

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HINDLIP CE FIRST SCHOOL**

Fernhill Heath, Worcester

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116822

Headteacher: Mrs J King

Reporting inspector: Mr C Parker  
11897

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> November 2002

Inspection number: 247700

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First  
School category: Voluntary Controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 to 9 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Droitwich Road  
Fernhill Heath  
Worcestershire

Postcode: WR3 8RJ

Telephone number: 01905 453455

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Weston

Date of previous inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> June 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11897	C Parker	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design technology Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed?
14083	A B Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.  How well does the school work in partnership with parents?  How well does the school care for its pupils?
20498	M Hamby	Team inspector	English Art and design, geography, history, music, religious education, Foundation Stage curriculum.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hindlip is a First School for pupils aged from 4 to 9 years. Currently, 18 of the 82 (FTE) pupils on roll are in the Foundation Stage. Almost all of the pupils are of white British heritage and all speak English as their first language. The school caters for a few travelling children, but the number attending the schools fluctuates. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs and fewer on the special educational needs register than in most schools. A very small number of pupils are receiving free school meals. Although the children have a differing range of experiences before they start school, their attainment on entry is above average.

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

The headteacher's strong leadership and clear direction have brought about many improvements. She is very well supported by the subject leaders. Although there are weaknesses in the provision for the youngest children, there is strong commitment to continuing improvement. The school is now offering a good education for the pupils in Years 1 to 4, who are well taught, make good progress and are attaining well above average standards. The school is providing good value for money.

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

- Standards are above average in writing and science, and well above average in reading and mathematics. The quality of the pupils' work in design and technology and their performance in physical education are good.
- The teaching in Years 1 to 4 is consistently good and is particularly strong in English and mathematics. The teachers set the pupils challenging tasks and as a result they are making good progress and achieving well.
- The pupils in Years 1 to 4 behave very well, are keen to learn and respond very positively to the tasks set for them. This is because they have a very good range of opportunities for learning and for their personal development.
- The parents value the work of the school and support their children's learning.
- The school has very good arrangements for ensuring the health, safety and well being of the pupils.
- The subject leaders are managing the ongoing improvement of the curriculum very effectively.
- The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership which has resulted in significant improvement and a clear direction for the school.
- The school development plan provides a very clear framework for continued improvement.

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

- The provision for the children in the foundation stage is unsatisfactory. Consequently, they are not making enough progress.

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

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

When the school was inspected in June 2000, it was judged to be underachieving. Since then, there have been considerable improvements in many areas of its work and as a result it no longer falls into

this category. Standards have risen sharply, and by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 the pupils are now achieving at the levels they should in English, mathematics and science. The new headteacher, appointed in April 2002, is leading the school with enthusiasm and determination, which has driven a programme of change and brought rapid improvements. Her monitoring of the school's performance is very thorough and has resulted in the deployment of support to improve the teaching in the reception class where, because of staffing changes, it has deteriorated since the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	B	C	A	B
writing	B	B	B	C
mathematics	D	C	A	A

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Although standards in the reception class are better than average, the children are not making enough progress because they are not being set tasks that motivate and challenge them.

In Years 1 to 4, standards in reading and mathematics have risen sharply, are well above average and now compare very favourably with similar schools. The children write for a wide range of purposes, the content of their work is interesting and it is neatly written. The teachers place good emphasis on this aspect of the curriculum and consequently standards in writing are securely above average and continuing to rise. Standards in science are above average; the pupils have a good knowledge of the topics they cover, but their investigative skills are not developed as well as they should be. In all subjects, the pupils are attaining at least in line with expectations, and in design technology and physical education the quality of their work is good. The pupils' information technology skills are developing well, but they are not using them widely enough across the curriculum.

The travelling children and the pupils with special educational needs are making good progress towards the targets set for them because they are well supported by their teachers and the classroom assistants.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils are keen, lively and eager to learn. They are very polite and well mannered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall behaviour is good but in the reception class some children can be noisy and unsettled when they are not engaged in challenging activities. In all other classes the behaviour is very good indeed.
Personal development and relationships	The relationships within the school are very good. The pupils co-operate very well. The older pupils accept responsibility willingly and act in a mature and sensible manner.
Attendance	Attendance has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average.

Attendance was low over the recent past. This was largely due to the number of pupils taken out of school for holidays during term time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Unsatisfactory	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 teaching in the reception class is unsatisfactory because the teacher's expectations are not high enough and the children's learning is not well managed.

In Years 1 to 4, the lessons are very well planned and the teaching is good. The teachers are very clear what it is that they want the children to learn, set very clear targets and ensure a good pace of learning is maintained throughout the lessons. They provide tasks that appropriately challenge all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. English and mathematics are particularly well taught. The teachers also have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and effort. As a result, the children respond well and are learning effectively.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is thoroughly planned and provides the pupils with an interesting range of activities except in the reception class where the learning opportunities are not sufficiently stimulating and challenging.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The programme of work provided for these pupils is carefully planned and well supported by the teachers and the classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The children are valued and the school makes very good provision for their personal development. There is a clear moral code and teamwork is strongly promoted. The school is preparing children very well for life in a multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very effective care for its pupils. There are excellent risk assessment procedures.

The school keeps the parents very well informed about the curriculum and their children's progress. They receive regular newsletters and are made very welcome when they visit the school.

The school is enhancing the pupils' knowledge of information and communication technology well, but their skills are not yet used and developed extensively across the curriculum. The foundation stage curriculum covers all areas of learning, but the activities provided for the pupils are often not demanding enough and structured play is not used effectively.

The arrangements for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics have improved considerably and are now very good. However, in other subjects the assessment of the pupils' progress as they move through the school is not well developed.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads and manages the school very effectively. She has given the subject leaders more authority and opportunity to manage changes to the curriculum. As a result, there is a strong commitment to continuing improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They make frequent monitoring visits to find out for themselves how well the school is doing. They are becoming increasingly effective in holding the school to account.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and subject leaders thoroughly evaluate the results of tests in English and mathematics and the pupils' progress as they move through the school. They also systematically monitor the quality of the teaching and the standard of the pupils' work.
The strategic use of	Resources have been carefully allocated to support the raising of

resources	standards through a carefully prioritised school development plan.
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The teaching and non-teaching staff are well deployed. The number of pupils in each class is less than average, resulting in positive pupil teacher ratios. The school has adequate resources, but they are not always used to good effect in the reception class. The accommodation is clean and bright, and the teachers display the pupils' work effectively to produce an interesting environment. However, the space available in some classrooms and in the hall restricts the range of activities the school can offer effectively.

