

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Neots

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110848

Headteacher: Mary Barnard

Reporting inspector: David Marshall
27681

Dates of inspection: 11th – 14th November 2002

Inspection number: 247064

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Wintringham Road
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Cambridgeshire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: John Knight

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

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Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
27681	David Marshall	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Foundation Stage	How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13485	Paul Widdowson	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' personal development and attendance
1234	Christopher Bolton	Team inspector	English Geography History Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils?
14976	Peter Dexter	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's School is a church aided school with links to the parish church of St Neots. The area is one of high social deprivation with a large proportion of one-parent families. The children mainly come from the local area, a large housing estate; very few come to the school for its Christian Foundation. There are 197 pupils on roll: 103 boys and 94 girls. Ten pupils (five per cent) are from ethnic minority groups, and this is below the national average. There are three children with English as an additional language – one at an early stage of language acquisition. Pupil turnover is approximately 10 per cent. There are nine pupils currently supported through Travellers funding. There are 48 pupils with special educational needs, around 24 per cent of the school roll and above the national average. Four pupils have statements of educational need – also above the national average. Forty-nine children are eligible for free school meals. This is 25 per cent of the pupils and above the national average. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is generally well below that expected for their age. After a devastating fire the school was rebuilt and reopened in November 1995. Although it is now seven years old it still has the feeling of a brand new school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Mary's is a good school that provides well for all its pupils. There is a very positive climate for learning, and both the staff and pupils work hard. Pupils are achieving well in literacy and numeracy and achieve sound standards by the time they leave school, despite a low start. The quality of teaching is good; pupils are challenged and make good progress. The school has a wide-ranging curriculum and also provides the pupils with very good opportunities for their personal development. The school is very well led by the headteacher and senior staff, with very good support from all staff and the governing body. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The quality of provision in the nursery and reception classes is very good and so children make a good start to their education.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities, including the extra-curricular activities, are good. The policy of including every child regardless of their needs is very effective.
- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff are very good. The governing body is well involved and contributes well to the effectiveness of the school.
- The provision for the spiritual, social and moral development of the pupils is very good. Pupils' behaviour and personal development are very good. They are polite and courteous, very enthusiastic and co-operate very well.
- The school's relationships with parents and the local community are good.
- The support staff, caretaker and administrative staff make important contributions to the effectiveness of the school.

What could be improved

- The presentation of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' level of achievement in the non-core subjects of art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music.
- The consistent application of the school's marking policy.
- Levels of attendance are poor. The school needs to review its arrangements for tracking and promoting better attendance and punctuality.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's progress since the inspection in November 1997 has been good. The requirements to raise the standards pupils achieve in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 have been completed well. Curriculum planning in all subjects has been completely reorganised and is now good. Pupils of all abilities are being appropriately challenged in all English, mathematics and science lessons and the more able are now making good progress. Assessment is now used well in the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics

and science. As a result, pupils have been enabled to make good progress in these core subjects. The headteacher and governors now share a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. Planning for school improvement, and for how it is checked, is better organised, which gives greater direction and purpose to the work of all staff. The need to ensure pupils make better progress in design and technology, geography, history and music in both key stages has only been partially successful. This is mainly due to the inconsistent use of assessment. The school has been successful in maintaining the good pupil attitudes and ethos of the school that made such a positive impact on the quality of education provided at the time of the last inspection.

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	C	C
Mathematics	E	E	C	C
Science	E	D	B	A

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

In the most recent national tests and assessments for pupils' aged seven, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average when compared nationally. When compared with results from similar schools, reading, writing and mathematics were also well below average. Pupils aged eleven achieved standards that were in line with the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science in these national tests in 2002. Compared to those in similar schools, these standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were also average in English and mathematics, but well above average in science. The trend over the last three years has been one of continued progress, and above the national trend of improvement. In the last two years, pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have reached their challenging targets in National Curriculum tests. The targets set for the 2003 are for more improvement and the school is on course to achieve them. This continued progress is due to the teachers' careful use of assessment, the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the good variety of learning opportunities provided. As a result, pupils of all abilities achieve well, including those with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language. Children in the Foundation Stage learn well and make a good start to their education. However, they still go into Year 1 with standards below those expected for their age due to their starting point that is often well below the expected level for their age.

Standards observed during the inspection in English and mathematics for seven and eleven year olds were generally average, but improving for older pupils as they make good progress as they go through the school. In science, pupils achieve well and are reaching standards that are above average for their age. This is also true of pupils' standards in physical education at the end of both key stages. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 but above average by the time the pupils leave school. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in all other subjects of the National Curriculum. Pupils' learning in design and technology, music, history and geography varies from year to year due to the inconsistent use of day-to-day assessment by teachers.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are also consistently very good. They respond enthusiastically to stimulating and well-planned lessons. They learn to concentrate well and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. There is good behaviour both in class and around the school. There is no incidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour. The pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes is particularly impressive.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils enjoy working co-operatively in the friendly atmosphere the school presents. They form very good relationships between themselves and teachers and learn to show consideration for the feelings and well-being of others.
Attendance	Poor. Attendance is well below the national average. Despite the sound efforts made by the school, pupils' attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Pupils enjoy school. Their relationships with each other and with adults are very good throughout the school. They consistently work well together. Pupils' personal development is a strength of the school and makes a considerable impact on the quality of their learning and the progress they make.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very 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 is never less than good throughout the school. This is an improvement over the inspection in 1997. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is very good. Teachers in the Foundation Stage are able to catch and keep children's attention very well, thanks to their very careful planning based on very good assessment and their very good use of resources. The cheerful and supportive atmosphere they create enables the children to settle down well and immediately begin to learn. The good quality of teaching throughout the school enables pupils to make good progress in both key stages. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum are good. The teaching of English and mathematics is particularly good because teachers have adopted the national strategies well and provide tasks within their lessons that are challenging. This means they teach the essential basic skills of literacy and numeracy effectively to all pupils, who learn well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, which result in the overall good behaviour and good learning. A wide variety of teaching methods is employed to make lessons interesting, and pupils enjoy their learning. In all lessons, class discussions are lively and challenging and lessons move along at a good pace. Questions are carefully thought out and bring all pupils into the discussions. Pupils learn to listen carefully and concentrate for longer periods of time as they get older. This care enables traveller pupils new to the school to settle well and make good progress. Although teachers know the individual needs of pupils well, they do not always use this to mark their books carefully and so provide guidance on what they need to do next. Teachers relate very well to their pupils and they manage classes well. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well, and their needs are planned for in other lessons through good individual language plans, and their learning is good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teaching and non-teaching staff and they also make good progress. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are now being taught effectively across the curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad curriculum. The good provision includes very good extra-curricular activities. Curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are supported well in lessons and when withdrawn into small groups. Individual education plans are of a very high quality, with relevant and achievable targets that are regularly reviewed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Provision and support in this area are good when required. Pupils make good progress and achieve appropriately high standards.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. Spiritual, social and moral education provision is very good and contributes greatly to pupils' personal development. The school recognises that, although cultural provision is satisfactory, there is room for improvement.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The monitoring and promotion of attendance are satisfactory, but need to improve to ensure better attendance from some families. Teachers make good assessments of academic work in the core subjects of English and mathematics. Procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' attainment and progress in other subjects are used inconsistently.

Parents' views of the school overall are generally positive. They are pleased with the school and the progress their children are making. Information provided for parents is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides a very clear direction for the school. The deputy head offers very good support in all areas and other key staff are extremely hard working and effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors take their responsibilities very seriously and play an effective role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Specific success criteria are included in the school improvement plan so that regular evaluation of its progress ensures that the school's targets are met.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All resources are used effectively. The school has good procedures to ensure that it gets best value for its money when purchases are made.

The school has a sufficient match of teachers and support staff to teach the curriculum in full. The support assistants make a very effective contribution to pupils' progress. The school has very good policies for the induction of newly qualified teachers, and staff new to the school. The accommodation is good. Resources for learning are good in most curriculum areas.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The happy atmosphere of the school.• The way that the headteacher and all staff are always available and nothing is ever too much trouble.• The behaviour of the children and the progress they make.• The great encouragement given to all pupils.• The help children with special needs are given.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount and type of homework.• The information they receive about their children's progress.

The evidence from the inspection confirms the parents' positive views. The evidence does not support the concerns of a few parents about the homework their children are given, or the information they receive about their children's progress. Homework is linked with the work being covered in lessons; parents are well informed about this and their children's progress and so they can help. Pupils' learning is enhanced as a result.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children are first admitted to the school, initial assessments show that their attainment is well below that expected for their age. Children in the reception classes make good progress in their learning as a result of very effective teaching. Despite this, by the time they leave the reception class most children will not have achieved the planned Early Learning Goals¹ and are not ready to move on to the National Curriculum. The reception class teachers and support assistants work closely together in planning and assessing children's achievements. This helps to promote the good progress the children make.
2. In the 2002 national statutory tests for reading and writing for pupils aged seven, the proportion attaining the levels expected for their age was well below the national average. When compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds the results were also well below average. Pupils aged eleven attained standards in the English tests that were average when compared with the results attained by pupils nationally, and in similar schools. Over the past four years, pupils' attainment in English has improved at a rate higher than the national trend of improvement.
3. The 2002 national assessments in mathematics for seven year olds showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected attainment level for their age was well below the national average. Comparisons with schools in similar social circumstances indicate that these results were also well below average for seven year olds. In the 2002 tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of eleven year olds achieving the expected levels for their age was in line with the national average. The number achieving the higher levels was also average. Comparisons with schools in similar social circumstances indicate that these results were again average for eleven year olds. Results in mathematics over the four-year period to 2001 also show that the school is raising levels of attainment above the national trend of improvement.
4. In 2002 the results of teacher assessments in science for Year 2 pupils showed that standards were below the national average, and also below average when compared with those in similar schools. There was little difference between the results of boys and girls, and the school is raising levels of attainment in line with the national trend of improvement. At Key Stage 2 the results last year were above the national average but well above average when compared with similar schools. There was little difference between the results of boys and girls, and the school is raising levels of attainment in line with the national trend of improvement.
5. Thanks to the good teaching and planning, the school's results at the end of both key stages have reached or exceeded the targets set in conjunction with the local authority.
6. Speaking skills show good progression as pupils mature, as shown in Year 6 lessons. Standards of reading are satisfactory by the end of Year 2. By this stage, above average and average attaining pupils are acquiring a growing range of vocabulary, and sound levels of word recognition. Appropriate measures are taken to identify pupils with reading difficulties and to provide them with extra help and support. By the time they are eleven many pupils achieve above average standards in reading, and become independent readers with their own preferences for authors and for different types of literature. Pupils in both key stages have a

¹ Planning in the Foundation Stage is geared towards pupils achieving standards known as the Early Learning Goals in six areas of development – personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

good range of opportunities for writing for different purposes; their response to these is good and they make sound progress. Pupils up to the age of seven have a secure understanding of simple sentence structure and by the time they are seven, average and above average attaining pupils can write paragraphs and begin stories well. As they mature, most pupils can choose an appropriate style of writing to suit a particular purpose and record their learning suitably. The handwriting skills of all pupils improve and many are writing in joined script by the time they reach Years 5 and 6. Spelling improves consistently throughout Key Stage 2 and pupils achieve good standards as a result. This good level of presentation does not transfer well to other subjects.

