

INSPECTION REPORT

YARDLEY HASTINGS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121876

Headteacher: Mrs Jill Gardner

Reporting inspector: John Foster
21318

Dates of inspection: 19 to 20 November 2002

Inspection number: 248297

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Castle Ashby Road
Yardley Hastings
NORTHAMPTON

Postcode: NN7 1EL

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Grahame Thompson

Date of previous inspection: 6 November 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Foster 21318	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and design Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) the school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Cathy Stormonth 16472	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	How high are standards? b) pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Kathleen Campbell 22856	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Science History Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Richard Evans 20692	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology Geography Music	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Yardley Hastings Primary School caters for boys and girls aged between 4 and 11 years. The school is smaller than the average size for primary schools. At the time of inspection, there were 64 pupils at the school including four children in the reception year. This is slightly fewer than the number on roll at the previous inspection. Although there is a wide range of ability, the general level of attainment of children when they start school is similar to that expected nationally. There are two pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. At 9 per cent, the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is about the same as found nationally. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is about average. Three pupils have formal Statements of Special Educational Need, which is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and effective school. The headteacher leads the school very well and, along with the staff and governors, has ensured that standards are rising, that pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good and that the quality of teaching has improved to the point where it is consistently good. The governing body has very clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school and manages the school very well. The effective ways in which English and mathematics are monitored has improved standards in these subjects to the point where pupils attain the standards expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in most other subjects meet those expected nationally, except for science at the end of Year 2 when standards are below average. Standards in art and design at Year 6 are better than those expected nationally. Although the cost per pupil is high, the school, nevertheless, gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- There is very good leadership and management by the headteacher and the governing body.
- The quality of teaching is good overall with, at times, very good and excellent teaching. This enables pupils to make good progress.
- Standards in art and design at Year 6 are above those expected nationally.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and this group of pupils makes good progress.
- Pupils have good attitudes, their behaviour is good and the relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good.
- Pupils' social and moral development is very good; their cultural and spiritual development is good.
- Resources are used very well to support teaching and learning.
- Standards are consistently improving.
- The school has developed very good relationships with partner institutions and good relationships with the local community.
- There are excellent arrangements for monitoring and improving the already very good levels of attendance.

What could be improved

- Standards in science at the end of Year 2 are too low.
- Provision for children in the reception year is unsatisfactory
- Assessment procedures for the ¹non-core subjects are not good enough.
- Monitoring of standards, teaching and learning in the non-core subjects is not good enough.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory.

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

¹ These are subjects of the National Curriculum other than English, mathematics and science.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

In the intervening period since the school was last inspected in November 2000, good progress has been made in addressing the key issues identified in that report. The headteacher had been in post for only a few weeks at that time, but was said to be giving very good leadership. This has continued throughout the past two years to the extent that this is no longer an underachieving school. The large number of issues identified have been fully addressed, except for the issue relating to standards in science. Whilst standards in this subject are now average at Year 6, there is still work to be done to raise standards sufficiently at Year 2. Standards in other subjects are now at expected levels and the progress pupils make in their learning is now good. This is the direct result of the higher quality teaching the pupils now receive. There has been a full change of staff and the new staff are fully committed to improving the quality of their teaching further in order to improve standards achieved. Pupils are more involved in their own learning and use computers and books more effectively for research purposes. Whilst the accommodation is still unsatisfactory, the school now uses it well. The headteacher and governing body have worked hard to gain funding and support to extend the school on one site. Plans are drawn up for the development, but full details have to be finalised. The school is in a very good position to improve further.

STANDARDS

There were only eight pupils in the 2002 Year 6 cohort and, therefore, the results of the national tests of 2002 are not published.

Overall standards have risen since the school was last inspected and now meet levels expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Children enter the reception year with levels of attainment expected for children of that age. They achieve satisfactorily overall and make sound progress in the six areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. In their physical development, however, their progress is unsatisfactory. Whilst the school has provided a range of large toys for this group of children, there remains a lack of a secure area for them to experiment and develop their physical skills fully. By the time they start in Year 1, most children will have attained or exceeded the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum, except for their physical development.