The school uses its resources well and the governors check that it is doing the best for its pupils. The governors consult outside agencies and parents to ascertain their views. Through competition they seek to obtain value for money in their acquisitions.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The good teaching and good progress made by the pupils.</li> <li>• The good teaching and good variety of interesting tasks.</li> <li>• The close working relationship with parents and the good range of information they receive.</li> <li>• The improvements made by the new headteacher – particularly in regard to the children's behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better feedback following target setting.</li> </ul>

The inspectors generally agree with the very positive views of many parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the pre-inspection meeting. However, the inspectors find that the teaching and learning in the reception class is not good enough at present. A few parents felt that they were inadequately informed about their children's progress, particularly in regard to the targets set for them. The inspectors found that the school provides meetings and written reports for parents that are comparable to those found in most schools. Moreover, its open and welcoming approach makes it easy for parents to obtain additional information if it is required.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Since the school was inspected in June 2000, standards at the end of Years 2 and 4 have risen, and in the important areas of English and mathematics the pupils are now achieving well and attaining the standards they should. The rapid improvement achieved in the last twelve months coincides with changes in leadership, thorough monitoring of the teaching and rigorous analysis of the pupils' performance.
2. Allowing for the very small cohort, an analysis of the 2002 test results of the end of Year 2 shows that they compare very favourably with schools nationally. Furthermore, they are either in line with or better than the results achieved in similar schools. In writing, the results are comfortably above the national average and well above it in reading and mathematics. When compared to similar schools they are average in writing, above average in reading and well above average in mathematics.
3. A thorough analysis of the pupils' performance in 2002 gives a strong indication that these improvements will be maintained. The analysis draws on not only the results, but also the answers given and the approaches taken by boys and girls. Although numbers were very small, this was useful in identifying gender differences and addressing the seemingly weaker performance of the boys. The inspection evidence supports the school's view that the difference in attainment of boys and girls varies from year to year and that both genders are given equal opportunity. The information collected by the teachers is used to set individual targets and is brought together to set appropriately challenging targets for the school.
4. Standards at the end of Year 4 in 2002 were also well above average in reading with four fifths of pupils working close to the level expected of 11 year olds. In writing, almost all pupils attained the expected level and almost half reached the higher level. The position was very similar in mathematics. The inspection showed that in present Year 4, standards are well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing.
5. From the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 4, the pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The weakest area of progress is spelling although the school has recently introduced a new programme of work to specifically address this issue.
6. In science, standards have also risen and are above average overall. The pupils have a good knowledge in all areas of the science curriculum, but their investigative skills need to be improved to bring them up to the same level. In all subjects, the pupils are attaining the standards expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. In design and technology the quality of the pupils' work is above average and in physical education the pupils perform particularly well.
7. The travelling children and the pupils with special educational needs are making good progress towards the targets set for them because they are well supported by their teachers and the classroom assistants.
8. There have been significant improvements in Years 1 to 4 where the pupils are now learning effectively, achieving well and making good progress in many areas of their learning, and particularly in English and mathematics. However, the situation in the foundation stage has

deteriorated. The children enter the school with a wide range of abilities that are higher than average in most areas of learning. Most of the children are on course to attain the early learning goals in their physical and creative development, and should exceed these goals in all the other areas of learning in the foundation curriculum. Nevertheless, some children are not making enough progress, particularly the most able who are not learning at a quick enough pace.

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

9. The vast majority of pupils have very positive attitudes towards the school. They arrive promptly each morning and are keen to start the day's activities. They quickly settle down in registrations, assemblies and in class. Nearly all children are keen, lively and eager to learn. They are attentive to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and opinions. The vast majority of parents agree that their children like school.
10. Overall, the standards of behaviour are good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and most of the pupils themselves have high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The pupils move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner and their behaviour in the classrooms, at breaks and at lunchtime is consistently good, and sometimes very good. However, some children in the reception class can be noisy and unsettled when not fully engaged or sufficiently challenged. This sometimes disrupts the teaching and learning in the classroom. However, there were no signs of either bullying or isolation of individual pupils. There have been no exclusions in recent years. The vast majority of parents agree that behaviour in the school is good.
11. The relationships in the school are very good. The vast majority of pupils get on very well with their teachers, other adults and also with one another. They are polite, well mannered and very welcoming to visitors. Children of all ages work very well together in the classrooms and play well together in the playground. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. The pupils with special educational needs are totally accepted and fully integrated into all activities. Most children consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies, they are respectful of the occasion, willingly join in hymn singing and bow their heads reverently during prayers.
12. The pupils' personal development is good. The children are learning a good range of social skills that is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. In the classrooms, the majority of pupils willingly take responsibility for their own work, and in lessons many were observed working independently. The children in the reception class play happily together when given the opportunity to do so and share the toys well. Outside lessons the older pupils willingly take on extra responsibilities, for example, taking registers to the office and preparing the hall for assemblies. There is a good range of educational visits and the children meet an appropriate range of visitors. The school supports local charities and the pupils are made aware of others less fortunate than themselves. The majority of parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
13. The attendance rate at the school has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average. The low level of attendance in the recent past was mainly due to the number of pupils taken out of school for holidays during term time. The relatively high level of unauthorised absence is entirely due to a tiny minority of persistent absentees of whom the school is fully aware and in regard to whom it has taken all possible appropriate action.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The overall provision for the pupils has improved and the teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved considerably. However, there remains an element of unsatisfactory teaching in the reception class where there is a new teacher.
15. All of the lessons seen in Years 1 to 4 were at least satisfactory, most were good and some were very good and occasionally excellent. In these classes, the lessons are very well planned and the teaching is consistently good overall. The teachers are very clear what it is they want the children to learn, set very clear targets and ensure a good pace of learning is maintained throughout the lessons. They provide tasks that challenge all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs. They also have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and effort. As a result, the children respond well and are learning effectively.
16. English and mathematics are particularly well taught. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the literacy and numeracy strategies, which they are using very effectively to plan their lessons in considerable detail. The teachers make very clear to their pupils what they are going to learn and what they are expected to achieve. They motivate and interest the pupils, pose probing questions and demand thoughtful answers even from the youngest pupils. This was evident in Year 1, for example, when they were discussing different sources of light. Right across the curriculum, the lessons are well structured and the classroom assistants are well briefed and deployed. The teachers are making increasing use of information and communications technology in their teaching, for example, by using the digital camera to capture aspects of the pupils' performance in physical education or using a digital projector to make illustrations visible to all in an art lesson. However, they are very aware that they could make much more use of a range of technology in their teaching.
17. The marking of the pupils' work is good. The teachers make useful comments to help them to improve their work and also take note of those pupils who have either exceeded or fallen short of expectations in lessons. They use this information to good effect when planning subsequent lessons and focussing individual support where it will be most effective. This is also the case in regard to the individual education plans of the pupils with special educational needs. These plans contain clear targets and good records of how well the pupils are working towards them. Homework is well organised and the vast majority of parents are happy with the arrangements.
18. In Years 1 to 4, the pupils are making good progress in their acquisition of knowledge and skills because they are well taught and the teachers' expectations are high. The pupils apply themselves well to the tasks they are set, work hard in lessons and complete a good volume of work. They are interested and happily enter into discussions with their teachers who value their contributions and encourage them to ask questions and play a full part in the lessons.
19. The teaching in the reception class is unsatisfactory because it neither sufficiently encourages the children's growing independence nor supports their disposition to learn and become creative thinkers. Most of the teaching is geared towards the children of average ability, and consequently those of higher ability are not well catered for and do not achieve all that they could. Moreover, the children's learning and behaviour are not managed effectively. Although the teacher's lesson planning follows the same format as that used by the rest of the teaching staff, it does not set out precisely what the children are expected to know by the end of the lesson. Consequently, the lessons tend to lose their way and drift to a conclusion rather than being guided by the teacher. As a result, the children are not making the progress they should.