7. Pupils are making good progress in mathematics throughout the school and achieve sound standards by the time they leave. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of numbers up to 100. Higher attaining pupils apply their knowledge effectively and use efficient strategies for solving word problems. They clearly explain how they solved the problem. In mental mathematics, teachers encourage pupils to explain their methods of calculation. Pupils' achievement in data handling is satisfactory. The emphasis on the development of pupils' mathematical understanding and reasoning skills is beginning to have an impact and pupils interpret the information presented to answer questions and solve problems well. Most pupils in Year 6 use standard written methods to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Higher attaining pupils confidently and accurately multiply pairs of numbers and solve division problems by using multiples of the divisors. Work in ICT and science supports older pupils' handling of data. They enter data onto a spreadsheet, and represent the results in a variety of ways.
8. In science, by the end of Year 2, pupils achieve levels above those expected for their age. They understand that materials have different properties, some of which can be recognised through use of the senses of touch and smell, and they can sort materials into magnetic and non-magnetic, firstly on the basis of prediction, and then by testing with magnets. This practical approach to learning builds pupils' confidence. They become eager to ask as well as answer questions, providing the teacher with a good insight into how their learning is progressing. During Years 3 to 6, pupils build on their skills and knowledge through a range of practical investigations, and achieve levels above expectations for their age by the time they leave school. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding overall of how to carry out a scientific investigation. Pupils are alert to health and safety issues relating to the different tests, for example when investigating the effects of burning materials as part of their study of reversible and irreversible change. Year 6 pupils make sensible predictions, and clearly describe their findings using the correct scientific terminology. They are becoming more secure in their ability to draw conclusions, which relate to the intentions of the investigation. Years 5 and 6 pupils make good use of ICT for recording their work. They use different formats to record the results of investigations, including tables and graphs. This and the taking of measurements, such as temperature, link well to the use and development of their numeracy skills.
9. Levels of attainment in ICT are now average by the time pupils are seven, but above levels expected for their age by the time they leave the school. At Key Stage 1, pupils can use a computer mouse competently to load a program and to draw, using a number of functions from different art programs. They are also able to use different word-processing packages. These skills are at a sound level and the opportunities they have are now good, and better than at the time of the last inspection. There are now well-taken opportunities for modelling and database work. In Key Stage 2, pupils build on their previous knowledge very effectively. They can store data in word-processing programs and databases. Their progress in these aspects is now consistently good. The range of opportunities to use the Internet to retrieve information to support learning in other subjects, such as science, art and music, is good.
10. Standards and progress in art and design are above average for pupils at the age of seven, but only average by the time they reach eleven. In design and technology, music, history and geography, pupils achieve levels in line with those expected for their age by the time they are

eleven. Standards in physical education are above those expected at the ages of seven and eleven, with particular strengths in dance, gymnastics and swimming.

11. All pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities and their individual education plans. They achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and against the targets set for them in their individual education programmes. Work for all pupils on the register of special educational needs matches targets set in individual education plans, and their progress is reviewed rigorously and measured against these goals each term. Good support from classroom assistants enables pupils to complete tasks successfully. Work is very well matched to the needs of all pupils, and achievement is good for all groups of pupils, such as the traveller children who arrive at the school often with little earlier schooling.
12. The school provides well for pupils with English as an additional language. Their quality of learning is good and they make good progress over their time in school, due to well-organised in-class, group and individual support. Travellers' children, who are new to the school, and some of whom have missed a great deal of school time, settle in well and make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, have positive attitudes towards school that enable them to learn well. Pupils enjoy coming to school and in most lessons they find the work interesting and challenging. They listen to instructions well, concentrate on the tasks they are given and contribute well to discussion. Pupils work well independently, and also in pairs and small groups where they share ideas and collaborate on tasks. Many pupils enjoy the very good range of after-school clubs that also contributes to their personal development.
14. Behaviour is good. In lessons pupils settle quickly, which ensures that there is a prompt start. During playtime they are lively and boisterous but they are well supervised and there is no evidence of aggressive behaviour, and boys and girls play well together. At lunch time pupils are very well behaved in the hall where again they are well supervised. Pupils from Year 6 act as playtime assistants and help in the dining hall; they serve water and there is a friendly and social atmosphere. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner; they greet visitors politely and open doors for adults. All pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and are aware of the school's expectations for good behaviour. Pupils are involved in establishing their own classroom rules where they consider the impact of their actions on others and this enhances their social development well.
15. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults in the school are very good. Staff know the pupils well and pupils are happy to talk to them if they have any concerns or problems. There is a high level of mutual respect at the school and pupils are encouraged to develop self-confidence and independence. The school also places a high priority on developing self-esteem amongst pupils, and achievements are always recognised and valued.
16. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils sensibly and willingly carry out a range of jobs within their own classrooms, which they take very seriously. The older children have the opportunity to volunteer for litter patrols around the school and each class elects a boy and a girl to represent them on the school council. Regular meetings of the school council provide a very good forum for discussion and allow pupils a voice in making decisions that affect them. Year 6 pupils additionally have specific responsibilities around the school and can apply to become playtime assistants, which involves helping the younger children at lunchtime both in the dining hall and in the playground. Awareness of the environment is encouraged by pupils' involvement in recycling projects within the community and they consider others less fortunate than themselves by supporting a number of charities. The current charity involves collecting shoeboxes containing gifts for children in Eastern Europe. The pupils really take an interest in

this project and the boxes collected so far in the entrance hall of the school make an impressive display, which pupils like to talk about. An example of the resourcefulness and initiative of the pupils in the school was when Year 6 pupils organised a sponsored bounce that raised £1,800 for Key Stage 1 books.

17. Attendance at the school is well below the national average although there is a low rate of unauthorised absence. The main reason for the poor attendance is absence by a small number of travellers' children, pupils taking holidays in term time and other families who take children out of school on trips and visits. Punctuality at the school has improved but there is still a small minority of pupils who persistently arrive late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching is good overall. Examples of very good teaching were found in all parts of the school. The teaching seen during the inspection showed numerous strengths, many of which were common to most lessons. While some shortcomings occurred in individual lessons, there were no recurrent weaknesses. This is a strong picture. This represents a considerable improvement over the position noted at the time of the last inspection in 1997.
19. The very good teaching in the Foundation Stage is characterised by careful planning that identifies what children are expected to achieve based on their previous knowledge and skill. The teachers have established a warm, supportive and purposeful atmosphere in their rooms, despite the lack of children in the nursery. The support staff are an integral part of the teaching being offered and work effectively with the teachers at all times.
20. Planning is effective throughout the school. Clear aims for what pupils will learn determine the course of each lesson. These are drawn from agreed plans, so that each lesson builds progress within a strong framework. Teachers share the lesson aims with pupils, ensuring by concise explanations and examples that pupils understand them fully. This makes for secure, purposeful learning. It helps to create a sense of joint enterprise in learning and enables pupils to work confidently and independently.
21. Planning is supported by effective day-to-day assessment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils very attentively, for example during writing tasks. They ensure that pupils fully understand their work, check and clarify pupils' progress and guide them towards the next step in their learning. In their planning for most lessons, teachers identify several pupils for more focused assessment. This arrangement combines practicality with effectiveness. It ensures that each pupil benefits from frequent, detailed assessment and enables teachers to build progress from one task to the next. This method provides a good model for application where required in all other subjects.
22. Teachers' management of pupils is very good. This helps to create a supportive atmosphere for learning. In all parts of the school, teachers combine thoughtful management with a clear focus on the task in hand. They successfully communicate a sense of shared enterprise in learning and a determination to succeed and improve. This promotes good attitudes to learning, secures pupils' commitment to the task in hand and encourages good progress. This is particularly effective for pupils new to the school, who have had little time at school before they arrive.
23. Teachers motivate and encourage pupils by praising and valuing their contributions. This gives pupils the security and confidence to make suggestions and gives them satisfaction in learning. Very good relationships bring warmth and purpose to lessons in all parts of the school. Teachers and learning support assistants promote effective relationships by skilled management and through the examples they provide of attentive support and collaboration. As a result, pupils are well behaved, good humoured and hard working. They work constructively alongside one another and co-operate well. Good examples of this were seen in the different

physical education lessons where older pupils were at very different levels of ability, but did not compete with or tease each other, but tried to help each other to achieve more.

