simple nature of the tools and materials, including corrugated card, thin card, ordinary scissors and masking tape inhibited the production of

mechanisms that worked smoothly. Many pupils demonstrated weak cutting and joining skills for their age and did not take sufficient care in the finish and quality of the outcome. Work in books includes the design of an outside shelter for parents. A few of these designs are of good quality, identifying materials to be used and construction techniques. Many of these were from pupils who had been in the school for a number of years, while others consisted of pictures with articles of labelled furniture. Photographs of finished articles show weaknesses in how to join and construct neatly, with too much dependency on tape, which reduced the finished appearance. However, in a project about bread, pupils identified the link between the different ingredients and the final loaf, developing skills of evaluation well, with the aid of a well-designed evaluation sheet. Many pupils identified strengths and weaknesses in their finished products and made constructive suggestions about how they could be improved. Photographic evidence of pop-up pictures and cards indicated average attainment in Years 3 and 4. However, weaknesses in the finish of products were evident in photographs of wheeled vehicles in the same age group.

107. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in the development of their understanding of the different processes involved in design and technology. In a project about soup, they evaluate manufactured soups and grade them by appearance, taste and packaging. They apply skills that they learn in numeracy hours well, collecting data, using a tally-count and presenting it in the form of a bar chart. Teachers' well-designed worksheets led pupils through the design process in which they identified ingredients and equipment to make their own soup and to design a label. Pupils successfully evaluated their finished product and higher attaining pupils wrote statements to say how they would improve their soup. In another project they designed and made a coat for Joseph, demonstrating appropriate skills in cutting fabrics. They used simple stitching to join their work and applied collage. The finished articles are of good quality. Standards are beginning to rise in these classes for younger pupils. In a very good lesson, pupils made rapid progress in their understanding of how to attach axles and wheels to a chassis to make a moving vehicle. They concentrated very well, shared resources and co-operated well, working carefully and solving problems with the support of their teacher and classroom assistant. The lesson was exciting and challenging and pupils showed excellent attitudes and behaviour.
108. The overall quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory. However, only two lessons were directly observed and in these it was good in Year 6 and very good in Year 2. In both lessons, teachers explained the task well and provided knowledgeable support to help pupils to complete the task. Teachers' planning, work in books and portfolios of work indicate that expectations of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are high. Challenging tasks are set to develop understanding of different techniques and materials and to acquire skills of designing, making and evaluating models and products. However, in Years 3 to 6, where mobility of pupils has been higher, the results of such teaching are not so apparent. As a result, evidence that pupils know, for example, how to produce several designs, evaluating them and then selecting the most useful, are very limited.
109. The co-ordinator has only just taken on the role but has a clear understanding of the way to develop the subject. There is an appropriate policy in place and sound schemes of work based on elements of a nationally recommended scheme and another developed by the local authority. Work is planned on a two-year programme of topics to take account of mixed-age classes. It is taught in alternate half-termly blocks, with art and design taught in the other half term. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to monitor the teaching and learning of design and technology across the school to ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding develop progressively. She has made a sound beginning in monitoring teachers' planning to ensure that all areas of the scheme of work are appropriately covered. Staff meetings have been arranged to monitor and evaluate standards of work across the school and to discuss ideas of assessment. Pupils' knowledge of the subject is enhanced by visits from the recycling bus and by staff from the Harambee Centre. The latter introduce initiatives, such as *Puppet Day*, which have strong multi-cultural links, helping pupils to develop interest, ideas and self-esteem.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. Standards of attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 are broadly in line with national expectations. Bearing in mind pupils' often low attainment on entry to the school, their achievements are nearly always good. A discussion with pupils indicates that they have built up a sound understanding of the subject, by the time they leave in Year 6. Since the last inspection, several improvements have been

made. A scheme of work based on national guidance has been introduced; resources have been increased, including the purchase of new atlases. Visits to places of geographical interest have been extended and more attention is given to the geographical aspects of other places visited. The Internet is beginning to be used to enhance teaching, as a result of the improved information and communication technology resources that are now available. Planning has improved and assessment procedures are being developed. The Gbanyamni School in Ghana adds to pupils' excitement as it provides a real link to a contrasting environment. Currently, geography is taught in alternation with history in a two-year rolling programme.