Some of the younger children need more opportunities for well structured and purposeful play rather than having to sit and listen for long periods of time. The headteacher and governors should take further steps to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning in the reception class improves. **This is a key issue for action.**

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

20. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage takes appropriate account of the recent national guidance, and includes the recommended areas of learning. However, some of the activities are not relevant to the needs of children in their reception year, and the way that the curriculum is organised does not enable all the children to learn as much as they could. For example, lessons lasting over an hour are unsuitable for this age group, and particularly for the youngest children. Too much of the children's time is spent in passive activities instead of active structured play experiences. There is a small area for play outside, but this is not used as well as it might be and the lessons planned for the outside do not build sufficiently well on what the children already know and can do. The curriculum for the pupils in the reception class needs to be more carefully matched to the needs of the children. **This is a key issue for action.**
21. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 4 is very well planned and organised in a manner that encourages the teachers to make good links between subjects. The duration of lessons is now appropriate and the range of activities is varied so that the pupils' motivation is maintained. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are now being used very effectively to provide the pupils with lessons that build on their previous learning at a good rate. Taken overall, the management of the curriculum in Years 1 to 4 has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now providing the pupils with a broad, balanced and interesting range of learning experiences.
22. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of clubs, such as the engineering club which has a positive impact on the design and technology curriculum. The school also makes good use of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest. Various aspects of the children's personal and social education are consistently developed throughout the school day, and specific health related topics, such as care of teeth, are taught as part of the science curriculum. The school has very good links with its local cluster of schools and the local high school which provides good support through its sports college status. There have also been clear benefits for the school from its links with a beacon school, notably in the development of a website.
23. The school is socially inclusive and ensures equality of access and opportunity for all of the pupils. The small number of travelling children is well supported by their own class teachers, the classroom assistants and the specialist support teacher who visits the school. The pupils who are identified as having special educational needs have individual education plans that set them targets for improvements. These documents are closely aligned to the teachers planning and are successful in ensuring that the pupils are set work that meets their needs and that they receive the necessary support for access to the whole curriculum.
24. There is an atmosphere in the school that indicates that the pupils are valued, and the provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The assembly themes are planned to give pupils the opportunity to explore values and beliefs and how they are important in their own and other peoples' lives. There are also many opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual matters in lessons, for example, in English, music and art. The teachers encourage their pupils to ask questions and put forward their own ideas and suggestions. There are good links

with the community through which the pupils learn to appreciate the needs of others, for example, by raising funds for local charities.

25. The school provides a clear moral code as a basis for good behaviour. All forms of equality are rigorously promoted. The pupils have been fully involved in negotiating their own school rules and the consequences of not following them. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties are helped to understand right from wrong. The teachers and support staff set very good examples and have a positive influence on the standards of behaviour achieved throughout the school. This aspect has improved significantly since the last inspection.
26. The school provides a very good range of opportunities for the children to work and play together. Boys and girls are encouraged to work in pairs and groups, for example, in literacy and art lessons. There are also opportunities to take part in school presentations. Teamwork is strongly promoted in physical education and in a good range of sporting activities. The children are offered many formal responsibilities around the school, for example, as register monitors and classroom helpers. There is a wide range of appropriate out-of-school visits, including a residential experience for the older pupils.
27. The school has a comprehensive multicultural education policy based on the aim that all children, irrespective of gender, background, race and religion should have equal access to the curriculum. A very good selection of music from around the world is regularly used to introduce assemblies and different languages are used during class 4 registrations. The pupils have studied Aboriginal paintings as part of their artwork. The school is positively preparing children for life in a multicultural society.

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

28. The school provides very effective care for its pupils. The chair of governors and the headteacher place a very high priority on pastoral care and provide very good leadership in this aspect. All members of staff are caring, dedicated and committed to the welfare of the children in their charge. They are very approachable and supportive. The non-teaching staff are effectively deployed and give very good support for both the teachers and the pupils, particularly those children who have additional educational needs. This has a beneficial effect on the progress these children are making. The school makes good use of relevant external agencies, for example, the traveller support services visit the school regularly and the teachers ensure that the traveller children are fully integrated into all activities.
29. The procedures for child protection are securely in place and fully understood by all the teaching staff. However, some members of the non-teaching staff, for example, the midday supervisors, have not been briefed or trained on this aspect. The governing body and the headteacher take their health and safety responsibilities very seriously and all the required health and safety inspections, including very detailed risk assessments, are systematically carried out and meticulously recorded. Conscientious teachers and teaching assistants, who are alert and vigilant, supervise the pupils very well at breaks. Experienced midday supervisors undertake lunchtime supervision conscientiously, and the standard of care is very high.
30. The school has very good procedures for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour. For example, the behaviour policy is supplemented by school rules, which have been discussed and agreed with the pupils. Apart from in the reception class, where the management of pupils is weak, the teachers have high expectations of what constitutes acceptable behaviour, and in Years 1 to 4 discipline is administered consistently. This has a positive influence on the

high standards of good behaviour maintained throughout the school. The procedures for recording and monitoring absence are good. The registers are completed correctly, reasons for non-attendance are recorded consistently and absences are rigorously followed up.

31. The class teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils extremely well and have a very good understanding of their individual personal needs. Better lesson planning has brought about much improved assessment of the pupils' progress in lessons. Manageable and useful records in English and mathematics now give the teachers a very clear picture of the pupils' achievements as they move through the school. In the other subjects, assessments are made after each lesson, but the teachers do not have the same overview of the level at which the pupils are working. The school should now look for a manageable solution to recording the pupils' progress in the non core subjects. **This is an additional issue for action.**
32. Baseline assessments are completed for the pupils as they enter the school, and these give broad indications of each child's ability. However, these assessments are not used well enough to identify learning priorities, and to plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child. In the reception class, the record keeping is currently insufficient to track the children's progress. For instance, in the Year 1 English records there are no entries to show the pupils' progress through their reception year. Moreover, there is little record of the children's progress in lessons, apart from the teacher's observational notes. Although these are helpful, they do not embrace all areas of learning or capture the main features of the children's progress either in the lessons or over longer periods of time.