24. There is a good school policy for marking written work that encourages the frequent use of feedback to pupils, which is related to the aims for the lesson. Some teachers mark pupils' work very carefully, for example, in English, mathematics and science, nurturing pupils' confidence and giving each pupil clear advice on how to improve. These arrangements motivate pupils, encourage positive attitudes to learning and promote good progress. This quality of marking, seen in more than one class in the school, is not being universally applied. Where the marking is good, pupils are not left in any doubt about how well they have done and how they can improve. However, the policy is not implemented consistently across all subjects and classes. This means that at times pupils are not sure whether they have successfully completed a piece of work, whether more is needed, or how they might improve in the future. In particular, the standards that are expected of pupils in the presentation of their work vary from class to class. There are some teachers who demand, and get, the same level of neatness and care in all subjects. There are, however, occasions when this does not happen, to the detriment of the pupils' progress.
25. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good. For example, in an excellent reception class lesson, the teacher's very good subject knowledge enabled her to devise exciting tasks that captured the children's interest and extended their understanding of numbers whilst she waited for the fire engine to arrive for the exciting visit she had prepared the children for. Very good subject knowledge was a feature of several mathematics lessons in the Key Stage 2 classes. Here, the teachers' expertise and enthusiasm ignited pupils' interest and promoted very good progress in numeracy and data handling.
26. Teachers question effectively. In many mathematics lessons, teachers improve pupils' mental agility by rapid, well-directed questioning, moving swiftly from one challenge to the next. In other subjects, for example English, they use questioning to extend thinking and encourage reflection. For example, in a successful Year 5 lesson, the teacher deepened pupils' understanding of a story extract by encouraging them to think about the author's choice of words and portrayal of character. In this and most other lessons seen, teachers target their questions carefully, taking account of pupils' differing needs and abilities. This builds pupils' self-esteem, giving them the confidence to frame their own ideas, and enables them to progress well.
27. The pace of lessons is almost always well judged. The initial discussion and writing tasks do not over-run, so there is good time left for the final plenary sessions, which teachers use well to reinforce pupils' learning, and to review what they have learned and share their thoughts about it. This enhances the effectiveness of learning in many lessons. The speed at which the Year 6 science lesson was conducted meant that pupils' attention was kept at all times. The enthusiasm created was a joy for them all.
28. Effective use is made of homework, for example in English, science, history and ICT. Arrangements are systematic and carefully planned to ensure that homework is integral with classroom learning. As a result, homework extends the range of pupils' study, encourages independence and responsibility, and helps to forge a valuable learning partnership between home and school.
29. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is effective. The many strengths identified in teaching promote good progress in the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing and in the different aspects of mathematics. Teachers make lessons interesting for pupils by setting challenging and varied tasks. They instil enthusiasm and motivate pupils well so that they are fully engaged and keen to improve.
30. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and so they learn well and make good progress. This is due to good organisation, sensitive support and a warm yet purposeful

ethos for learning. Teachers successfully include all pupils in their lessons, including those with special educational needs. Teachers know pupils very well and work closely with teaching assistants to implement pupils' individual education plans. Teachers plan well for pupils of different abilities in their classes. Provision is consistent and, because of the knowledge class teachers have of pupils with special needs, good provision is made in planning. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is given suitable time away from her class by the headteacher and works very closely with colleagues and gives very good support. This ready availability, alongside the generous provision of teaching assistants and good support for pupils with statements, means provision for a variety of teaching approaches is very good. The school works hard to ensure those pupils with special educational needs take part in all activities. Able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons because teachers' expectations are high and well informed. As a result, they make good progress. Many pupils benefit greatly from the additional activities that teachers provide, for example in mathematics.

31. All staff take responsibility well for supporting pupils with English as an additional language and the teaching is good. Literacy and numeracy lessons are well planned. Good individual targets are set to support the pupils in the initial stages of language acquisition. The teacher or teaching assistant working with pupils is aware of the language needs of the identified pupils and plans effectively with clear learning objectives and well-matched tasks, making good use of interesting and stimulating resources.

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

32. The school is committed to providing rich and varied learning experiences for all its pupils. It does this well, starting at admission to the nursery. Children in the Foundation Stage experience a very well planned, active learning day, which includes all the Early Learning Goals. There is a deliberate and effective emphasis on spoken language as many pupils have well below average language skills on admission. All children are soon assessed and children with special educational needs are identified early and their progress is monitored carefully.
33. From Year 1 onwards all pupils have full access to the National Curriculum and religious education. At the time of the last report the curriculum was not sufficiently well planned in a number of subjects and this was affecting standards adversely. The school has made good progress in planning and organisation since then because the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have been introduced successfully. National guidance is used to make sure all plans now cover every subject in a systematic manner, supported further by very good quality local authority plans. There is now very good use made of ICT to make sure all plans have a common approach and that they are readily available to all teaching and ancillary staff. Consequently pupils now have better access to all subjects, and standards have risen as a result. Although standards are better now, the school recognises more can still be done in subjects such as art and design, design and technology, music, history and geography.
34. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator makes sure that all pupils with particular learning or behavioural difficulties are identified early and supported effectively. Individual education plans set clear targets for improvement and help from well-trained assistants maintains good progress. Extra government funding for the education of travellers' children is targeted very well to make sure they have every opportunity to make maximum progress. More able pupils are identified and given more challenging tasks, and as a result the number of pupils reaching the highest level in their national tests continues to rise. The school's thoughtful approach to make sure all pupils are included fully in all aspects of learning is a strength of the school.
35. Good opportunities for pupils with English as an additional language are provided so that they participate well in all curriculum-related tasks. The language demands that pupils will have to tackle in individual lessons are analysed, and support is also given in other subjects as appropriate, in developing new subject-related vocabulary. The planned activities, the quality of support and teacher interventions ensure equality of access to the curriculum. A clear

distinction is made between pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. In all lessons, work is well matched to targeted pupils.

36. The school makes very good provision for extra-curricular activities; these run throughout the year. There is a well-attended 'breakfast club'; sporting activities include netball, basketball and football, sometimes competitively against other local schools; the dance club is popular with both boys and girls. Computer clubs organised for pupils of different abilities enable the more able pupils, for example, to explore ideas and pursue their interests. Visits to churches, a residential weekend for adventurous activities, visiting music groups or speakers add further to the school day.
37. Personal, social and health education is provided for very effectively in different curriculum areas, and by the variety of ways the pupils are involved in the life of the school as a community. For example, in science pupils study such topics as drugs awareness as part of 'looking after our bodies'. Sex education, appropriate to the age and experience of pupils, is an integral part of science too. Pupils' social knowledge and understanding are widened very well when pupils sit together and discuss how to make more mature choices, to express their views and feelings clearly and to always have respect for others. Everyday social involvement in the life of the school helps pupils to mature and take on responsibilities. They act as playground assistants, look after younger pupils, tackle a range of minor jobs independently and help each other in the classroom, guided skilfully by adults who are very good role models. The school council is a good example of this where ideas, such as playground equipment, are discussed and agreed.
38. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, social and moral education is very good and thoughtfully interlinked. It is aimed carefully at the different ages and experiences of pupils because the headteacher has a strongly held philosophy that makes sure each pupil is treated as a special individual. The assemblies are carefully planned to reflect on beliefs and values. The excellent artefacts used when pupils were reminded of Remembrance Day are a typical example. The tiny Bible, the pouch with a bullet hole through it, photographs, spectacles and the setting with poppies, together with a lighted candle, illustrated the importance the headteacher places on such occasions. The Code of Conduct, reward systems, which include certificates and cups for consideration, fairness or helping others, are ways by which the school makes sure pupils know right from wrong. In lessons, or at other times during the school day, pupils' ideas are valued and respected by the teachers and each other. Spiritual, social and moral provision contributes greatly to pupils' very good personal development.
39. The school recognises that, although cultural provision is satisfactory, there is room for improvement. Consequently it has made this part of its current action plans for several subjects, particularly those in the arts and humanities, so that pupils' experiences will be widened and deepened. There is some satisfactory provision for learning about cultural diversity, but this is mainly through good quality books and this too needs further development.
40. Links with the community and partner schools are recognised as important. They are actively maintained by close links with parents before admission and throughout pupils' time at school and very good links with the nearby special school and on transfer to secondary schools. The use of the community in learning has developed well. For example, how the school worked with Community 2000 to plant bulbs in nearby open spaces, and the way businesses are involved, such as in the recycling scheme, are instances where the pupils' learning has been enhanced through the local community. These help to teach pupils the value of good citizenship and the importance of active community involvement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school provides a very safe and caring environment for its pupils and staff, which creates a good learning atmosphere. There is an effective health and safety policy and the health and safety committee conducts an annual risk assessment audit throughout the school. The

caretaker monitors health and safety issues on a daily basis and is a member of the health and safety committee. There are very clear procedures for dealing with accidents and two members of staff are qualified in first aid. All accidents are recorded appropriately. There is a clear policy on dispensing medicine in school and the special medical needs of individual pupils are well known to staff. There is a very effective child protection policy in place and the headteacher holds regular staff training, including guidelines on how to identify children who may be at risk.