In English and mathematics, pupils make good progress and achieve average standards at Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment in science at Year 6 is average, though at Year 2 they attain below average levels. The main reason for the low attainment is that in the past the teachers have not had a good enough understanding of what pupils can achieve in the subject. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the school's results have improved at a faster rate than in other schools nationally. In other subjects, pupils achieve well and attain levels expected nationally for their ages. During the inspection, however, it was not possible to make secure judgements on standards in physical education at Year 2 or in geography and music at Year 2 or Year 6, as it was not possible to observe any lessons for these subjects. Standards in art and design at Year 6 are above those expected nationally. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, make good progress and achieve appropriate standards for their ability.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils' attitudes are much improved since the previous inspection and this is a significant factor in the hard work they undertake in lessons and the progress they make. They take an active part in the wide range of out-of-school activities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good. They show respect for others and this is demonstrated in the ways they support each other well during lessons. The newly formulated behaviour policy has had a very positive effect on behaviour throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall, with relationships being very good. There is a strong mutual respect shown between pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility within the school and the newly established School Council is already having a good effect on the school.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance levels are well above the national average and there

	are excellent arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. This shows an improvement since the previous inspection when they were identified as satisfactory and it was noted that decline in achievement before that inspection indicated unsatisfactory quality in the teaching. The improved quality of teaching in the intervening period has been the main reason for the current, improved standards. Whilst the quality of teaching varies between classes and subjects, the highest quality teaching still occurs towards the top end of the school. In the Years 5/6 class, for example, very good and excellent lessons were observed. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are now firmly embedded in the school's curriculum. The staff have undertaken appropriate training for implementing the strategies and are confident when teaching them. This is reflected in the higher quality teaching and learning for English and mathematics. Teachers' planning is good and they have high expectations of pupils' achievements and behaviour. The pupils are challenged well to give their best and to help them to attain the highest standards possible. Throughout the school, teaching assistants give good support to the teachers and pupils.

The quality of teaching for children in the reception year is satisfactory. Though they have the same teacher as the Years 1/2 pupils, they are not catered for as well as these pupils. Activities designed for the reception children are not always appropriate to their needs, for example, when they are taught alongside the older pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons. The teacher for the reception children is newly appointed to the school and has yet to have significant impact on standards for this group. She is aware of their needs, however, and what is needed to improve provision for them.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school has developed the curriculum well particularly in relation to English and mathematics. Other subjects are covered adequately with plans to further improve the provision in these subjects. The curriculum for the children under the age of five is unsatisfactory, largely because of the lack of a secure outdoor area where the children can develop their physical skills. The school provides a good range of activities for pupils extending beyond the school day.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The special educational needs co-ordinator, well supported by the headteacher, maintains this area well. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to give this group of pupils a high level of support to enable them to make good progress. Pupils' individual education plans are well designed for each child to be able to reach the targets set for him or her.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school provides very well for pupils' social and moral development. Arrangements for their cultural and spiritual development are good. The school has close links with other schools which help pupils to develop well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are cared for well. The arrangements for child protection are excellent.

Parents are very supportive of the headteacher and the school. The results of the parents' questionnaire give strong indication that parents are generally happy with most aspects of the school's provision.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership. The staff work well together as a team and this is having a good impact on raising standards. The headteacher and staff are fully committed to improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its duties very well. Governors are very aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and work closely with the headteacher and staff to counter the weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The governors are fully involved in decision making and in monitoring standards and performance very well. Monitoring of teaching and learning is good, though subject co-ordinators are not fully involved in the process.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The headteacher and governors plan the use of resources well. The school had earmarked a substantial carry forward to equip the proposed extension to the existing school. This has now been used well to give extra resources and staff to support pupils' learning. The administrative assistant is very capable and maintains day-to-day control of finances very effectively. When purchasing goods and services, the school ensures that the principles of best value are consistently applied.

There is an adequate number of suitably qualified teachers to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. The school provides for a good number of high quality teaching assistants to support teaching and learning. There are adequate resources provided. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school is located on two sites at either side of the main street in the village. Whilst the best use is made of the accommodation, the lack of a secure outdoor play area for children in the reception class inhibits their physical development.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are happy and enjoy school. • The teaching is good and teachers have high expectations of the children enabling them to make good progress. • Their children are expected to behave well and work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • They feel that they can approach the school with concerns or suggestions and they will be dealt with fairly and efficiently. • The school helps their children to become mature and gives opportunities for them to take responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework given to their children. • The range of activities beyond the school day. • A few parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them.