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

33. Relationships between the school and parents are very good. The school enjoys the active support of the majority of the parents. A good number regularly help in the classrooms, where they are used effectively to support learning in lessons, accompany the children on out-of-school trips, and give of their time to help in other ways around the school. For example, parents have brightened up the outdoor environment by painting railings and fences. Most parents are fully involved in their children's work in school and at home, for instance, they fully support homework and home reading. There is a very active Parents Association that organises fund raising events for the school and a considerable amount of money has been raised for the school in this way. The majority of parents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school.
34. Communication between the school and home is very good. The school sends out weekly, informative newsletters, which include curriculum details, and regular letters about specific events and activities. It also publishes an attractive, comprehensive and informative prospectus. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and issue a useful annual report. The parents are given an informative annual progress report that clearly indicates what the pupils can do, the progress they are making and sets targets for improvement. They are offered the opportunity to attend appropriate consultation meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with the teachers. The parents of children with special educational needs are kept well informed and fully involved in their children's education. The headteacher and her staff are very welcoming and approachable. They make themselves readily available to parents at the start and end of each day. There are also plenty of opportunities for parents to speak informally to their child's class teacher.
35. Overall, the school has very effective links with parents. The high quality parental involvement has a beneficial influence on the children's academic achievement and personal development.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. Since the last inspection, the leadership and management of the school have improved markedly. The new headteacher leads the staff very well. She has created a clear vision for the school and generated a strong commitment to improvement, which is shared by the subject leaders. The changes that were needed to secure a whole school approach to key aspects of its work have been very effectively managed and resulted in rapid improvements in recent months. The headteacher has successfully influenced and motivated the teachers so that there are consistent approaches throughout Years 1 to 4 which have resulted in higher standards at the end of both Years 2 and 4.
37. The school is also very well managed. There is a very thorough and carefully targeted school development plan that draws together all the improvement initiatives and includes a comprehensive programme of monitoring and evaluation activities that are increasingly being used to clarify and modify the focus of the school's work. The headteacher and governors have aligned performance management targets with the priorities for school development and improvement to ensure all of the available resources are assigned to improving the provision made for the pupils and the standards they attain.
38. The school's improvement work has been focussed on the addressing issues from the last inspection, but the headteacher's monitoring of the school's performance has also highlighted the situation in the reception class where the teaching is unsatisfactory. She had already identified a need to give additional support for a recently appointed member of staff in addition to the required induction process for newly qualified teachers. The headteacher not only gives the staff considerable support within the school, but has also provided opportunities for them to observe good practice in other schools and has arranged visits by local authority specialists. Although the inspection found that the teaching in the reception class remains unsatisfactory overall, a considerable level of support is being given to the teacher to foster improvement.
39. The role of the subject leaders has developed significantly since the last inspection. These teachers now have a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in all subjects and a long-term strategy to address them. Over the recent past, standards in English and mathematics have risen as a result of the considerable effort that has been put into improving the planning of work, the resources and the teaching. The subject leaders are now utilising the skills they have developed through these activities in other subjects, such as science and information and communication technology, where they are working to improve areas of relative weakness.
40. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well and have made progress in their role as critical friends of the school. They are using frequent monitoring visits to the school to find out for themselves how well it is doing. The new chair of the governing body works very closely with the headteacher. The headteacher now prepares her reports in a way that requires the governors to raise questions about the work of the school. As a result of training, the governors are becoming increasingly effective in holding the school to account.
41. The school uses its resources well and the governors are conscious of the need to check that the school is doing the best for its pupils. They consult outside agencies and parents to ascertain their views. Through competition they seek to get value for money from their acquisitions.
42. The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified teaching and non-teaching staff to cover the curriculum. They are well deployed. The number of pupils in each class is lower than average,

resulting in a positive pupil teacher ratio. There are subject leaders for all curriculum areas with the exception of geography. There are appropriate procedures for the induction of new staff and the procedures for appraising teachers are securely in place and up to date.

43. The school is situated close to a busy road with no parking areas for parents to drop off and collect children. A local club allows parents to use its car park at the start and end of the school day. The school has an adequate size hard surface playground, an adventure play area and an attractive environmental area with a pond. It also has a sports field situated approximately 500 yards along an adjacent lane.
44. The teaching accommodation is clean and bright, and the teachers display the pupils' work effectively to produce a stimulating and attractive learning environment. There are sufficient classrooms for the number of pupils currently on roll, but the space in some rooms and in the hall restricts the range of activities the school can effectively offer. For example, there is little room for computers; and therefore information and communication technology teaching has to be classroom based. Furthermore, the library is situated in a corridor and there is a shortage of storage space for resources throughout the school. Despite these restrictions, the teachers use the accommodation to the best possible effect.
45. In almost all subjects the resources are satisfactory, and in science they are good. However, there is a lack of tuned instruments for music. Children under the age of five now have regular outdoor play with large equipment, but there are no large wheeled vehicles available for them.

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

46. The governors and headteacher should take steps to improve the provision made for the pupils in the reception class by ensuring that:
  - the curriculum is appropriate
  - the teaching is more precisely focussed on what the children should learn
  - the children are fully involved and interested in a varied range of activities.

Paragraphs 19 and 20

In addition the headteacher and teachers should continue to implement the comprehensive school development plan placing particular emphasis on:

- improving the pupils' investigative skills in science
- making broader use of information and communication technology across the curriculum
- developing a manageable means of recording the pupils' progress in each of the non core subjects of the curriculum.

Paragraphs 31, 79 and 96

● **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

*Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

*Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	11	4	3	0	0
Percentage	4	27	42	15	12	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 almost four percentage points.*

*Information about the school's pupils*

**Pupils on the school's roll**

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	82
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Special educational needs**

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	9

**English as an additional language**

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

**Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

*Attendance*

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	5.4

**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	4	6	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	9	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (100)	90 (100)	90 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	9	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (100)	90 (95)	90 (100)
	National	85 (85)	85 (89)	89 (89)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	68
Any other minority ethnic group	

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

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	22

**Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	64

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
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.*

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

**Financial information**

Financial year	2002
	£
Total income	236 697
Total expenditure	234 622
Expenditure per pupil	2 728
Balance brought forward from previous year	16 500
Balance carried forward to next year	18 575

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	82
Number of questionnaires returned	35

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	26	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	40	0	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	71	26	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	49	9	3	3
The teaching is good.	57	31	0	0	11
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	46	11	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	9	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	26	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	66	26	0	6	3
The school is well led and managed.	74	20	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	17	6	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	23	11	0	14

## **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**

47. Children are admitted to the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Those born between September 1st and February 28<sup>th</sup> are admitted on a full time basis, and the others with birthdays between March 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup> are admitted part time for the first half of the year. At the time of the inspection, there were 18 pupils in the reception class, the majority of whom were still four years of age. The school has an effective induction policy to make the transition from home and playgroup to school as smooth and enjoyable as possible for both parent and child. All children receive a personalised booklet about starting school to share with their parents, who are also given access to a video so that they can see what their children do in school.
48. The children enter the school with a wide range of previous experiences, but taken as a group their abilities are higher than average in most areas of learning. Most of the children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in their physical and creative development and should exceed these goals in all the other areas of learning. Although standards are higher than the age-related expectations, some of the children are not making enough progress, particularly the most able who are not learning at a quick enough pace. At the time of the previous inspection, the provision in the Foundation Stage was good and three-quarters of the teaching observed was either good or better. This is no longer the case. The provision for the school's youngest pupils is currently unsatisfactory.

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

49. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is above age-related expectations. The children have settled into school routines well and are already showing signs of independence and initiative. They dress and undress for physical education with little assistance and anticipate the need to move toys and equipment to accommodate more children joining in their group. They move around the school quietly and sit remarkably still in assemblies. They join in with prayers and respond very well to the sense of occasion. Whilst the children behave very well when they are given clear guidelines on what is acceptable, some of them misbehave in lessons. When the activities lack challenge, they can become silly and mischievous and do not work as hard as they should.
50. The teaching in this area of learning is not good enough to help the children make the progress of which they are clearly capable. The planning does not take sufficient account of the entirety of this area of learning, and so the children do not get enough opportunity to solve problems, gain independence, and develop a disposition to learn things for themselves.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

51. The children's attainment is above age-related expectations in all aspects of this area of learning. Most of them speak confidently in the class and listen well when required. For instance, they responded accurately to a visitor's instructions to find a long green pencil or four yellow counters. The children engage in animated conversations with each other and develop their own games. For example, when doing an alphabet jig-saw two boys started talking about the pictures on it and recalling when they had seen the various things and what they might have put on the puzzle pieces to replace the ones that the manufacturer had chosen.