111. Pupils in Year 1 choose countries far away that interest them. A display in their classroom demonstrates that they have understood the nature of simple geographical facts. They learn about different environments when they visit the Wandlebury Nature Reserve and gather material for their nature corner. Their visit to Hunstanton provides the opportunity to learn about coastal features and the associated vocabulary, including cliffs, tourism, resort, coast, beach, waves and tides. Year 2 pupils learn the different countries from which products are imported and interesting facts about other localities. They know the importance of maps and make use of atlases and the globe to locate places. These early skills are developed through Years 3, 4 and 5. By the end of Year 6, in another discussion with an inspector, pupils demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the water cycle and explained why rainfall is higher on the west side of the Pennines and the Cambrian mountains than on the east side. They explained the significance of place name endings as clues to the natural features close to settlements. Examples were Dartford and Cambridge. Their appreciation of geography is enhanced through the residential journey to Scarborough. Pupils showed confidence in identifying physical and human features in landscapes and appreciated the reasons for differences in contrasting environments. However, a scrutiny of work in their books did not indicate the same detailed knowledge. The most likely reasons are constraints of time and weaknesses in pupils' general vocabulary and writing that inhibit the recording of work. However, a higher standard of recorded work was evident in a book that the school had indicated was the work of a pupil of higher ability.
112. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils made good progress when they designed a survey to assess the likely impact of proposed housing on Marshall's Airport. They showed their good geographical thinking, when they predicted that increases in the volume of traffic entering Cambridge would be one likely effect. In Year 4, pupils built progressively on the basics of mapwork. Good planning that takes place in earlier years helps to extend their ability to interpret information on maps.
113. The teaching and learning of geography are good overall. As a result, pupils show strong interest in the subject. An example occurred when they used large scale maps of their own locality. They were keen to locate their homes and other places of interest and to share information with others. Teachers encourage younger pupils to talk about places visited on holiday. They are keen to share such experiences, which helps them make a good effort. They are well behaved, responding well because teaching is well planned and interesting. In the lessons that were observed, teachers invariably had a good knowledge of the subject and extended pupils' learning and understanding of both physical and human geography. Teachers use good questioning skills, enabling pupils to think logically about cause and effect.
114. The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed to the subject. However, he has already built up a clear vision for its future development. Assessment records of pupils' progress have not yet been fully incorporated into the scheme of work, but plans are in place to do this. Resources are adequate and are used effectively. Another planned development entails using the subject to extend pupils' general language skills and vocabulary, by introducing a set of key words for each year group.

## **HISTORY**

115. History is taught alternating with geography in a two year rolling programme. During the inspection lessons were being taught in Years 1 to 4. Attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with nationally expected levels. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved as a result of teachers' increased subject knowledge and confidence, which is based on national guidelines that have been adopted since the last inspection and have contributed to improved planning. New resources have been added and greater use is made of artefacts that are

available on loan. The teaching of the subject has been enhanced by the contribution of visitors, especially for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Computers are more widely used in obtaining information to increase knowledge.