Just over one-third of questionnaires sent out were returned, seven parents attended a pre-inspection meeting for parents and more parents were spoken to during inspection to gauge their views. Most parents are very pleased with the school and the quality of education being provided. Though a few parents expressed concern over the levels of homework provided, the range of out-of-school activities and that the school did not work closely enough with them, inspection evidence finds these concerns to be unfounded. The positive views expressed by parents are fully endorsed. The range of activities beyond the school day is very good, particularly for older children, and the school has strong links with the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The low number of pupils in each year group within this small school means that the figures from the national tests are unreliable in reporting the standards pupils attain. However, the indications from results over the past four years are that standards attained by Year 6 are rising in the school at a faster rate than the trend nationally in English, mathematics and science. The major reason for this increased level of attainment is the higher quality teaching experienced throughout the school. The development of improved schemes of work and curriculum planning also contributes significantly to the raised standards.
2. When they start school in the reception class, most children's attainment is about what is expected for children of four years of age. In most areas of learning, they make satisfactory progress and by the time they start in Year 1, most have reached the Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The exception to this is in their physical development. The accommodation and facilities are unsatisfactory for the children to undertake experimental activities to develop their physical skills well enough. There is no secure play area where the youngest children can climb, ride on toys or devise their own activities. Though the facilities for extending their learning in creative development are limited, nevertheless most children achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. They work for too long alongside the older Years 1/2 pupils without appropriate activities organised for their age. However, the reception children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and by the time they start in Year 1 most will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.
3. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve average standards in mathematics and English, but they attain below average standards in science. The below average results in science stem from some deficiencies in provision in the past. It is only recently that the school has begun to target the weaknesses in the subject for pupils in Year 1 and Year 2. Since the previous inspection, there has been greater concentration on raising standards for the older pupils, particularly in English and mathematics. Recent initiatives, however, are beginning to have an impact on standards in science. Teachers are better prepared to teach the subject and are now fully aware of what the pupils are able to achieve. As a result, the pupils are developing a much wider scientific knowledge. It was not possible to make secure judgements about standards in geography, music and physical education as it was not possible to observe lessons in these subjects. Standards in other subjects, however, are at expected levels at Year 2. Standards in religious education are appropriate as identified in the locally agreed syllabus.
4. By Year 6, average standards are attained in English, mathematics and science. This is an improvement on standards at the previous inspection when they were identified as below average in all three subjects. In the intervening period, a new staff has been appointed, the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been fully implemented and the teachers are more confident in what they want the pupils to learn. Over the past three years, the school has improved standards at a faster rate than schools nationally. This is in no small part because of the very good leadership of the headteacher and the effective ways in which staff, governors and parents have worked together to improve the school's aspirations. Standards in other subjects are at nationally expected levels. It was not possible to observe any lessons in geography and music because of timetable restrictions, and, therefore, no judgement can be made on standards in these subjects. The high quality teaching and the good use of expertise within the school has raised

standards in art and design very well and pupils at Year 6 now attain standards above those expected nationally.