52. The teaching in this area of learning is generally sound and has some good features. The teacher uses her voice well when reading stories and this helps the children to respond appropriately. They particularly enjoy fiction, and know that books are usually read from front to back and from left to right. The classroom assistant and other adults are deployed effectively and this is of considerable help to the children with special educational needs. Good use is made of the resources, such as big books, to capture the children's interest and to teach them about the settings and characters within the book. Suitable emphasis is placed on the teaching of reading and writing, but more could be done to make these activities meaningful to the children. At present, they have insufficient opportunities to write as part of their freely chosen play, and the work set for the more able pupils is insufficiently demanding. Some of the able pupils are already able to write simple words for themselves, but do not have enough opportunity to build on this in lessons.

### **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

53. The children have a natural curiosity about numbers, and the school has a wide range of resources to support this interest. The children count sequentially to ten and the more able know how many are in a set less than five, without having to count them. They know what addition means and can calculate the answer to simple addition problems, either mentally or by using their fingers to count on. The children understand numerals and know that they signify a certain quantity. They recognise simple plane shapes, such as squares and circles, and describe them using appropriate terms like "straight" and "round". Although the children's attainment is higher than the expected levels, the teaching is unsatisfactory and not helping them to make the best progress.
54. The organisation of the lessons is not suited to the learning needs of the children and the management of their behaviour is not good enough to ensure that they concentrate on the set tasks. For example, in a counting activity, the children used their dinosaur counters instead to recreate "a big dinosaur battle", and rather than reminding them of the task, the teacher acquiesced and allowed the game to continue. This meant that the children involved in the game learned no more about addition, and the one who tried to keep to the set task was distracted and unable to complete the activity. Some of the children are ready to record simple mathematical tasks like sorting, counting and addition, but as yet there is nothing recorded in their books.

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

55. The children are keen to learn, are curious about their world and enjoy the opportunity to ask questions about how things work. They have a high level of knowledge about the natural world and about technology. For example, the older children know that the propellers on aeroplanes help to keep them airborne, and that they "whiz round and round". They know that the wings "help the plane to balance" and that "there are little flaps that make it turn". They use the computer and a programmable toy confidently, although they do not always stick to the required tasks. For instance, instead of counting the number of steps to make "pixie" reach its destination, they programmed in a variety of turns to make it move around the room.
56. The children know that they live in the countryside and that there is a big city nearby where they can go to the cinema or buy clothes and shoes. They talk about what they like and dislike, and they enjoy their time at school. They are confident when making things for themselves and use sticky tape and glue appropriately. The teaching is sound, but does not make the most of the children's existing abilities because it is not structured well enough to build on what the children

already know. For example, in a science activity the children were expected to learn about cause and effect by putting ramps at different heights and watching where the cars went as a consequence of this action. This was a potentially very useful activity. However, the children's learning was not well managed because the teacher's questions were not structured carefully to ensure that there were appropriate links between cause and effect.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

57. The school provides suitable opportunities for physical development in the classroom, the hall and to a lesser extent in the outside play space. The children show appropriate skills when using pencils and small tools like scissors and spatulas. They use their wrists flexibly when colouring in, and most of them are able to keep within the prescribed outlines. In this area of learning, the teaching emphasises the importance of perseverance, and the children improve their skills in using their hands, but it is unsatisfactory overall and restricting progress. In a physical education lesson, for example, the aim was to help the children recreate the role of toys. Although there was some opportunity for them to move like cars, trains or soldiers, the teaching did not build on what the pupils could already do, and there was no improvement in their movements as a consequence of the lesson. Some of the activities that take place in the outside area are not planned well enough and consequently they offer little more than a playtime.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

58. This area of learning is not planned well enough to encompass the full range of opportunities that the children need to develop their aesthetic awareness, communicate their own ideas, and explore music, movement and the arts. There is too much emphasis on the visual arts at the expense of other creative stimuli, and the expectations are far too prescriptive to allow the children to respond individually to a task. For example, the "fireworks" on the display lacked an individual response, and in the lesson about making a robot, the teaching resulted in a range of similar products.
59. The children engage enthusiastically in the tasks, and when drawing and painting produce some lovely individual works of art. For instance, their drawings of robots showed that they all had their own clear ideas of what their own robot would look like. Some of them drew articulated arms, whilst others wanted their robot to have one fixed arm; some had antennae, others had switches and flashing lights. However, these delightful designs were not used to help the children construct their own models. They all had to make their robot from a small range of equipment, following a similar pattern. A particularly weak feature of this lesson was the requirement that children should paint white paper black to make arms for their robots. This neither inspired the children nor helped them to develop the painting skills that the teacher intended.
60. Although there are occasional opportunities for the children to explore roles, for instance in the class toyshop, this activity is not given a high status. The shop is rather barren and in a corner of the room where there is little space to recreate a shopping environment. There are few opportunities for the children to write lists and orders as part of this experience, and the adult involvement is too infrequent to extend the children's imaginative play.

## **ENGLISH**

61. The pupils in Years 1 to 4 make good progress in this subject because they are keen to learn and are taught very well. They make particularly good progress in reading, and by the end of

Year 2 they reach standards that are well above the expected levels. This momentum continues through Year 3 and Year 4, so that when they leave the school, most of the pupils read difficult texts with confidence and accuracy. Standards in reading have improved since the previous inspection, and are now one of the school's key strengths. The teachers make good use of the national guidance to structure their teaching and are skilful in pacing their lessons to ensure that the pupils learn well.

62. Regardless of their ability, the pupils throughout the school are keen to read. They are encouraged to do so, not only by the school staff, but also by their parents who make a very useful contribution to their children's learning by supervising reading at home and commenting in their reading diaries. The teachers communicate very positive attitudes towards books, make reading sessions pleasurable and help the pupils to see that learning can be fun. They are skilful in choosing texts that arouse the pupils' interests and are pitched at an appropriate level for their ability. This engenders confidence in the pupils, particularly those in the early stages of reading and those who have difficulties in reading, and helps them to learn quickly.
63. The pupils progress from reading simple structured texts in Year 1 to reading popular children's fiction in Year 4. In Year 2, the more able pupils read poetry with a good understanding of the composition of verse, and use intonation to enhance its meaning. The less able pupils make use of punctuation like full stops to make sense of the text and employ various means to establish the meaning of unfamiliar words. The pupils of average ability read aloud with good expression, and can read silently when requested. They understand what they have read and express choices for the sorts of books they would like to read next. In Years 3 and 4, most of the pupils understand that fiction can be classified into various types and they are starting to express preferences for such things as adventure stories or traditional tales. They make reference to the text when answering questions about the characters in their books and use the blurb to guide their subsequent choices.
64. Throughout the school, a strong feature of the teaching of reading is that it provides a good balance between fiction and non-fiction. This helps the pupils, particularly some of the boys who like information books better than fiction, to enjoy their reading, to develop their skills, and to do their own research. The pupils in Year 2, including those with special educational needs, know where to find non-fiction texts and understand that these books do not have to be read in their entirety. They use the contents page to find information, and the more able pupils use the index very efficiently to locate the information that they need. The pupils have very good alphabetic knowledge and this helps them to use an index and a glossary effectively. In Year 4, the pupils have acquired sophisticated skills, such as skimming a text to find key words, and are diligent in returning books to their correct place on the library shelf.
65. In Year 4, the pupils talk about the characters in their books and other topics of interest to them, such as their research on mammoths. Their speaking and listening skills are within the expected levels at both key stages, progressing from talking about matters of immediate interest in Year 1 to discussion of more abstract terms in Year 4. In some lessons, such as a science lesson in Year 1, the teacher's skilful questioning helped the pupils to make good headway with their speaking skills. She encouraged them to use specific scientific vocabulary in their explanations and to answer in complete sentences, rather than single words and phrases. In all classes, the teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and this helps the more reticent children to contribute confidently in whole class discussions. The pupils know that their ideas will be valued and in turn they are encouraged to value and respect the ideas and opinions of others. In lessons across the curriculum, the teachers occasionally include opportunities for the pupils to

discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups and this is effective in helping the pupils to listen carefully to each other.

66. Since the previous inspection, the standards of the pupils' writing have improved significantly and are now above the expected levels in both key stages. The report was also critical of both the standards being attained and the unsatisfactory progress made by the pupils. This is no longer the case. The pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all aspects of writing, and there is evidence of very good progress in handwriting and good progress in punctuation and grammar. One of the reasons for this improvement is that the teachers are now much clearer about what they want the pupils to learn in each lesson. They convey this explicitly so that the pupils know exactly what is required of them. The assessment is good and enables the teachers to pitch the work at the right level for the various groups of pupils. The teachers' marking has also improved so that the pupils receive a high level of feedback about their work including what they need to do to improve. The teachers are now more skilled in involving the pupils in elements of self-assessment, and this further enhances their learning. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher used the whole-class session very effectively to involve the pupils in judging what various pupils had done well in their writing, and what would help to improve the writing even more. This was particularly effective in helping the pupils with special educational needs to have pride in their work and to end the lesson with a sense of achievement.
67. The pupils try hard with their writing, and have developed a sense of pride in their work. There is a clear improvement from the time of the last inspection, when the inspectors noted that there was too much crossing out in pupils' work and that the work lacked organisation and structure. This no longer applies because the teachers have taught their pupils to use simple writing plans that help them in writing according to its intended readership. The pupils take care when forming their letters, and in Year 2 they are taught to join their handwriting and many of them produce a neat cursive legible script in the first half term. By Year 4, not only are most of the pupils writing neatly and fluently, but some are also developing their own handwriting style and are able with total confidence to write on the black board when requested to do so.
68. Standards of spelling are satisfactory throughout the school and are helped by the practice that the pupils get at home. The lower attaining pupils in Year 2 make sensible attempts to spell words by using their knowledge of the sounds that various letters make. The more able pupils also use their phonic knowledge well, and are starting to remember blends of letters like "wh" and "sh" and strings of letters that usually follow one another. By the time pupils reach Year 4, they spell common words accurately and make good attempts at less frequently used words. A good feature of the pupils' attitudes to their work is that they are not inhibited from including adventurous words in their stories even if they cannot spell them properly. Their stories include powerful words like "shivering" and "excitedly" which add richness to their narratives and help to bring the text alive to the reader. The pupils are encouraged to extend their writing over a number of lessons, to re-draft it and to aim high. The stories have good openings, such as "Yesterday I went to the park and it was a disaster", which engage the reader's interest straight away. The more able pupils are starting to write at reasonable length and to embellish their stories with characterisation and dialogue. The story endings, however, are conventional and rather abrupt, and are not always congruent with the thrust of the tale. This is a feature common to year groups throughout the school.
69. A good feature of the curriculum is that it presents a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to write in various styles, for different purposes and for a range of readerships. This helps all the pupils to make good progress because some of them respond better to the challenge of writing reports and accounts than to writing stories and poems. Another good feature is that the

teachers are enthusiastic and keen to improve their practice. They have been on numerous courses, made visits to other schools and discussed together the strengths and weakness of their practice. Together, they have made significant improvement over the last two years and are now in a strong position to continue this improvement.

## **MATHEMATICS**

70. Standards in mathematics have improved significantly since the last inspection. An analysis of national tests results at the end of Year 2 shows that they have risen from below average in 2000 to well above average last year. The proportion of pupils working at higher levels has also increased markedly. This is a direct result of very good teaching, comprehensive monitoring, good professional development and changes in staff deployment over the last twelve months. The results of optional tests at the end of Year 4 are of a similarly high standard and show that good progress is now being made from Year 1 to Year 4. The inspection of the pupils' work and observation of lessons support the view that the pupils are now making good progress and achieving well.
71. The pupils are keen to learn, respond well in lessons and generally enjoy mathematics. They are achieving very well because of the very good teaching. Scrutiny of the pupils' work shows they do a lot of work in all areas of the mathematics curriculum, have good all round knowledge and are developing a broad range of skills.
72. The teaching of mathematics is very good. In many lessons, the classroom assistants work effectively with small groups of children to extend their learning. The teachers plan the lessons extremely thoroughly in line with the national numeracy strategy, and are very clear about what they want the pupils to learn in each lesson. They write the objective for the lesson on the board to ensure that the pupils know what is expected of them. The mental starter sessions are well used to revise and consolidate learning. All activities are conducted briskly and in some lessons, for example in Year 4, the pace is very rapid indeed and accelerates the pupils' learning. In all classes, this good pace is maintained throughout the lesson. In Year 2, for example, the pupils were set clear time targets within which to complete quite challenging mathematical investigations when sorting 2D shapes. The teacher's questioning of the pupils to encourage them to explain their findings was a particularly strong feature of the lesson. In Year 4, the lessons are very well structured and the activities are carefully modified to provide the right amount of challenge for the different ability groups within the class. In one lesson, the teacher set a range of demanding, but well-matched tasks to increase the pupils' understanding of vulgar fractions, mixed numbers and decimal fractions. In this lesson, the higher attaining pupils were particularly well challenged and they responded well to the task set for them.
73. The mathematics subject leader has focussed her efforts on improving the effectiveness of the whole-class sessions at the end of lessons. This has clearly been successful because they are generally used to good effect to assess the extent of the pupils learning and prepare them for the next stage. This was well illustrated in Year 1 when the teacher assessed the extent of the pupils' understanding of place value.
74. The management of the mathematics curriculum is very good and it fully reflects the national numeracy strategy. It is highly organised and benefits considerably from the monitoring undertaken by the headteacher. These activities are clearly focussed and result in points for action, which the teachers now willingly accept and build into their practice. These developments are clearly having an impact and have resulted in all round improvements and rising standards.