42. The behaviour policy is detailed and very effective and there is a clear system of rewards and sanctions that are applied consistently throughout the school. These very good procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour have established a very orderly community in which pupils learn well.
43. Registration procedures are quick and efficient and ensure that attendance and punctuality are recorded accurately. Office staff check registers on a weekly basis and any problems with attendance are brought to the attention of the headteacher who quickly follows up any unexplained absence by contacting parents. A late book records any pupils who come into school after registration so that persistent offenders can be identified and their parents contacted. The school has improved its attendance since last year and has been particularly successful in improving the attendance of travellers' children. However, the overall level of attendance is still well below the national average.
44. The school provides effective support and guidance for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and travellers' children. The breakfast club, which runs on two days a week, is a recent innovation aimed at promoting awareness of a healthy diet and developing socialising skills. This term there are 22 pupils who regularly attend. The policy of including every child regardless of their needs is very effective and is a strength of the school. The school has a detailed personal, social, citizenship education programme within the curriculum that includes a specific programme for sex education in Year 6. Drug awareness is covered within the programme but does not provide any awareness of drugs beyond alcohol and cigarettes. Other issues relating to drugs are, however, covered by the Life Skills Bus that visits the school annually.
45. Reported incidents of bullying are dealt with by the headteacher who records the incidents and works with parents, staff and pupils to resolve any problems. The procedures for dealing with reported incidents of bullying are effective and it is not perceived as an issue by parents, pupils or staff. The school handled a recent case involving a pupil who reported being bullied by others very effectively. The pupils involved clearly thought they were being bullied, but this was not the reality and the school has now arranged for the behaviour support team to offer counselling and support on a weekly basis.
46. There has been good improvement in assessment of pupils' attainment and progress since the last inspection. Whole school systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress in the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics and science are good. The school makes good use of national and school test results to set targets for individual pupils, which are shared with them and their parents. The information is also used well to identify weaknesses in the curriculum, such as spelling and problem-solving in mathematics and to put them right. Records of pupils' progress are well detailed in the core subjects and for younger children in the nursery and reception classes. The school has good assessment arrangements for identifying pupils with special educational needs. Their progress is monitored at regular intervals with this information used appropriately to plan the next stages of pupils' learning. Learning support assistants liaise well with class teachers after lessons and discuss, and often record, the progress pupils make.
47. Assessment in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music has not yet caught up with changes in the planned curriculum. The school is well aware of this and it is a priority in their development planning. There are good portfolios of work where the teachers

have agreed levels of achievement, particularly in English, which clearly show the progress pupils make over time. These enable teachers to pitch the work at the right level for pupils. An example of how these portfolios influence standards can be seen clearly in art and design. Infant classes have such a portfolio of art work and standards are above average. There is no portfolio in art in the juniors. As a result there is less progression in their work, resulting in average standards. In some classes teachers make regular evaluations of pupils' progress towards the learning intentions of the lesson and make good use of this information to plan work at a suitable level for individual pupils the next day. This practice is not established in all classes. Marking is also inconsistent across classes. At its best, pupils know what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The school has a good relationship with parents that has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the progress they make. The majority of parents are very supportive of the school and the work it does and feel that it provides their children with a good education in a safe and caring environment.
49. The school provides very good quality information to parents through the school brochure and monthly newsletters, which allows parents to know exactly what is happening in school. They are also provided with details of topics that are to be covered each term. Pupils' annual reports provide good information on what has been taught during the year and on attainment and progress with targets for pupils to achieve in the next year. Ticked boxes record personal development although there is a written report that indicates achievements in other areas. There are also comments by pupils on what they have achieved and what they would like to achieve in the future. There is specific target setting that is discussed with parents at formal parent teacher meetings.
50. There are two formal parent teacher meetings each year and additionally parents have the opportunity to discuss pupils' annual reports. The autumn term meeting is primarily to discuss targets and the spring term meeting attainment and progress. These meetings are well attended and the class teacher contacts any parents who cannot attend the meetings.
51. About 15 parents regularly help in school where they provide good classroom support, hear pupils read and help in the library. A number of parents regularly come into school to have lunch with the pupils each month and attendance at class assemblies, particularly with the younger children, is very good. Parents are encouraged to contact staff if they have any problems or concerns and the majority find the school very welcoming. Staff, including the headteacher, are regularly available at the end of the school day to talk to parents in the playground when they collect their children from school. There is a home-school agreement in place, signed and appreciated by the majority of parents. Homework diaries and reading records are used to encourage parents to help their children at home. However, despite the school's best efforts, these have all had limited success and there is limited support with homework.
52. There is a parent teacher association at the school although parents are reluctant to be involved on the committee and in organising events. Nevertheless, regular social and fund-raising events are held throughout the year and are well supported by parents. These raise approximately £2,000 annually for the school. The money raised has been used to purchase video and digital cameras, playground equipment and a secure storage shed for the playground, and these make an important contribution to the educational facilities at the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher is an experienced and knowledgeable professional who has a very clear vision of how the school is to develop. She values the views of staff, pupils and parents and believes all should have a say in how things can be improved. Her leadership is very good and she is well supported by the deputy head and senior managers who are effective in shaping and carrying out the strategies for making improvements. Together with the headteacher, they have been successful in motivating the staff so that there is a spirit in the school of co-operation and a shared commitment to improve. This is reflected in the whole ethos of the school in which pupils are valued and relationships are very good. In this atmosphere the school carries out its aims very well. This means pupils are confident, well behaved and well motivated to do their best.
54. The monitoring of the curriculum and teaching has improved well since the last inspection when this was found to be mostly informal. Co-ordinators and senior managers regularly observe lessons in English, mathematics, science and ICT. This is providing the school with a lot of useful information and teachers receive good reports on what was seen. Co-ordinators also study teachers' planning and look at the quality of pupils' work. The general improvement in monitoring has played a part in helping the school to strengthen the areas of weakness identified in the last inspection. For example, the school has increased the amount of equipment and resources available in the teaching of ICT and improved the assessment of pupils' work. In addition the confidence and expertise of staff have improved through training, which has raised the quality of teaching and learning well.
55. The school's development plan provides a clear overview of how improvements are to be carried out. It is supported by comprehensive plans drawn up by subject co-ordinators following their analysis of resources and staff training needs. The views of all school staff are sought and used by senior managers to identify priorities and produce draft plans for further discussion. Part of these plans is the provision for staff training. All teachers are appraised and set targets within a good system of performance management, which also identifies what training teachers need for their own development and to meet the needs of the school.
56. The governing body is led by an experienced chairman and fully supports the actions that the headteacher is taking to move the school forward. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is good. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and have played an important and effective role in shaping the direction of the school. Various standard committees meet on a regular basis to ensure that the management of the school is effective. These include a standards/curriculum committee that has a close liaison with the curriculum co-ordinators so that it is kept fully informed of what is happening in each subject. Each governor has a link with a particular subject and is matched with a specific class so that the development of the subject can be monitored from year to year. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well because of their close involvement with what is going on. The governing body also has a clear strategy for checking on the progress that is being made. For example, it works closely with the headteacher to set targets for her to achieve and monitors the progress that is being made on a regular basis. This is a strong aspect of their involvement with the school.
57. The planning of the school budget is an area where the governors are very well involved. The current quite large underspend is a deliberate decision in order to cope with the shortfall of children in the very good nursery. However, they have acknowledged that this is a situation that cannot be allowed to continue as it has serious implications for the rest of the school. They are currently exploring a range of possible solutions with the local authority. Specific grants, such as those for special educational needs and the travellers' children, are used very effectively.
58. The school has good systems in place for ensuring best value in all its purchases. Administrative staff are knowledgeable, well trained and efficient in maintaining pupils' records and carrying out financial transactions. Spending is well monitored through regular financial

reports and meetings. The school takes appropriate measures to obtain the best value in the purchase of resources and equipment by comparing prices and obtaining quotes when necessary.

59. There is a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers to meet the needs of the school in teaching the curriculum. There is a good mix of longer-serving teachers and newer staff and of male and female teachers. The headteacher has built up a good, professional attitude in the staff so that any changes in responsibility are accepted and seen as in the interest of raising standards. All new teachers receive appropriate formal assistance from their mentors with the chance to be observed teaching and to observe other lessons. In addition they receive a lot of help and support from the whole staff. Teachers are well supported by a large number of well-qualified learning support and teaching assistants who help the learning of all pupils throughout the school. The school is fortunate to have the services of a highly skilled and dedicated caretaker whose endeavours have much enhanced the whole learning environment and saved the school a lot of money in the many minor repairs as well as occasional decorating that she carries out.
60. The school's accommodation is good. It is situated on a widespread but attractive site with large playgrounds and field. Children under five have an outdoor play area with a safe surface around climbing equipment. The computer suite has added an extra dimension to the teaching of ICT and is well used. The school's library is attractive and well used.
61. Overall the school's learning resources are sufficient for the needs of pupils in each subject and in many they are good. For example, in design and technology, ICT, mathematics, music and geography, they are making a significant contribution to pupils' learning experiences. In English the number and range of books available are improving. Although there is no lending library, pupils have access to an adequate range of fiction and non-fiction books, all in good condition. In addition all classes have a good stock of dictionaries and thesauri.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to continue the developments made and further raise the overall standards of pupils' attainment in all subjects, the governors, headteacher and all staff should jointly:
- (1) Continue to raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
 - a) reviewing the school's policy on the presentation of pupils' work;
 - b) making sure visual resources such as vocabulary, whiteboards, number lines, are used to best effect in all lessons.
 - (2) Raise the pupils' level of achievement by the time they leave school in the non-core subjects of art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music by:
 - a) improving the quality and use of procedures to assess and monitor pupils' attainment and progress;
 - b) using pupils' work and day-to-day assessment better in order to inform the planning of what pupils will be learning.
 - (3) Review the school's marking policy so that it is implemented systematically in order to make sure all pupils know what they do well, and what they must do to improve further.
 - (4) Improve pupils' attendance by instigating a more rigorous approach to identifying and tracking absence and punctuality.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

46

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	13	22	8	0	0	0
Percentage	7	28	48	17	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 two percentage points.