5. The teachers use the national strategies well for teaching literacy and numeracy. Since the previous inspection, there has been considerable improvement in this area. At the time of that inspection, it was noted that numeracy was not taught well enough because the teachers were not sufficiently aware of the National Numeracy Strategy and how it should be used. In the intervening period, all teachers have had appropriate training and the result is that standards have risen in the subject.
6. The school has set achievable targets for pupils and staff and pupils work hard to achieve them. The small number of pupils in each year group, however, means that the results achieved in national tests do not always reflect accurately the pupils' attainment levels as each pupil represents up to 12 per cent of the total. Where an individual fails to achieve or exceeds a particular level in the tests, albeit by a small margin, the overall results become skewed.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets identified for them. Their individual education plans clearly identify what they need to do to meet the targets. The teachers plan well to make sure pupils achieve them. The very good support given by the teaching assistants for this group of pupils helps them with the good progress they make.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Attitudes and behaviour are good and significantly better than they were at the previous inspection. These are now a strength of the school and a significant factor in the good progress that pupils make and the quality of school life. The school is an inclusive, vibrant and supportive community where the ethos is positive and relationships are very good. Pupils obviously enjoy school.
9. Children in the reception year group are developing confidence and good social skills. They work well together, share ideas and resources and show enjoyment in the success of others. Reception children emulate older pupils in lessons and want to be as clever as the older pupils. They listen and answer questions to the limit of their ability and are eager to please their teacher with their good efforts. Children in the reception year have too few opportunities to use outdoor equipment for their physical development. This restricts their exploratory impulses and stifles their curiosity as they do not have the freedom to enjoy new experiences.
10. Pupils in Year 1 to Year 6 have good attitudes to learning and respond well when the teaching is good and expectations are high. They follow instructions well and enjoy and respond well to praise and encouragement that helps pupils try harder and improve. Pupils relish challenge. They are keen to learn, have good concentration levels and answer questions eagerly. In an outstanding art lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm captivated pupils and made them really stretch themselves to produce watercolours of landscapes of unusually high quality. The pupils were really proud of their work. Another strong feature was the support pupils have for the less able who were helped in recording work or when they needed some friendly critical advice for improving their work.
11. Behaviour in the classroom and around the school is good and has improved since the headteacher arrived. Both pupils and parents agree that older pupils in particular, are calmer and there is a more purposeful atmosphere in lessons where pupils concentrate on work without interruption by misbehaviour. Pupils show reverence during assemblies, especially during reflection and prayer. The behaviour seen in assemblies was impeccable. The supportive culture was well demonstrated when older pupils helped

younger ones when they fell over in the playground. Lunchtimes are pleasant sociable times. Behaviour in the playground is good and pupils amuse themselves well. There is no evidence of any bullying and there have been no exclusions in recent years.

12. Relationships throughout the school are very good and are based on mutual respect for all in a caring, family orientated small school community. Pupils' personal development is good and pupils are friendly, well mannered, helpful, and welcoming to visitors. They talk with pride of going to a school with such a long history. They enjoy and appreciate the extra-curricular activities and the school trips they take. Teachers speak positively to pupils and all talents are valued. This builds confidence and self-esteem and helps pupils tackle new learning and do their best. Boys and girls mix freely and happily. Pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and have respect for each other's feelings and values. As pupils move through the school, they become more responsible, more independent and develop greater maturity and growing confidence. Lessons are less tightly controlled now that behaviour has improved and this enables teachers to give pupils more independence in their learning. They are given more freedom to do some research into Victorian Britain and investigate the properties of light in science.
13. The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils write thoughtfully about the good and bad feelings engendered by light and dark. They think carefully about story settings and the conditions Victorian children suffered. Moral themes in assemblies make pupils aware of the benefits of goodness and kindness. Pupils are eager to be actively involved in daily routines that help the smooth running of the school day. They carry out their duties very well. Older pupils look after the younger ones and are 'friendship monitors' looking out for peers on the 'friendship bench' who want to be cheered up. Pupils elected to the school council take their responsibilities seriously and feel pleased that they have a 'voice' in the school. The residential trips give pupils a range of new and exciting experiences away from school and home and extends their personal development very well. Pupils who went to North Wales, for example, described the trip as 'amazing'. The impressive school assembly was led by Class 2 and was acted out by pupils who were confident, whose speaking was clear and who obviously savour these opportunities.
14. Attendance is very good and well above the national average and this is an improvement on the last inspection. Authorised absence is attributable to genuine illness and holiday taking. There was no unauthorised absence and this is highly commendable. Punctuality on arrival at school is good and there is a prompt and punctual start to each school day and to lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching overall is good and during the inspection, no lessons were observed that were less than satisfactory. This is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory. It remains the case, however, that the highest quality teaching was observed in the Years 5/6 class, where there were excellent and very good lessons observed. Of the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory in 38 per cent of lessons and good in 50 per cent in addition to the very good and excellent lessons seen. The main reasons for the improvement in the quality of teaching include more detailed planning, a new and committed staff under the very good leadership of the headteacher and the improved behaviour of pupils through very good behaviour management by the staff.
16. The improvement in the quality of teaching is reflected in the pupils' learning and the standards they achieve. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were low and the cause of this was identified as being that the quality of teaching had not been high enough in the past. Pupils now attain standards appropriate for their age in most subjects, though there are some obvious gaps in this, notably the attainment in science by the end