116. Pupils in Year 1 demonstrate a very clear understanding of past and present, when they compare articles from the past with items today. They develop a good awareness of chronology both with the use of artefacts and pictures of the past. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils developed this knowledge further when they sorted photographic scenes into categories of around 100 years ago, 50 years ago and the present day. They gained experience of historical techniques, when examining a collection of items from which they were taught to deduce information about the age, gender, and period in history of the probable user. Pupils also recall facts about the lives of famous historical characters, such as Samuel Pepys, Guy Fawkes and Alexander Graham Bell, whom they knew was the inventor of the telephone. In their study of the Great Fire of London they demonstrated clear understanding of reasons for differences in the quality of the fire services then, compared with today. They understood why the destruction was so quick and widespread, and why wood was replaced with bricks when the rebuilding began. Pupils' grandparents make a significant contribution to history in Year 2, visiting lessons and answering questions put by pupils. For example, they offer facts about seaside holidays both past and present, so pupils can make comparisons. Several higher attaining pupils, especially, have clearly learnt a lot from these opportunities.
117. In Years 3 to 6, pupils build on their learning in prior years to gain a more detailed understanding of major past events and historical eras. For example, nearly all of them know that the Romans invaded England and established themselves in Colchester, which contains artefacts found in the remains of Roman buildings. Higher attaining pupils understand some of the reasons why Boudicca of the Iceni tribe fought the Romans and that, later on, the Romans established a settlement in the London area, which they called Londinium. As they move through the school, pupils develop skills of comparison and deduction further and they acquire facts about, for example, Ancient Egypt. For example, they understand that Egyptian civilisation made valuable social contributions to the development of human society. Their interest in this period is reflected in displays of Egyptian myths and legends. By the end of Year 6, pupils have acquired a store of knowledge about Tudor as well as Victorian England. Their history experience is brought alive through visits to Kentwell Hall to sample life in Tudor times and the World War II Museum in Scarborough. Pupils who attended the school throughout their education had very good knowledge of the order of historical eras. Understandably, those pupils with special educational needs or who joined the school from abroad have less secure understanding.
118. The teaching and learning of history are good overall, which makes a strong contribution to learning and to pupils' general levels of interest. For example, the use of artefacts from World War II, in a Year 4 lesson, elicited a great deal of lively enthusiasm, making learning easier. This good learning was again supplemented by the visit of grandparents, who related their personal experiences of what life was like for children during the war. Teachers employ good methods, making good use of the Internet, for example, to obtain additional information and thus enhance learning further. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, using it to plan activities well and make good use of resources at their disposal. However, as in geography, pupils' knowledge and understanding are not always reflected in the quality of their recorded work, owing to shortages of time and weaknesses in uses of standard forms of written English.
119. Co-ordination is effective. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future of the subject. Monitoring is carried out by checking teachers' planning across year groups and looking at work and displays. However, opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching directly are limited, owing to the emphasis on literacy and numeracy over the past few years. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are under way, although they remain in the early stage of development and have yet to make an impact on planning. Resources are adequate and are supplemented with a good loan scheme at the local museum. These items include artefacts, photographs, posters, videos and teaching packs on particular topics. The subject makes an important contribution to the social, moral and cultural development of pupils in the school.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

120. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are in line with what is expected nationally in Years 2 and 6, as it was in the last inspection. However, expectations in this rapidly developing area are higher now, so overall attainment has improved. Bearing in mind that several pupils have no access to a computer at home and that starting points are often low, this attainment represents very good achievement in the subject. Further evidence of strong management is that the school has sought this information about access systematically. It has used it to make certain that parents and pupils are aware of a scheme at a local library that offers free use of computers to children. Little direct teaching occurred at the time of the last inspection and, although developments in the subject were linked to a good range of tasks of increasing complexity, a previously low base of confidence and knowledge was reported amongst teachers. Improvement since then is judged to be good, as these weaknesses have been rectified. Older BBC and Acorn computers that were still in use in 1997 have been replaced with more recent technology in a computer suite. Computers are also available in all classrooms. Very good management of the subject and training have resulted in increased confidence amongst staff. This confidence is evident in uses of new technology to support teachers' planning, timetabling and the use of programs to analyse information about pupils' progress.
121. Throughout the school, relevant programs are made available to support the work that is carried out in each specific year. In this way, good links with other subjects are established, so pupils acquire computing skills on programs directly related to their other work. In a good lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, the teacher's good knowledge resulted in clear explanations of how to use an adventure program. This game simulated a nature park. In order to complete it successfully, pupils needed to answer a series of challenges related to the recognition of animal species. They demonstrated sufficient skills to control the program adequately. Pupils in Year 2 moved cursors around the screen, following simulated footpaths and clicking the mouse in the places that they wanted. Higher attaining pupils carried out the task with confidence and accuracy. Pupils who found the task difficult were supported well by their teacher and other adults. As a result, all pupils made progress at a good rate. This good progress continues through the school. In Year 4, for example, good teaching showed pupils how to use a sequence of skills and commands to write relevant information into different fields. The teacher explained how this information, in a subsequent lesson, would be used to create a database. He introduced and explained technical vocabulary well. By Year 6, nearly all pupils, including several with special educational needs, demonstrated understanding of a *PowerPoint* program. They used skills in line with what is normally expected for their age to create presentations about their school. Good teaching ensured that they were clear about the audience for which this presentation was intended. Good links with literacy and art were established, as pupils needed different styles of writing and designed layouts for their pages, inserting photographs and images from *Clipart*.
122. Pupils' good attitudes contributed well to their learning. Pupils of all different groups throughout the school, whatever their background or ethnicity, demonstrated enjoyment of their tasks. As a result, they got on with their work well, making the most of opportunities. Good teaching, which ensures that all pupils understand what to do, coupled to strong support from teaching assistants, is the main reason that pupils work at this good pace. It was clear that whenever a difficulty arose in the lessons that were observed, an adult was quickly available to sort it out and explain what to do.
123. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. All observed lessons were of this quality. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is sufficient to ensure good planning that identifies pupils who might experience a problem. Furthermore, teachers' notes showed how, with support, such potential problems could be addressed. Management of pupils and organisation are particularly strong. Teachers, teaching assistants and other staff adapt instructions, questioning and explanations effectively, so pupils with a wide variety of needs understand how to make progress.
124. Co-ordination and management of the subject are very good. A good action plan has been put into effect and indicates how improvement can be maintained. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and communicates her enthusiasm well. She is sensitive to the requirements and developmental needs of all staff in the subject and is approachable and hard working. Thorough audits of equipment and checks of what suitable new programs might be available are made. A portfolio of pupils' work has been collected to help monitor standards. Furthermore, each pupil, from the Reception class on, has an individual computer file to which he or she can open and save work. These files also are used as a record that demonstrates good progress and achievement.