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)	7	191
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	49

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	48

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	11	12	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	10
	Girls	9	10	9
	Total	17	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (82)	83 (100)	83 (96)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	9
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	19	20	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (96)	87 (96)	83 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	14	10	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	13
	Girls	9	6	10
	Total	17	16	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (61)	67 (52)	96 (76)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	8	6	10
	Total	15	15	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (61)	63 (61)	79 (76)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	179	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	138

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
£	
Total income	530533
Total expenditure	510929
Expenditure per pupil	2831
Balance brought forward from previous year	40810
Balance carried forward to next year	60414

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	190
Number of questionnaires returned	81

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	42	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	51	4	4	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	64	5	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	46	18	5	5
The teaching is good.	51	46	1	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	57	16	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	32	6	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	49	5	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	37	44	15	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	63	33	4	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	56	4	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	49	4	2	10

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63. Children are admitted into the nursery in the term after their third birthday, and into the reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. Children are assessed termly, in both the nursery and reception classes, to find out what they can and cannot do. The results of these assessments show that children's attainment when they start school is well below the levels expected for children their age in all areas of learning². The learning environment created in both the nursery and reception classes is very supportive and caring. Children feel safe and secure, and settle very quickly into the daily routines. Children respond with enthusiasm to activities, and to the help they are given by teachers and support staff. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. However, only a minority are likely to attain the levels expected for their age by the end of their reception year. This is particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy, social development and mathematics.
64. A particular concern for the school is the continuing fall in numbers of children taking the places in the nursery. It is currently equipped for an intake of 26 children for both the morning and afternoon sessions. At the moment there are just 13 children for the morning session and none for the afternoon. Not only does this lack of numbers threaten the nursery's future but it also restricts some of the well-planned experiences that are being provided. For instance, it was noticeable that activities planned to enable children to learn how to share and take turns were being quickly completed by children on their own!
65. Teaching is very good throughout the Foundation Stage with some excellent features. Teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of the curriculum for children this age, and of how young children learn. They are good at teaching basic skills and use a range of teaching strategies. Teachers are skilled at asking open-ended questions and encouraging children to think for themselves. Lessons move at a good pace and activities are well matched to the children's learning needs. In all sessions there is a clear focus for the activity, and children are well supported by adults. As a result children's interest is maintained and their learning is good. Teachers plan effectively for all areas of learning and for the inclusion of all children. Planning in the nursery and the reception class is very well co-ordinated to ensure continuity of provision as children move through the Foundation Stage.
66. Teachers use assessments continuously to monitor children's progress and inform their planning. The assessments carried out in the nursery and reception classes are comprehensive, and well linked to provide a continuous system for tracking children's progress. Resources are used very well to support children's learning. Relationships are very good. Teachers and support staff work very well as a team and provide very positive examples for the children. The nursery and reception classrooms are well organised to cover all areas of learning. They are bright and stimulating, and provide many opportunities for children to interact directly with their environment. Children's work is well displayed and labelled to support children's learning. Labelling in languages other than English supports the learning of children with English as an additional language, and promotes the cultural awareness of all children. Resources are very good. The area for outdoor play is good; the lack of a covered area results in it not being used when it is raining.

² Planning in the Foundation Stage is geared towards pupils achieving standards known as the Early Learning Goals in six areas of development – personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

67. Parents are provided with good support. The induction programme for the nursery includes a home visit and parents are encouraged to bring their children to the nursery prior to their being admitted. Parents are provided with information each half term about the work their children will be involved in. They are encouraged to contribute to their children's learning by sharing books with their children.
68. The co-ordinator is very experienced and knowledgeable and has a well-defined vision for the continued improvement of the overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

69. Most children start school with very under-developed skills in this area of learning. When they start in the nursery many children play alone, or alongside others, but seldom together. Although progress is good, most children will not attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Activities that encourage co-operative play are a regular feature of daily routines. Children's skills in this area of learning develop well because teaching is very good. Through the direct involvement of adults and the very good teaching, children learn to take turns, share and play co-operatively. For example, in the reception role-play area, adults help children to act out the roles of chefs, waiters and customers. Relationships are very good and teachers expect children to behave well and work hard. Children are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants who take every opportunity to praise children for their effort and achievement. All adults set a good example to the children. The very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with sensitively by staff, and children learn how their behaviour affects others. However, as a result of there being so few children in the nursery the well-organised activities and sessions do not always provide opportunities to develop these skills. Some children only spend time on their own engaged in these activities and so gain little from them. Despite this many children in the reception class develop self-help skills, and will seek the assistance of adults only when they really need it.

Communication, language and literacy

70. When they start in the nursery most children have skills in this area of learning that are well below those expected for their age. They have limited knowledge of books and writing. They use a limited vocabulary and talk using single words and short phrases. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Support staff provide very good support and resources are very good. However, despite the high quality of the teaching and support they receive, and the good progress they make, most children are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year, and so will they be below standards expected for their age.
71. Activities are carefully planned to develop children's skills in speaking and listening, and to encourage them to learn about books and the sounds that letters make. Children's speaking and listening skills develop well because the activities planned support their learning in this area. They respond confidently to their teacher's questions and learn to take an active part in conversation. Every opportunity is taken by all staff to help children develop and use appropriate vocabulary. For example, in the nursery, children learn the names of trees and what can be made of wood. In the reception class, they learn to name objects and materials used when sowing seeds. In the nursery, opportunities to help children practise writing letters and their names are fully pursued in role-play situations. In the reception class, sessions to promote literacy skills are very good. By the end of their reception year many children are able to form recognisable letters, and are able to write some words for themselves. During the inspection children in the reception class were beginning to link letters to the sounds they make. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories. They know how a book is organised and that print carries meaning. Children take books home regularly, but the support they receive from home is very variable. Teachers work with small groups and individual

children on appropriately focused tasks. Only a minority of children are likely to reach the expected level of skill in reading by the end of their reception year.

Mathematical development

72. Children have very limited mathematical skills when they are admitted into the nursery. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the very good teaching. However, the majority are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1 from the reception class. Children have access to a range of activities to support their learning. Many of these activities are very practical and give children good opportunities to consolidate and develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding. Children learn to count and use mathematical vocabulary through stories and number rhymes. For example, when singing the rhyme 'Five Currant Buns', children in the nursery counted accurately and learnt to recognise a one penny coin. Role-play areas organised as a 'Post Office', and a 'house' are used to further support children's learning in this area. Many opportunities are provided for children to sort and match objects. Children develop an understanding of pattern through colouring and working with practical apparatus. Teachers and support staff use an effective range of questions to help children understand mathematical vocabulary and solve simple problems. Children in the reception class are beginning to understand addition through combining two groups of objects.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. The activities planned for this area of learning, and carried out in the very good teaching, have a very positive effect on the development of children's knowledge, understanding and skills. Good provision is made in the nursery and reception class for developing children's awareness of the world around them. They have many opportunities to explore the natural and man-made world. For example, children in the nursery explored the grounds and learnt how wood is used to make many different things. Children in the reception class sow seeds and investigate what plants need to grow. Teachers' skilful questioning encourages children to look closely at similarities and differences and give reasons for events. Interactive displays encourage all children to use their senses to investigate objects, and use equipment such as magnifying lenses. They assemble and join materials in a variety of ways, using simple tools and techniques. In the reception class, children begin to develop an understanding of different environments. For instance, they sort clothing and equipment for journeys to hot and cold climates. The cultural development of children is well supported through stories and assembly themes. Friendship, tolerance and equality are strongly promoted by all adults through focused topics and their day-to-day interaction with the children. Children have access in these classes to a range of ICT equipment. They confidently operate tape-recorders and are learning to control a computer by using a mouse. In the reception class children are able to continue to develop their skills in the use of ICT as there are some good quality computers. In addition the computer programs available to support children's learning are very good.

Physical development

74. This is the one area of learning where most children are likely to achieve the expected levels by the end of their reception year, and all children make good progress due to the very good teaching and the range of activities provided. Children move confidently around the classroom and the outdoor play area. Nursery children sit on and control wheeled toys, steering them accurately. Both the nursery and reception classes have regular access to an outside area and the hall, which allows them to practise the skills of climbing, and moving over, around and through large apparatus, where the children show improving levels of control and co-ordination. The outdoor play area is secure and contains a range of good quality equipment. Very good use is made of this area to promote children's imaginative and co-operative play in the nursery and reception class. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children use a range of drawing, writing and painting equipment with increasing skill. Children have access to tools from the beginning of their time in the nursery. They become increasingly competent in the safe and effective use of hammers, scissors and glue.

Creative development

75. Children's attainment is below the expected levels in this area. However, they all make good progress because the teaching is very good and they experience a range of activities to support their learning. They explore colour, texture, shape and form, and work in two and three dimensions. In the nursery, children learn about colours by looking at and drawing flowers, and in the reception classes they blend pastels when drawing fruit. Through painting, printing and collage work children learn to express themselves, use their imagination and learn about design. They learn how to manipulate and mould malleable materials, and make models from found materials and construction toys. A good range of small toys and well-resourced role-play areas support children's imaginative development. For example, children in a reception class pot up colourful tubs of flowers and watch them grow. When supported by an adult this type of play successfully promotes not only children's imaginative development but also their social development and communication skills. Teachers and support staff are skilled at using open-ended questions to guide children's thinking, and help them develop story lines for their imaginative play. Children have regular access to musical instruments and learn to sing familiar songs from memory. In the reception class they learn to use their imagination to express their ideas and feelings through dance. For example, they creatively act out the story of a seed beginning to grow.

ENGLISH

76. Standards are in line with those expected nationally of pupils aged seven and eleven and are steadily improving. From a very low starting point, pupils' standards show good achievement over time. Many pupils have speech and language difficulties on entering the school; they lack confidence in speaking and their listening skills are generally weak. Pupils' reading and writing skills are not well developed. These limitations are addressed through good teaching. Teachers have good knowledge of pupils' abilities and use this to group them effectively. This enables staff to know where they need to direct their efforts to challenge the able pupils and provide extra support for those finding the work difficult. As a result the number of pupils in Year 6 achieving higher levels than expected nationally has risen in the past two years. Pupils with special educational needs and travellers' children make good progress in school through well-organised and focused support in small groups where designated staff work with them to practise specific language skills. This good quality support boosts pupils' self-esteem as well as enhancing skills. Very effective use is made of initiatives such as early literacy support for under-achieving pupils. Since the last inspection effective strategies have been put in place to raise standards and pupils now make good progress in English.
77. The attainment and progress of learning of pupils with English as an additional language match those of the school as a whole. Those who enter the school with weaker English skills receive support appropriate to their needs and with such support make good progress overall. There was little difference between the performance of girls and boys seen in speaking, listening, reading or writing by the age of eleven.
78. By the age of seven and eleven, many pupils attain below average standards in speaking and listening. Although there is imbalance between the two skills as pupils generally listen well to what teachers and other adults have to say. Their speaking skills are weaker. Sometimes this is shyness but often there is a struggle to find the right words. Teachers have worked very hard to address these weaknesses and provide a number of valuable opportunities for pupils to express themselves in different situations. For example, pupils are encouraged to talk to others in small groups, drama and role-play and in 'show and tell' sessions, when they have the opportunity to share their thoughts and possessions with classmates. Teachers' use of good subject-related vocabulary in class discussions plays an important part in helping pupils to express themselves clearly. In Year 2, for example, pupils used such words as 'mainland', 'island' and 'harbour' to describe life on a Scottish island in a geography lesson.