- of Year 2. The teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and this is particularly the case with English and mathematics through the training they have received for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. As a result, English and mathematics lessons are planned to give challenging tasks to the pupils in order for them to make good progress in their learning. The teachers move lessons at a fast pace, encouraging the pupils to take an active part in their learning. In a Years 5/6 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were grouped according to their needs and the teacher and support staff discussed the work with the pupils. The pupils were closely involved in the discussion and made good suggestions about how they could undertake the tasks set in order to improve their own learning.
17. Throughout the school, the pupils are given tasks which challenge their thinking and encourages them to use the equipment provided to calculate the correct answers to the problems set. The teachers have high expectations of behaviour and performance and the pupils react well to this. As a result, they work hard and concentrate well. In an English lesson in the Years 1/2 class, for example, the learning objectives were shared with the pupils and throughout the lively introduction to the lesson a good atmosphere was created for learning. The teacher organised the class well and used the teaching assistant effectively to support pupils' learning whatever their ability. In an excellent art and design lesson for Years 5/6 pupils, the teacher and the teaching assistant worked very closely together and their complementary skills were very effective in enabling the pupils to produce high quality work.
 18. The quality of teachers' planning is good. Learning objectives are clearly identified and the planning includes defined activities by which the objectives are to be achieved. The teachers, because of the good planning, know exactly what progress the pupils are to make within the lessons and how specific work for groups and individuals is designed for them to make the most progress. Within the planning, there are often identified ways in which the work can be assessed to ascertain whether or not the learning has been successful, particularly in English and mathematics. Time and support staff are used well to encourage good learning. The lessons move at a fast pace and the support staff are kept well informed about their role in developing pupils' learning. The positive relationships which exist throughout the school between pupils and between pupils and adults enables the teachers and pupils to work closely together and this contributes well to the good teaching and learning that exists within the school. This in turn leads to the teachers being able to use effective teaching methods to stimulate and encourage the pupils in their learning. The teachers give clear explanations about their expectations and use questions well to help the pupils to learn. In a Years 5/6 information and communication technology lesson, for example, where pupils were using spreadsheets, the teacher elicited the correct response from the pupils relating to the correct formula they had to use for each cell. A Years 3/4 design and technology lesson was successful because of the teachers' intervention and questioning skills which gave her information about what the pupils understood about the task they were asked to complete when they designed rockets propelled by pneumatic forces.
 19. Teachers mark pupils work satisfactorily. At its best, assessment of pupils' work gives them clear guidelines about what they need to do in order to improve. The teachers in these cases write comments which are pertinent to the individual and explain what is wrong with the work and how it can be put right. Often, however, the marking does not fully identify where mistakes exist and as a result, the pupils are not given enough guidance for improvement. The teachers value the effort put in by pupils and ensure that the pupils' work is carefully mounted and displayed.
 20. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well alongside the other pupils. This group of pupils has specific work planned for them and the teachers have equally high expectations of both their behaviour and their work.

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

21. Overall, curricular provision is satisfactory.
22. Since the school was last inspected, when the declining quality of the curriculum contributed to the low standards achieved, the pace of development has been satisfactory overall, though variable.
23. On the positive side, initiatives designed to raise standards in English and mathematics have been very effective. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and all subjects are now firmly established on the timetable. Religious education is taught to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Opportunities for developing the arts have expanded and provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly, resulting in higher standards. Although curriculum time is used better than in the past, the school is aware that the balance of time allocated to the various subjects needs further attention. The introduction of guided reading sessions, in addition to the literacy hour, has led to a reduction in time for other subjects. Consequently, in subjects such as science, there is sometimes insufficient time for teachers to cover topics in depth. The effects of this superficial coverage are most noticeable in Years 1 and 2, where standards in science are below expected levels.
24. The pace of progress in the development of a Foundation Stage curriculum, however, has been too slow. Until very recently, the reception class curriculum adhered too closely to the National Curriculum and not to the suggested curriculum for children this age. Even now, children do not receive an adequate balance of free-choice and more structured activities. The curriculum lacks richness and variety. Lengthy literacy and numeracy sessions alongside Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are sometimes inappropriate for children recently admitted to school, who lack maturity and concentration. There are too few opportunities for the development of creative and physical skills. Despite the school's best efforts to improve provision for physical development, weaknesses in accommodation, identified during the previous inspection, remain. Facilities for outdoor play, though improving, still do not give reception children adequate opportunities to develop their physical skills.
25. The provision for teaching literacy and numeracy has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are fully established. This has had a positive effect on standards. Resources associated with the implementation of the strategies have improved provision considerably and have also contributed to the rise in standards. Opportunities for speaking, listening and drama have increased to eliminate identified weaknesses. There are encouraging signs that the school's concentration on developing pupils' independent skills is starting to have a positive impact on their attitudes towards learning. However, the use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is not well developed. Although there are many isolated examples of pupils using graphs and measurement in science and producing high quality research work in history, there is no structured plan for the systematic development of skills. Similarly, teachers do not make enough use of computers to support work in other subjects. The school is aware of the need to develop skills across the curriculum more effectively.
26. Planning is a strong feature of provision. The 'Ashby Cluster Group' provides good quality, well-structured schemes of work to ensure adequate coverage of each subject. Work is designed to ensure pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat the same work. However, the organisation does not always ensure older pupils in each class cover topics at a sufficiently mature level. All too often, pupils of different abilities in different year groups