## MUSIC

125. Improvement since the last inspection has been sound and standards of attainment in Years 2 and 6 remain broadly in line with expected levels.
126. Currently, two part-time teachers co-ordinate the subject collaboratively. As a result, a source of good advice and expertise is available to other staff all the time. A nursery nurse with musical skills supports teaching well in younger age groups up to Year 2. Other teachers with instrumental skills support teaching in older classes. Improvement in the subject is sound and standards of attainment in Years 2 and 6 remain broadly in line with expected levels.
127. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. This quality was reflected in all class lessons that were observed and in a combined singing lesson for all pupils in older age groups. A band practice that was directed by one of the subject co-ordinators was also well taught. All these lessons were taken by members of staff with good subject knowledge, who were sufficiently confident to model performances to help pupils understand what was required. As a result, the quality of learning was also good and a good rate of progress was maintained. During a lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils demonstrated that they could make decisions of their own about compositions. They picked suitable instruments and employed rhythms and musical ideas confidently, matching levels that are expected for their age. Good musical vocabulary was also taught and pupils showed understanding of what "loud", "soft", "fast", "slow", "short" and "long" mean in a musical context. A good scheme of work, based on national guidelines, ensures that pupils' skills are built up effectively as they move through the school. In a discussion with an inspector, a group of pupils in Year 6 composed a simple tune for glockenspiels in just two minutes. They improved and practised it and then played it together accurately at the end of the session. They had a mature understanding of the need to practise. They also gave a good appraisal of Gustav Holst's *The Planets*, explaining its derivation, as well as recalling facts about some of its sections, including *Jupiter* and *Mars*. This discussion was typical of attainment in line with what is normally expected in the National Curriculum. However, recall of vocabulary such as "ostinato" and "rest" was insecure, as pupils needed to be reminded. Although evidence of the use of either standard or non-standard musical notation was limited, singing was often of good quality. For example, pupils performed songs such as *We Lift Your Name on High* accurately and with a good tone, and they sustained two parts in *I Really Wanna Praise Your Name*. Pupils in Year 6, who were seated at the back, sang particularly strongly during the latter performance, leading the school well.
128. Music has an important place in the daily life of the school and pupils value its contribution highly. For example, those asked spoke with pleasure of what they had performed at Christmas. A video of this production was supplied to inspectors and the performance was clearly of a high quality. In the pre-inspection meeting, parents were complimentary about this performance and were pleased that the school produces work of this calibre. However, a few were disappointed that instrumental teaching is restricted. They acknowledged the excellent contribution of guitar lessons, provided by an enthusiastic parent, but they would like a greater range of provision. In fact, the subject co-ordinators and headteacher have already begun to respond to this request. They have approached the local authority to see what is available and have written to parents to establish the level of support. Good co-ordination also ensures that music contributes strongly to pupils' personal development. Regular opportunities are planned for pupils to reflect and respond to music by listening and dancing. Music from a range of cultures is both taught and played. For example, African drumming, Caribbean steel pans and examples of Asian music have all been used, as well as music from West End shows such as *Cats*. Pupils of all different groups and cultural backgrounds have equal access to what is provided and share their ideas. The co-ordinators identify those with particular talents and seek ways of using them to promote standards in the subject. For example, pupils accompany singing in assemblies and those who demonstrated particular talents with percussion instruments were used to set the standard as the nucleus of the band.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment broadly matches what is expected nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. Teachers' records of