79. Given the limitations of the pupils' skills on entry to the school, they have done very well to attain the average standards in reading by the age of seven and above average standards at the age of eleven noted on this inspection. Most pupils gain a good grasp of letter sounds by the age of seven. They also have other strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Average and above average readers notice when their reading does not make sense and correct themselves. Below average pupils look for other clues, such as pictures. The school has invested heavily, in both time and resources, to ensure pupils have a wide range of books to read, individually and in groups. Most pupils understand terms such as 'author', 'illustrator', 'contents' and 'index' and enjoy sharing books during the literacy hour. Parents are encouraged to hear their child read at home and a number of them support reading in the school. By the age of seven, many pupils have acquired the confidence to read and are doing as well as they can.
80. The books read by pupils in Key Stage 2 are appropriate to their interest and level of attainment. The range of reading material is extended as the pupils move through the school, and more able readers are able to choose books freely. Pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy. Most pupils talk about famous authors with discernment, although some pupils' critical appreciation of a range of books is limited. While lower attaining pupils still interpret their reading literally, average and higher attaining pupils are able to identify meaning beyond text. Higher attaining pupils can select extracts from the book to support their views on the characters and plot in the story. Most pupils understand how books are arranged in the library and how 'contents' and 'indexes' can point the way to specific information. Careful monitoring records kept by teachers include relevant ways of approaching reading to continue to make it interesting for all pupils.
81. From a very low start, pupils make good progress in their writing and standards are broadly at the expected level by the age of seven and eleven. The higher attaining Year 2 pupils can link sentences together to make an interesting short story. They use vocabulary well, for example, in their writing about a bird flying at night, stated it "saw a peaceful sleeping city". There are good examples of pupils writing instructions; for example, average attaining pupils wrote about how to make a glove puppet. Lower attaining pupils approach writing tasks with confidence but need considerable support. Competence in spelling, punctuation and handwriting are emphasised well, although some pupils do not apply what they know consistently. The standard of presentation of work varies a great deal. Pupils often fail to transfer the care and skills they have acquired from their written work in English to other subjects.
82. By Year 6 many pupils are able to write at length. This work is generally well presented. Higher attaining pupils write well with an audience in mind. Weaknesses in grammar, spelling and range of vocabulary still persist in the work of average and below average attaining pupils. The teacher and support staff work hard to raise standards in these areas. In Key Stage 2, the scope of writing for a range of purposes is suitably extended to include narrative, note-taking, biography and report writing. There are good examples of descriptive writing throughout pupils' work; for example, in Year 4 one pupil wrote "...sticks and dried up leaves crackled under his feet." In Year 5, pupils have a good understanding of story openings to capture the interest of the reader. One pupil wrote, "He opened the door and slipped inside. It was as black as midnight and ..." However, weaknesses are apparent in other subjects such as history where there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length. Presentation in subjects such as science is untidy. ICT is used well for drafting, re-drafting and printing out work in eye-catching fonts, for example the newspaper headlines and articles written by Year 6.
83. Teaching is good throughout the school, with a substantial amount of very good or excellent teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was found to be predominantly satisfactory. Teachers are familiar and secure with the National Literacy Strategy, which they apply effectively. There is a sharp focus on precisely what is to be learnt and this is shared with the pupils, so they know what is expected of them. Teachers plan and organise their lessons well and use a variety of methods, such as role-play, to keep pupils interested. In an excellent lesson in Year 4, where pupils were learning the skill of note-taking,

the teacher played the part of a famous artist creating a picture. This captured the imagination of the pupils and they effectively made notes on how he created a masterpiece! Teachers manage their pupils well, value their contributions and enjoy very good relationships with them. This has a positive effect on pupils' relationships with one another and on their attitudes towards the subject.

84. The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and gives good advice and support to colleagues. She is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and there is effective forward planning. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good. The results of national and school tests are analysed in order to set individual targets for pupils. The school is, therefore, able to identify pupils, at all levels of attainment, who have the potential to improve and can then provide extra support.
85. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. At its best, pupils know what they have achieved and what they have to do to improve. The daily evaluation of lessons that identifies pupils who need further help is apparent in some classes but not in all. In these classes this information is used to help plan for the next day. Resources are very good. There is a non-fiction library that is well organised and contains a good range of books to meet the needs of pupils. Library skills are well taught and pupils know how to find information from the library. Plans are in hand to increase the number of books that will appeal to reluctant readers.

MATHEMATICS

86. The inspection findings show that pupils' attainments are average at both seven and eleven years of age. There are far more pupils with special educational needs than in most schools so this can affect the school's performance. Extra help for pupils with special educational needs is organised well and some reach an average level by the time they leave. Pupils are now making good progress; the number of more able pupils reaching the highest levels has risen.
87. Standards have risen because the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced successfully since the last inspection, providing the framework that was missing before. Also, teaching has improved; it is now good for both younger and older pupils. The quality of pupils' work in shape, space and measures now matches that in number. Planning is detailed, clear and used well. As a result of these developments, progress since the last inspection has been good. However, marking and its use in everyday assessment requires further improvement and this remains outstanding from the last inspection.
88. Mathematics teaching is good and organised well in both key stages. Pupils are placed into three ability groups in each class, based on an analysis of school test results and teacher assessments. This ensures that pupils with special needs, and other pupils who work at a slower pace, are given extra help from learning assistants, some of whom are funded from government initiatives. This organisation ensures that the needs of pupils from a wide ability range are met successfully and all pupils make good progress.
89. At the age of seven all pupils have completed a considerable volume of work at their own level. Everyone has an exercise book, three commercially produced workbooks and a collection of teacher-prepared worksheets, which cover the full mathematics programme comprehensively. More able pupils recall addition and subtraction facts quickly, know their 2, 5 and 10 times tables and are keen to use these skills to solve everyday problems. In a lively lesson these Year 2 pupils counted confidently in 2s, 5s and 10s and then quickly found a variety of ways to make 50p. Average ability pupils showed less certainty with both their number knowledge and did not find it as easy to make 50p with, for example, six coins. Lower ability pupils needed help from support staff to work with amounts up to 10p. These same patterns of development are seen in other space, measures and number lessons, with work using litres, centimetres and time, for example. Whereas able pupils identify cylinder and sphere readily, other pupils are more secure with cube, cone and cuboid. However, all are

challenged at their own level of ability by the work, and all make good progress, building well on their rich experiences in the Foundation Stage.

90. In the Key Stage 2 classes there is a similar pattern of classroom organisation into three ability groups, again with commercial workbooks, exercise books and teacher worksheets, but now with the addition of more tests, particularly at the end of each year and during Year 6. Work for the more able pupils begins in September with the multiplication of decimals by 10, 100 and 1000, a clear indication of the above average challenge that is evident throughout the year. Average ability pupils begin with the same work, but have a calculator to help them and the lower ability pupils work with decimals, rounding numbers such as 0.92 or 6.97. In shape work, whereas the more able pupils draw different shapes in four quadrants, middle ability pupils will draw a shape in one of the four quadrants, whilst the lowest ability pupils draw shapes on grids, sometimes needing help from an assistant to complete these successfully. During a well-organised lesson in Year 6, pupils accurately ordered decimal fractions in the range 4.1 to 4.725 during a quick fire mental session and then worked out times around the world in different time zones, recording their answers as a 24-hour clock. They then compared these with their own local time. Average ability pupils use the same worksheet(s) but complete less examples, sometimes with errors. One in four pupils had special educational needs and they were able to tackle some of the work with the help of an assistant. Mathematics, science and ICT are linked well and the resultant work is above average.
91. Teaching is good throughout the school. Pupils build their knowledge, skills and understanding well because of the good planning. Daily plans are set out well following a standard format, which helps teachers to plan work systematically for all pupils. Lessons are taught at a lively pace, which generates enthusiastic responses from everyone. Pupils are increasingly confident because they feel successful in what they are asked to do. Questions, explanations, praise and encouragement are used skilfully to involve everyone throughout each stage of the lesson. Relationships are very good, particularly because all teachers treat pupils with courtesy as part of a firm but friendly approach. Learning assistants are very successful; they work closely with individuals and small groups, guiding pupils skilfully; they are well trained and confident. Homework is set regularly and an after-school computer club adds to some pupils' mathematical knowledge. Pupils like mathematics lessons and behave well.
92. Although teaching is good and standards have risen as a result, nevertheless there are areas for development, some of which are common to every classroom. To raise standards further the effective co-ordinator has now identified that the school needs to improve the presentation and recording of pupils' work so that simple mistakes are eliminated and methods of working are set out more clearly. Teachers should mark everyday work more carefully to enable better planning and assessment. They should also make sure visual resources such as vocabulary, whiteboards and number lines, are used to best effect in all lessons.

SCIENCE

93. Standards of attainment are above expectations at the end of both key stages. There are many pupils in Key Stage 2 who demonstrate levels of knowledge and understanding above those expected of pupils of this age. Pupils throughout the school are making good progress in science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Standards attained by pupils at the end of both key stages have improved since the last inspection.
94. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve above average standards in their knowledge of a good variety of science topics. When discussing the properties of materials, most can recognise and identify properties of materials and sort them into groups according to given criteria. Their work on sorting, grouping and changing materials was good. The recorded investigation that included cooking an egg to see how it changed was clearly exciting and enjoyed by all. Year 2 pupils are given a great many opportunities to experience investigational work, and they always complete their work thoroughly and well. Their many

booklets bringing together all parts of the different investigations show a good understanding of the science involved.