## **SCIENCE**

75. Standards in science are above average overall. The pupils have a good knowledge of materials and living processes, for example, but their investigative skills are not as extensive as they should be. By the end of Year 2, the children can describe their observations and higher attaining pupils are able to make predictions and draw simple conclusions. Nevertheless, most of the pupils need more opportunities to develop these skills further.
76. Similarly, the older pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to carry out investigations. There is evidence in the pupils' work of experiments, such as 'making solutions', which included prediction and observation, but generally they do not make decisions about how to record their findings and explain their results. This weakness was also illustrated in a Year 4 lesson where the pupils were investigating how much light would pass through a range of textiles. Very few of the pupils were able to suggest ways of recording their observations. Nevertheless, the pupils are making satisfactory progress both in their lessons and work over the course of the year.
77. The teachers have identified the need to improve this aspect of science teaching within the school development plan. Consequently, there are already signs of improvement. In a lesson in Year 1, the teacher used probing questions to get the pupils to give explanations about how they had gone about testing the brightness of three torches. Not only did the teacher question the pupils well, but she also developed their vocabulary by helping them to give better explanations.
78. The teaching observed was always at least satisfactory and in some lessons it was good. The teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, setting out very clearly what it is they want the pupils to learn. They mark the children's work and make very good assessment comments to aid their own planning and guide the pupils' next stage of learning.
79. The subject leader knows what the school needs to do to bring about improvement. She has established what the strengths and weaknesses are through monitoring the teachers' planning and the quality of the pupils' work. The school should implement its plan to raise the standards in the pupils' investigative skills. **This is an additional issue for action.**

## ART AND DESIGN AND MUSIC

80. Standards are in line with expectations in both subjects. This has changed a little from the time of the previous inspection when standards in music were higher. This slight drop in standards is partly due to the emphasis placed on raising standards in English and mathematics. Both subjects are well led within the remit of the current school improvement plan and the school is well placed to build on its current secure provision.
81. In both subjects, the pupils are still as keen to learn as they were at the time of the previous inspection. In lessons, and from the work on display, it is clear that the pupils enjoy opportunities to be creative and to respond to stimuli in an individual way. Their skills are developed systematically from Year 1 through to Year 4, and this enables them to make choices about how they wish to respond to the challenges that their teachers lay before them. In Years 1 and 2, for example, the pupils are taught how to mix primary colours to make secondary colours like green and orange, and by the time they get to Year 4, they are able to mix more subtle tones such as grey and mauve. They are taught how to hold musical instruments properly and to take care of their resources. However, some of their learning was hampered because there were no beaters available with which to play the triangles. The school is aware that its shortage of resources in music is having an adverse effect on standards.
82. The teachers are skilled in consolidating the pupils' learning in both subjects by combining aspects of some of their lessons. For example, a music lesson in Year 2 required the pupils to

draw what came to mind when listening to some carnival music. This was successful and showed that the pupils responded appropriately to the music with drawings showing dancing, parties and other celebratory activities. The work also related well to the study that the pupils were making of the Caribbean islands in their geography lessons. The teachers are also successful in including sufficient opportunities for the pupils to use information and communication technology in their learning. In art lessons, for instance, the pupils use the computer to create pictures, such as a sunset, and to help them compose and record their own music.

83. Both subjects are enhanced by reference to artists and musicians, past and present. In art, the pupils in Year 2 recalled learning about the work of Pablo Picasso, but found it difficult to describe his pictures using specific vocabulary like "portrait" and "still life". In Year 4, the pupils talked with more assurance about the work of David Hockney, but found it hard to recall the work of other artists they had studied. The pupils talked with greater animation about the recent visit of two actors who had produced a version of "Peter and the Wolf", which they had obviously enjoyed. They could recall the story and remembered the musical themes from the production, such as those for the cat, the bird, and Peter. They listen attentively to all sorts of music and this helps them to appreciate various cultural traditions from around the world. In art too, the teachers are careful to include art from non-western traditions, such as Aboriginal art, which some of the pupils in key stage 1 have recently studied.
84. The pupils sing with great enthusiasm in Assembly each day, and this is a strong feature of the school's musical provision. The pupils know that they must look at their conductor when singing in parts and have learned to start and stop at the appropriate signal. A group of pupils are learning to play the ocarina and are reading simple musical notation in order to play melodies such as "Jingle Bells" and "Happy Birthday". They enjoy performing for their friends in Assembly, and the whole school delights in putting on productions for parents, such as the seaside show at the end of the last term.
85. Both subjects are taught well, and there is some excellent teaching in key stage 2. The teachers plan work that inspires and motivates the pupils to learn. They are careful to strike a balance between skill development and allowing time for the pupils to explore and experiment for themselves. A consistently positive aspect is that the pupils are encouraged to respect each other's work and to take responsibility for their equipment. They are taught to work together in pairs or groups and to share the available equipment. A weaker feature of the provision is that there is no secure way of tracking the pupils' progress as they move through the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

86. The quality of the pupils' work is above average. The curriculum for design and technology is well planned and carefully linked to other subjects to create situations where the pupils can design and make artefacts that are relevant to the topics and themes they are learning about.
87. An inspection of the pupils' work from last year and photographs of their finished products indicates that in Year 2 the pupils are able to make drawings and annotate them with simple ideas. The photographs of their work show their finished puppets alongside their designs. The finished puppets clearly reflect their own ideas, and show that they have used appropriate techniques to measure, mark out and join the fabric pieces they have selected. Many of the examples have added features that capture particular characteristics and expressions. Similarly, the finished work of pupils in Year 4, on the theme of pneumatic toys, demonstrates that they

have developed an understanding of simple pneumatic systems and that their designs have been realized in models that incorporate moving parts.

88. In one lesson seen in Year 2 during the inspection, the teacher set the task for the pupils to make puppets. She provided a good range of string, glove, finger and rod puppets for them to explore. There was good discussion about the materials and tools they could use and the different ways they might join the materials. The pupils were aware that they had to establish criteria against which to evaluate their finished product. In this lesson the pupils responded well, contributed thoughtfully to the discussions and settled well to the challenge before them.
89. The design and technology curriculum is enhanced by the work of the engineering club which provides opportunities for the pupils to develop their skills further.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

90. The school has maintained the sound standards that were reported at the time of the previous inspection. The teachers plan an appropriate range of opportunities in which the pupils learn about people and places, and the pupils respond well to these opportunities. Strong links are made between these two subjects and with other subjects of the curriculum, and on the whole this helps to strengthen the pupils' understanding. For example, the pupils in Year 2 have recently written a newspaper report dated November 6th 1605, in which they set out in a journalistic style the main events of the Gunpowder Plot. There are also good links with English in key stage 2, where the pupils are compiling a reference book for younger pupils within the school. The pupils use the internet and other ICT facilities for research, and links with art are also strong. Occasionally, the links made with other subjects are not as helpful. For example, in an introductory history lesson about light, some of the pupils posed scientific questions rather than the historical ones that the teacher had hoped for. The teacher handled this well, and tried to re-focus the pupils so that they concentrated more on the historical aspects of the subject. Although the range of questions was narrow, and the questions themselves lacked specificity, the pupils learned the need to frame questions carefully when pursuing an historical enquiry. In geography, the pupils are encouraged to pose questions for themselves and consider the similarities and differences of lifestyles in various places. In consequence, the pupils are keen to pursue their own research and are beginning to see that climate plays an important part in people's lives.
91. The teaching is good; it is well organised and moves along at a reasonable pace so that all pupils are motivated to take part in the lessons. A strong feature of the teaching is that it also encourages the pupils' social development. The pupils are frequently asked to work with a partner or in a small group to complete a task or discuss an issue. This helps them to work together co-operatively and to value each other's opinions. The teachers are also skilled in ensuring that the pupils in this largely mono-cultural school become aware of the customs and traditions of other races and cultures. In a lesson about the Caribbean islands, for example, the teacher ensured that the pupils were given a fair view of the different way of life in Jamaica, and answered their questions about skin colour honestly but sensitively. The pupils are also developing a rational view of the benefits and drawbacks of life in the past. In a discussion about life at the turn of the twentieth century, the pupils talked clearly about the good features of using a bathing machine at the seaside, but were also able to see the benefits of wearing modern beach attire. The pupils have a reasonable understanding of chronology for their age, but they tend to use phrases like "the olden days" to encompass events that happened in the recent past to those that happened in Stuart times.

92. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors to the school. The pupils in Year 1 were delighted by the opportunity to take on roles, such as a boot boy and a scullery maid, during their recent visit to the Tudor Museum. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 learned more about the past from a visitor who engaged them in a demonstration of water cures as part of a study on treatments without medicines. In Year 2, the pupils know that life was different in the past and they are starting to understand why people acted as they did. This knowledge is built on progressively through key stage 2 so that by Year 4 the pupils make tentative explanations about why things might have happened, and are starting to use a range of information sources to answer questions about the past. In geography, the pupils in Year 2 have started to differentiate between the human and physical features of the landscape and are beginning to employ geographical vocabulary in their discussions. By the time they reach Year 4, they can justify their observations of various places and express their opinions about the benefits and drawbacks of living in a village. They know some of the features of rivers, but cannot yet say why rivers get stronger and bigger as they move towards the sea.
93. The subject leadership is at an early stage of development, and this has consequences for the monitoring of both subjects. There is no subject leader for geography, and the subject leader for history is only recently in post. Although some records are kept of pupils' attainment, there are no systematic or reliable procedures to ensure that assessment is used effectively.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with expectations at the end of both Year 2 and 4. The use of a range of software applications across the curriculum is developing, but the pupils need more opportunities to apply the skills they are learning. Nevertheless, clear and rapid improvements are being made and the plans for further developments are detailed.
95. The pupils' skills are now being developed through focussed lessons. For example, in years 3 and 4 the pupils were shown how to merge text and images to create an interesting page layout. The pupils approached the task with confidence and were successful in their efforts. The lesson was well managed. The teacher made good use of a digital projector, on loan from the Beacon group, to teach the children the skills they needed to complete the task. A group of pupils also did the task using paper and pencils and then discussed the advantages of using a word processor.
96. The best example of how the pupils' skills are being utilised across the curriculum can be seen in their use of image processing software. The youngest children have learned to use a simple palette and tool bar and are able to create shapes, fill them with colour and use 'brushes' that create different effects. In Years 1 and 2 these skills are built upon and used to create designs for a teapot and a coat of many colours for Joseph. In years 3 and 4, the pupils' increasing skills allow them to use a wider range of tools and create quite sophisticated designs for wrapping paper. The quality of the finished product is good. The systematic way in which the pupils' image processing skills are developed and used in design and technology is a very good model that is now being transferred to other skills and other subjects. The school should maintain this development to broaden the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. **This is an additional issue for action.**
97. The teachers are stepping up their training to allow them to provide a broader range of opportunities. For instance, they are making good use of the school's digital camera to capture aspects of the pupils' work. This was very well illustrated in a physical education lesson when

the teacher took pictures of the various stretching positions and used them to help the pupils to evaluate their own performance. Similarly, in art the teacher used the digital projector to display works of art and switch to black and white to emphasise the impact of light, tone and colour.

98. The development of information and communication technology in the school is well managed. The subject leader is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's provision and has laid out a clear strategy for improvement. This makes good use of the school's involvement in the Beacon Project which has already resulted in the development of an interesting website which some parents are accessing regularly.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

99. The pupils' performance in physical education is of a good standard because they are well taught.
100. In Year 1, when the pupils were developing their ball control skills the teacher set them an appropriately challenging task and expected them to both achieve and behave well. As a result, the lesson was effective and the teacher was able to help the pupils to make progress through good individual coaching and demonstration. In Year 2, the teacher enthusiastically led the pupils in their dance interpretation of a poem about fireworks. She chose the pupils well to demonstrate and evaluate their performance and set them the challenge of putting their movements into a sequence using imaginative links. At first, many pupils found this difficult, but by using a number of different approaches she was able to help the pupils to improve their movements and to develop interesting sequences which illustrated very well their imaginative interpretation of the poem. In a Year 4 gymnastics lesson the teacher motivated the pupils to achieve high standards and encouraged mature evaluation of the own and others' performances.
101. All of the lessons were very thoroughly planned, had good pace and high expectations of the pupils; consequently the teaching of physical education is consistently either good or better in Years 1 to 4.
102. The oldest pupils have planned opportunities to learn to swim. The school has use of a field which is a short walk away, a hard surface playground and a multi-purpose hall for dance and gymnastics. Overall, the facilities are satisfactory but the space available in the hall does place a limitation on some activities particularly when the oldest children are involved in gymnastics.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

103. There were no religious education lessons taught during the inspection period. An analysis of the teachers' planning shows that the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are taught and discussion with the pupils indicates that standards are in line with the expectations of the syllabus. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the previous inspection.
104. The curriculum is taught in a way that is meaningful to the pupils and becomes more complex as they grow older. In Year 1, the pupils learn about the parable of the sower, and they understand that Jesus told stories that have a meaning. In Year 2, the pupils have begun to understand some of the dramatic stories of the Old Testament, and know that God was angry with his people when he sent the flood. They have also started to appreciate that there are many faiths in the world and that Hindus, for example, worship many gods. In Key Stage 2, the pupils study the Jewish faith and learn what the constituents of the Sedar plate mean. They have also begun

to understand that religion contains metaphorical aspects and have discussed what such phrases as "Jesus is the light of the world" mean to Christians.

105. There are good links with other subjects that help the pupils to consolidate their understanding of some of the things they have covered. In discussion with some of the pupils in Year 2, for example, they recalled the story of Joseph when prompted to discuss the coats of many colours that they had completed in design and technology. The illustrations of stories in the Old Testament in this year group also enhance their learning in art and their written accounts of these stories contribute well to their learning in English.
106. The subject makes a very strong contribution to the spiritual development of the pupils. In the photographic record of the Christingle Service, there was a clear sense of awe and wonder on the children's faces. Their writing about Holy Week also shows a strong spiritual dimension, and work in Year 4 about literal and non-literal expression helps the pupils to think in more abstract ways. Visits to the church and visitors to the school help the pupils to understand more about the meaning of worship and the customs and traditions associated with it.
107. At the time of the last inspection, there was criticism that some of the pupils were not showing sufficient respect to the expression of various world faiths. There was no evidence of this during this inspection, rather the reverse. The pupils talked animatedly and with great sensitivity about the customs and traditions that they had learned about and were keen to discover more. The pupils understand the special place religion has in some people's lives and show respect for prayer in their own assemblies.