swimming indicate that pupils make very good progress in the limited time available for swimming lessons in Years 3 and 4. Over half of pupils are unable to swim at the start of Year 3 and many others have only limited swimming skills. At the end of Year 4, almost all pupils swim at least five metres and over a quarter attain or exceed 25 metres, the standard recommended in the National Curriculum for pupils aged 11.

130. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Although standards are broadly similar to those reported in the previous inspection, teaching has improved and is now good throughout the school, with some very good teaching in Years 4 and 6.
131. In lessons seen, pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress in their understanding and execution of African-style dance. They showed a good understanding of the style of the dance but had difficulty performing in time to the music. Nevertheless, by the end of the lesson, pupils improvised short sequences of movement in pairs, copying and reflecting each other's movements. They evaluated each other's work well, identifying strong features and making constructive suggestions for improvement, meeting the expected level for their age. In games lessons in Years 4 and 5, pupils made good progress in developing skills with balls. Pupils in Year 5, for example, developed basketball skills, bouncing the ball while moving about. They showed good awareness of space, moving in and out and dodging defenders. Again, this work met the expected level in the National Curriculum. Pupils in Year 4 improved their striking and fielding skills in cricket and showed a good understanding of the basic structure of the game.
132. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good progress in bowling and striking a ball. By the end of Year 2, they demonstrated awareness of their own and other's safety, when they bowl with reasonable accuracy and control. When striking a ball with a racquet, they showed good co-ordination of hand and eye, beginning to aim their strikes. They have a sound understanding of the importance of exercise and understand which parts of the body are affected by different stretching exercises.
133. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Lessons are planned well, following the local authority's scheme of work, which relates to the National Curriculum. Teachers plan well, allowing time for a warm-up and a few minutes at the end to evaluate the learning that has taken place and for cool down and relaxation exercises. Their clear, and often very good, explanations and demonstrations ensure that all pupils understand well what they are trying to achieve. As a result, pupils are well focused, concentrate well and try very hard to improve their skills. Good support from classroom assistants enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress and ensures the full involvement of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
134. The co-ordinator for physical education has only taken on the role this year but has made a good beginning in monitoring teaching and learning by observing lessons, teaching different classes and monitoring teachers' planning. An appropriate action plan has been drawn up to develop provision in the subject further. The school holds an annual physical education day, as an alternative to sports day, in some years and the co-ordinator plans more inter-school competitions in the future. The subject contributes well to pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle. During the inspection they were encouraged to take part in *Walk to School Week* and a group of pupils in Year 6 were observed independently rehearsing their own dance to music from *Cats*.
135. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided including hockey, football, gymnastics, dance and athletics. A local sports association, Cambridge United football club and the British Hockey Association provide support for these activities and make available some high quality resources. Together with the school's own equipment, overall resourcing is good. Appropriate playground markings allow the space to be used to develop skills in small games and some use is made of the local recreation ground. However, the school has no large grassed areas of its own and has access to the local swimming pool for only one lesson a week. This time is used appropriately for pupils in Years 3 and 4, each class attending lessons for one term each year. However, this arrangement does not permit sufficient time to develop all pupils' swimming from their low starting points, to the government's recommended distance for minimum safety in the water. This factor is particularly unfortunate as the river flows close to the locality.