95. Many pupils in Year 6 have benefited from the good teaching at the end of Key Stage 2 that provides an even stronger emphasis upon scientific enquiry. In a very good lesson pupils were faced with concepts such as measuring weight in newtons and water displacement. In the very good teacher-led discussion all pupils showed a good appreciation of the principles of fair testing, and a good knowledge of the key steps in scientific enquiry. The level of knowledge of many pupils was impressive. In fact one girl responded to the teacher by saying – “I didn’t realise we knew so much”. Everyone else agreed.
96. Science contributes to the development of vocabulary and the speaking and listening aspects of literacy. For example, in Year 6, pupils’ work on forces contained clear explanations of gravity, molecules, conductors, resistors and insulators. In Year 5, the pupils have learnt about the movements of the moon around the earth; they learned to use words appropriate to this topic such as ‘spin’, ‘rotate’ ‘orbit’ and ‘on its axis’. Numeracy is supported in science with the creation of graphs to compare pulse rates in Year 3, and in the measuring of limbs in Year 4. The Year 4 investigation on friction was another very good cross-curricular topic. It focused on the way the ancient Egyptians had moved blocks of stone to construct the pyramids. Pupils’ careful investigations, linked with their history topic, were using a force meter and recording in newtons after the scientist. The use of sensors in ICT is an area that has developed well recently.
97. The quality of teaching is good. In all lessons teachers plan carefully, ensuring work is at an appropriate level for different groups of pupils. They use resources well to engage in practical work, and show good classroom management. Most teachers successfully adopt approaches to ensure that all pupils are fully involved and included in the lesson. There were some lessons where teachers’ expectations of pupils’ ability were very high and the challenges posed were exciting. There was a quicker pace and pupils were completely involved. Their higher standards of achievement reflected this.
98. Teaching plans draw upon national guidance. There is coherent planning throughout the school, particularly in developing pupils’ investigative skills. The school has now developed a scheme of work to ensure pupils’ knowledge, understanding and skills are built upon systematically from one year to the next. The effective co-ordinator manages the subject well and has now identified the need to supplement the material with a further short scheme and this is in the school’s action plan. The school has introduced a regular system of assessment of pupils’ progress and this has further enhanced pupils’ progress. The range, quality and quantity of learning resources for science are now good, and enhance the progress that pupils make.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Standards and progress in art and design are above average for pupils at the age of seven, but only average by the time they reach eleven. This is better than at the time of the last inspection because standards for seven year olds have risen.
100. Standards and progress have improved because national and local authority guidance has been combined skilfully to provide good whole school plans. All teachers have copies of these and use them well, which was not always the case before. ICT is used well to raise pupils’ awareness of design in art. Standards of teaching for younger pupils are now good.
101. Standards for younger pupils are higher than those in the Key Stage 2 classes because of the strong influence of the co-ordinator who works in Year 2. She has collected together examples of pupils’ work and shared these with the teachers of younger pupils so that they experience a rich and varied curriculum, particularly in the use of pencil, crayon and paint, in Years 1 and 2.

102. The work on display in Year 2 reflects the range and quality of these experiences. For example, there was high quality work in the above average features of the pencil drawings of electricity pylons and power stations, using line and tone. The combination of visual and tactile elements of art and design in the patterns created with seeds, paint and collage also showed above average skills. The use of ICT and colour to create house designs of a high standard is a good development. The blending of colours is used to make backgrounds and scenes such as sunsets, patterns of fish, sky and sea, which are pleasing to the eye. Also the good use of crayon and pencil to make Torah scrolls to tell the story of Jonah or David and Goliath in pictures, is an example of how the subject has improved in the last year.
103. Although there is some evidence of similar work for older pupils, it is neither as extensive nor of the same consistently good standard. It is mainly average in all areas of art and design, apart from when ICT is used in design and then it is above average. There is less art and design in displays and in sketchbooks, reflecting the stage of the subject's development for older pupils. For example, in Year 6 in the work on 'People in Motion' and in other previous work, the pencil drawings of activities such as 'jumping on the trampoline' or 'facial emotion', such as tiredness or happiness, lack the finer detail expected of pupils of this age. 'Smudging' using chalks is carefully done, but it does not take the more able pupils far enough in imagination and technique. There is little evidence of three-dimensional work, apart from the use of patterns and different materials in the making of hats. Other work with paint, charcoal and crayon, is average, and only a small amount has been produced. However, video sleeves, which link with design and technology, are of a high standard.
104. There is no collection of pupils' work for older pupils comparable to that for pupils in Year 2, which matches their richness of experience and range of techniques. Although it is satisfactory, this reduces the quality of the work that the Key Stage 2 pupils complete, and their progress overall.
105. Teaching is satisfactory for older pupils and good for those in the Key Stage 1 classes. All teachers use national and local guidance well in their planning. Resources are plentiful, accessible and of good quality, so every pupil has access to suitable materials. Teachers celebrate pupils' work, display it well and use drapes, artefacts and books imaginatively. Pupils and teachers get on well together, so that lessons are productive, enjoyable occasions. Teachers are knowledgeable about art and design; this was evident in a Year 5 lesson when pupils drew 'Sunflowers', a still life, using a 'golden section' to focus on a particular aspect, so subsequent work had depth, perspective and balance. Pupils practise their drawing, and sometimes their colouring skills, in sketchbooks, but the amount of work for older pupils is small. Consequently they do not spend sufficient time improving their techniques, or exploring imaginative ideas. More time is spent on art and design, linked to design and technology, by younger pupils and consequently their progress is better.
106. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator who recognises that there is more to be done to raise standards further for older pupils. To do this she plans to collect together samples of pupils' work and make sure it matches national standards. She also plans to make sure the full range of skills, evident in Year 2, are built on systematically, and in depth, in subsequent years and develop three-dimensional work with a range of materials, sometimes linked to design and technology.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Standards in design and technology are average for pupils aged seven and eleven. This is better than at the time of the last report. There is now more evidence of both model making and design throughout the school. Standards have risen and pupils make better progress because national guidance has been used to provide a good framework for lessons, which was missing at the last inspection. Design books have been introduced and design using ICT is good.
108. Design is better than model making for pupils aged seven. Although most designs are average there are some examples of above average work. This is because the art and design co-ordinator has influenced design by raising standards in this subject for these pupils. The labelled drawings of power stations, which are linked to science, are accurately drawn and labelled. Consequently the designs for vehicles, as part of design and technology, are well drawn and labelled too. They use words such as 'templaty' (sic) 'axle' and 'wheels' so it is clear they are generating their own ideas and using pictures and words to describe them. Design books show this is now an established process. Models are average in, for example, the making of puppets and vehicles. Pupils' cutting of card and fabric with scissors is too uneven, but models are finished boldly and colourfully. They build models with commercial kits, but these are not retained nor are any designs recorded. Pupils talk about how they could improve models, but there is no written evidence of any evaluation by the more able pupils in their design books.
109. Every class in Key Stage 2 has a design book which shows satisfactory progress from year to year. Standards in design are average and there is little difference sometimes between the brighter pupils and those of average ability. By the time pupils are eleven they draw labelled sketches and designs, but they are not always step-by-step plans. These plans do not always identify what could be improved, or what worked particularly well. For example, in a lively lesson about building fairground models, pupils' designs were imaginative; they took each other's ideas into account, discussing names such as 'Groovy Monster' and then drawing detailed labelled sketches. However, other work showed no evaluations. The subsequent fairground models, which incorporated horizontal and vertical rotation – terms used readily by pupils – worked by hand, but they were not driven by electricity, which would have raised the standard of models further. Model making is average. However, designs are above average when ICT is used; the designs for video sleeves are a particularly good example of this very good link between design and technology and the use of computer-aided design.
110. Teaching is at least satisfactory with examples of good or very good teaching on occasions. Planning is good, so pupils do have regular opportunities to experience both design and model making. Resources are plentiful, readily to hand in the locked trolleys, or in the central stores. Pupils share these well and safely, so the working atmosphere is busy and productive. Teachers and assistants support pupils well and consequently they are pleased with how their designs or models are developing. Relationships are always good, because pupils respond very positively to guidance from adults; everyone has an enthusiastic approach to the subject. All of these good features were seen in a very good lesson about pop-up books. By the end of this lesson, the teacher and pupils alike were pleased with the imaginative working models that had developed.
111. The well-organised and effective co-ordinators recognise that, although there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection, more needs to be done. To raise standards further they plan to organise a whole school collection of designs and relate these to national standards so that teachers and pupils are aware of what happens in other classes and in other schools. They also intend to collect together models, and photographs of models at different stages of development, to illustrate the range and standard of skills needed in model making. A start has been made in the collection of photographs, but this is very recent and has yet to have any real impact on raising standards.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

112. Pupils' attainment in history and geography is in line with the expected levels by the age of seven and eleven. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be below average. In part, this improvement is because there is now a planned approach to the teaching of these subjects based on national guidelines. This ensures pupils' knowledge and skills build up as they move through the school. The school has successfully maintained the profile of these subjects within the limited time available and provides a satisfactory range of topics relevant to the age and interest of the pupils.
113. By the time they are seven, pupils have gained a sound knowledge of famous people they have studied, such as Florence Nightingale. They know about her work and make sound comparisons between hospitals today and the conditions she met during the Crimean War. They understand aspects of the passing of time, for example through interviewing a great-grandmother, who lives in the area. In Year 6, pupils develop a sound knowledge of the changes in this country since the 1930s and understand the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence. Pupils across the school learn successfully from visits to places of historical interest, such as the Year 1 pupils' visit to Wimpole House to learn about life in the past.
114. In geography, Year 2 pupils can make simple comparisons between the life and features in St Neots with those found in an island of the coast of Scotland. They draw simple maps of their own locality and can explain why maps have key symbols. They have a satisfactory knowledge of countries and the British Isles and find some of the major cities in England on a map. They have a sound knowledge of countries further away through studying 'harvests around the world'. In Year 6, pupils have appropriately extended their knowledge, skills and understanding of geography. They effectively research information from books and ICT to contrast features of the locality with the Isle of Wight. They use world maps effectively and have a good knowledge of places, such as Karachi and Tokyo. Numeracy skills are applied well to study time zones around the world. Pupils' geographical vocabulary builds up well and they use appropriate terminology, such as 'tributary', 'estuary' and 'river basin' in their study of rivers.
115. Although few lessons were seen, the teaching of history and geography is satisfactory within the time available for these subjects. The teaching seen during the inspection was good. The lessons are well prepared, and a range of stimulating resources is gathered to capture the pupils' interest. For example, in Year 1, special toys brought in by the pupils and the teachers prompted good discussions as an introduction to looking at the topic of 'old and new toys'. In Year 5, pupils study census information from 1881 and effectively use this to find out about life in St Neots in the 19th century. Relationships are good and pupils are enthusiastic. Pupils co-operate well and share ideas and information.
116. Both co-ordinators manage the subject well as they are suitably experienced and well aware of what needs to be done to improve standards further. At present there is no system of assessment in place to check pupils' understanding of history and geography, although a start has been made in geography. Portfolios of pupils' work are at an early stage of development. Pupils' literacy skills are underused in these subjects, as there are too few opportunities to write at length on the topic studied. The school is in the process of building up resources in these areas and there are now reference books in the library that are being used well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

117. The school has improved upon the standards of the last inspection. Inspection evidence shows that the majority of pupils are attaining the expected levels of attainment by the end of Year 2, but above expected levels for their age by the time they leave the school. There has

been a good use of funding to equip the school to teach all the programmes of study in the National Curriculum, and resources are now good and being used well.

118. Little direct teaching of ICT was seen during the inspection; however, on the basis of the good lessons seen, teachers' effective planning, assessment and record keeping and the effectiveness of pupils' learning, it is clear that teaching is good. All staff have completed national training for the use of computers and are now more confident and competent in the range of programs being used. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on the use of word-processing skills, the teacher presented a well-planned lesson with good explanation of the tasks required. There were good opportunities for pupils to practise these skills, In a Year 2 science lesson, pupils showed they were familiar with the keyboard as they prepared the title page of a topic book. They changed the colour of fonts and printed their own work without direct supervision. Pupils are keen to use computers and take turns and share the resources fairly.
119. Children are introduced to computers in the reception classes and soon become adept at using the mouse to select, drag and drop objects on the screen. Year 1 pupils have used computers in their mathematics lessons to draw pictographs of their favourite fruits and vegetables. They have learned how to use the keyboard to write simple sentences to match pictures, for example after their visit to a local zoo. These skills are further developed in Year 2 and Year 3 where pupils can combine text and graphics and change the size, style and colour of fonts. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have used an art package to draw freehand pictures and can change the size and shape of the 'brushes' they use. Teachers' plans show that the school is addressing all the required aspects of the National Curriculum for ICT with a clear programme of skills development.
120. By Year 6, pupils are fluent in the use of computers, knowledgeable about the uses and applications of ICT and show a good understanding of its value, impact and limitations. Most pupils are adept in the use of word-processing to improve and present their work. They combine text and images to make, for example, the page of a school newspaper. They access the Internet and use a CD-ROM to research topics, for example in history, and use spreadsheets to manage, present and interrogate data. By the time they leave the school, almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, have good ICT skills and wide experience. This consistency of good achievement is a particular strength. It results from teachers' very effective use of the school's well-equipped ICT suite to build pupils' skills systematically. It also reflects teachers' good subject knowledge. This gives them the confidence to take pupils forward by means of challenging work and imaginative projects. A good example of this is the Year 6 pupils' work to produce a video of their last year in school. With the teacher's guidance, and the help of students from a local secondary school, pupils of all abilities designed a video, its box and the notes to accompany it. They then produced the video, with digitised still shots, and presented it to an audience from the school and the parents. This example also illustrates the way in which teachers skilfully link ICT with other subjects, in this case, science and design and technology. Further examples link ICT with English, mathematics, music and art and design. These connections extend pupils' learning in each of the subjects and broaden their understanding of the ways in which ICT skills can be applied.
121. Pupils have a good grasp of the uses of ICT and can consider ways in which it has added to, and sometimes detracted from, the quality of their lives. They point out, for example, its value in exchanging information, for example by e-mail, as a research tool and as a means of organising and presenting data. They appreciate its usefulness in improving the accuracy and presentation of their work. On the other hand, they comment that technology can be frustrating when it goes wrong. They realise, however, that its apparent shortcomings may result from inadequate information or incorrect commands.
122. The management of ICT is good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to raise the profile of the subject across the school. He has supported his colleagues well and expanded resources, such as CD-ROMs for research purposes, a digital camera and microscope, and various

software programs that are appropriate for the ages and abilities of the pupils. The school has adopted a nationally approved scheme of work to support teaching and learning in the subject. This is leading to the more systematic development of skills across the school. Teachers' plans and pupils' work are scrutinised and he has recently drafted an Internet safety policy, which is due to be presented to the governing body for approval. Good use is made of ICT to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, mainly in English and mathematics, but also in art and design and science.

MUSIC

123. By the age of seven, pupils achieve standards expected for their age. Standards in singing, playing, listening and applying knowledge and understanding are in line with the level expected for pupils of a similar age. Standards have risen since the last inspection and, by the age of eleven, standards are typical of pupils of this age. Factors contributing to this are: firstly, the improved planning and coverage of what pupils should be taught through the careful use of a commercial scheme; and secondly, the action taken to improve the quality of teaching.
124. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are benefiting from the good, new planning and good resources and make good progress in the development of musical skills. They are able to control pulse when using body percussion or percussion instruments to accompany their singing. They enjoy singing and sing simple songs from memory, accurately matching their voices to the shape of the melody, and keeping pace with the piano accompaniment. Pupils use their voices confidently in a variety of ways and, with the teacher's support, are able to follow changes of pitch indicated by simple hand signs or symbols. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the music curriculum and how to sequence pupils' learning in manageable steps. The development of pupils' practical skills and knowledge are well integrated throughout the lessons. Teachers set a brisk challenging pace, and the well-chosen activities motivate pupils. Their concentration is good and during the lesson pupils become more confident in their ability to distinguish between high and low sounds.
125. By the age of eleven, pupils sing with clear diction and a good sense of pitch and rhythm. In composing, pupils achieve standards similar to those expected for their age. They explore a range of sounds using classroom percussion, orchestral instruments and occasionally ICT. Pupils who have instrumental lessons make good use of their skills in composing sessions. This enhances the quality of their work. Pupils work well together. When performing their compositions they listen carefully and are aware of how the different parts of their piece fit together. Teachers ensure that pupils understand that they need to practise their singing and playing skills in order to improve. Pupils are sensitive to each other's feelings when discussing their work. All pupils' contributions are valued and pupils readily applaud each other's efforts. This helps pupils to gain in confidence and enhances pupils' performing skills. They make satisfactory progress in the use of a musical vocabulary, although do not apply this as a matter of course when describing their own music or talking about the music of well-known composers.
126. The quality of teaching and learning in music throughout the school is satisfactory. Although not all teachers have the same high level of knowledge to teach all aspects really confidently, particularly singing, the planning for the development of pupils' skills and understanding is good. Lessons have a clear focus and teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. The lessons provide balanced coverage of the key musical skills with appropriate emphasis on learning through practical music making. Teachers make lessons interesting for pupils by choosing themes and repertoire which are relevant and enjoyable.
127. The school is strongly committed to providing pupils with good musical experiences. The music co-ordinator works well with the other teachers and uses her expertise to adapt the plans that show what pupils are to be taught each term to meet the specific needs of the different classes. All pupils who are learning to play a musical instrument have opportunities to perform in school, and this enhances their performing skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Standards in physical education are above those expected at the ages of seven and eleven, with particular strengths in dance, games and gymnastics for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils are grouped by ability in Years 5 and 6 for swimming so all pupils make good progress; almost all are able to swim at least 25 metres using recognised strokes by the time they leave. The 'residential adventurous' stay in the Isle of Wight helps pupils effectively to work with others in an unfamiliar environment. Pupils with special needs make good progress, sometimes with support from learning assistants. After-school activities raise standards further in basketball, netball, dance and football. They are popular and well attended.
129. Attainments have risen from average to above average since the last inspection. This is because the school has introduced local authority guidance for all aspects of the subject. This is of high quality and provides a series of well-structured lessons so that teachers know exactly what to do and how to do it. All teachers follow the guidance carefully, building pupils' skills well over time.
130. Pupils respond very enthusiastically in dance and gymnastic lessons. In a lively Year 2 lesson, pupils showed they were able to explore the apparatus, balance confidently, jump, land and roll, often in a linked series of movements. They worked out their own routes and showed each other what they had done. By the time pupils reach Year 6 these series of movements are precise, fluent and imaginative. They are able to practise and refine these skills independently, to improve their performance and to readily discuss their own and others' work.
131. Similar skills are evident in dance. In a Year 5 dance lesson, 'Samurai Warriors', pupils worked a 'warrior' sequence, moving around the hall in a series of well co-ordinated aggressive, vigorous body shapes and actions, with suitable facial expressions. In the tea ceremony that followed, pupils used body, face and arm movements that were expressive and well judged.
132. In games lessons, ball skills begin well in Year 2. In a well-planned Year 2 lesson, pupils showed they were able to dribble a ball, catch it two-handed and work with partners sensibly. By Year 6 these skills are refined so they are able to use them in team games, apply tactics and compete fairly. Pupils are aware of their developing skills and enjoy taking part in clubs and competitions; for example, they have won trophies in fixtures involving local schools, reflecting the standards they reach.
133. Teaching is good. Teachers are confident because the lesson plans are so clear and systematic they know exactly what to do. Everyone approaches lessons in the right way; pupils and teachers dress suitably; activities begin and end with a warm-up and cool-down session. Lessons are lively, but well controlled, so pupils use space and apparatus safely. Teachers take every opportunity to encourage pupils to refine their performances; they use pupils to demonstrate to each other what is done well. Learning support assistants help small groups of pupils with special needs so they too tackle activities confidently.
134. Although the co-ordinator has no time to work alongside colleagues, he manages the subject well. For instance, his introduction of a whole-school plan, and some good training courses for teachers, has helped to raise standards. He has an action plan for the subject that includes the principle of assessment, including photographic evidence, but it has yet to begin.