complete the same work at the same level, with little attention to individual needs or the structured development of skills.

27. Policies are not of the same high quality as schemes of work. Some are very outdated and do not do justice to the quality of current provision.
28. The curriculum offers equal opportunity for all. Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support from teaching assistants and make similar progress to others. Pupils who are withdrawn for instrumental music tuition do not miss their entitlement to lessons. Teachers are careful to explain and pupils endeavour to complete work which they have missed in their own time.
29. Sex education is taught through the science curriculum. The school nurse offers advice and an appropriate level of information to pupils in Year 6. The local police provide valuable input into the school's drugs awareness programme through talks and visits at regular intervals throughout the year.
30. Extra-curricular provision is well above average for a school of this size and further development is planned. Provision has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Sporting clubs, such as football and basketball, take place after school. They involve staff, who give of their time willingly, in addition to outside agencies. The school offers a very good range of high quality activities, geared mostly towards its older pupils. However, it is very aware of the need to provide for its younger pupils and has recently introduced a dance club, which is open to pupils of all ages. Regular visits to places of local interest and further afield form an important part of the curriculum for each year group. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 gained valuable insight into Victorian lifestyle from their recent visit to Holdenby Hall. All activities and visits are carefully thought through and complement classroom work well. Visitors, such as the local clergy, make a regular contribution to school life. The school makes very effective use of its geography field study and residential visits to develop social skills, build self-esteem and enhance learning.
31. The local community is becoming increasingly interested and involved in the work of the school. The headteacher has made extra efforts to secure stronger links. The lack of involvement of the local community was criticised during the previous inspection. The community currently makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Local clergy take assemblies and other visitors hear pupils read, help in classrooms and use their expertise in subjects such as information and communication technology to the benefit of all pupils.
32. The governors' curriculum committee is a strong, positive force in the school. Governors have a wide range of subject expertise and are well informed about curriculum issues. They meet regularly and liaise well with the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. They observe lessons to judge the impact of initiatives on pupils' learning and have a very clear overview of strengths and weaknesses. They react immediately to suggestions. For example, when the governors became aware that parents would welcome more information about curriculum matters they and the headteacher promptly arranged curriculum meetings and organised provision of more regular information.
33. The school's personal, social and health education programme is promoted well. Personal issues are regarded as very important. Lessons are timetabled for each class so that pupils have the opportunity to value the opinions of others through discussion. Consequently, behaviour has improved and relationships are good.
34. There are very good links with local primary and secondary schools. The Ashby Cluster Group offers invaluable support in many areas and enables the school to feel part of a community. It extends pupils' learning through numerous shared activities, such as music

workshops. Rewarding links with Hartwell Primary School enable pupils and staff to gain greater knowledge and understanding of investigative science. Strong links with Wollaston Comprehensive School ensure pupils develop skills in information and communication technology, geography and mathematics.

35. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. It is planned across some areas of the curriculum and provides a rich, exciting and varied background for learning and successfully promotes pupils' personal development
36. Spiritual development is good. Assemblies comply with the requirements for collective worship. There is usually a strong moral message delivered in a range of different ways to interest and involve pupils. The theme during the inspection was about the value of friendship and class 2 used a modern adaptation of the 'Good Samaritan' as an appropriate and powerful way of relating how pupils should help others. The spiritual dimensions are developed when pupils are given time to think and reflect about what has been said and they thought about the words in the 'special friends' poem. Spiritual development elsewhere is good, especially when pupils are encouraged to explore and reflect on beliefs and values and understand feelings and emotions. Pupils are given many very good opportunities to express these elements when considering, for example, the life of Jesus in religious education and in personal, social and health education. In art, pupils reflected to very good effect and interpreted moods aroused by music such as 'The Planets' and 'The Seasons' well.
37. Moral development is very good and there is a well-developed ethos of respect and kindness within which pupils' efforts and achievements are valued. Through the very fine examples set by the headteacher and other adults in the school, pupils learn the principles of right and wrong and that high standards of behaviour and care for others are expected. Staff remind pupils constantly about this and it permeates everything that happens in the school. Assemblies convey strong moral messages. Personal, social and health education promotes moral development well when pupils consider themselves and the value of good friendship. They explore moral issues, such as 'How can I make myself a better person?'
38. Social development is very good. The skills and personal qualities required to become more mature and take on greater responsibility as pupils get older are promoted very well. The personal, social and health education programme teaches pupils some important life skills, such as adopting a healthy lifestyle, first aid training, general safety at home and on the road, personal safety, how to be a good neighbour and some early good citizenship skills. The school council enables pupils to raise issues effectively. The 'house' system encourages good work, effort and behaviour and pupils value the house points they earn. Charitable activities extend social awareness and help pupils appreciate and value others. Pupils raised money and enjoyed wearing silly hats for 'Children in Need'. Other experiences include leading and taking part in assemblies, school productions and sporting events and clubs extend social development very well. Older pupils benefit from the social opportunities given during residential visits organised for them by the staff.
39. Cultural development is good and the school tries to encourage greater knowledge and understanding of living locally and in a multi-cultural society. Pupils are encouraged to explore and know about Yardley Hastings and the rich history and geography of the locality. In religious education, pupils have focused on many aspects of Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism as well as Christianity. Art and music offer a rich mix of different cultures and this extends to subjects, such as dance and geography. Older pupils are currently making friends via the e-mail with pupils from two Kenyan schools and have been contrasting life there with that in Yardley Hastings. There is good use of classic literature and stories, a range of music and artwork to inspire work. Opportunities are

taken to invite visitors and go on visits to enrich learning. Older pupils, for example, went to an Odyssey production as part of their studies about Ancient Greece.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school takes good care of pupils and this helps to improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning. Staff know their pupils well and pupils are confident in their approaches to their teachers and other adults in the school and this helps pupils to feel happy, safe and secure. The school gives a high priority to an excellent range of procedures which encourage very good attendance, good behaviour and work habits and where pupils' welfare is safeguarded.
41. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are excellent. Registers are consistently maintained and absences are followed up to encourage very good attendance and eliminate unauthorised absence. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good and have improved since the headteacher arrived and a new behaviour policy was implemented. This has been welcomed by pupils as a 'firm but fair' way of improving behaviour. It is applied consistently and there is an effective positive approach which is constantly reinforced throughout the school day. Pupils know the school rules and high expectations for behaviour and they behave very well. The pupils who have more severe behavioural difficulties are well supported and the behaviour management strategies employed are good and enhance pupils' learning. The procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. Pupils confirmed strongly that they do not have any bullies and don't want any. The school complies with the new requirement to have a racial equality policy.
42. The arrangements for child protection are excellent and meet all statutory requirements. The designated person has had recent training to update the school on recent changes in local child protection procedures. When pupils are sick or injured, they receive a high level of care and attention and all pupils' medical conditions are catered for well. The school has some good systems for carrying out all the routine health and safety checking and risk assessments. The main issue of children having to cross the road remains a continuing concern on the split site. The school takes all reasonable steps to ensure pupils' safety. School security, including Internet security, is good.
43. When the school was previously inspected, systems for assessing and recording pupils' achievements had only recently been introduced. The school had just started to analyse results of national tests and introduce targets for improvement. During the intervening years, the school has made steady progress on implementing purposeful procedures and using assessment more effectively. There is an impressive range of assessment procedures for English and mathematics and for science in Years 3 to 6 that gives an accurate picture of areas for development. Data analysis highlighted investigative science as a priority area. Steps taken to remedy the weakness resulted in significant improvement by the end of Year 6. Secure procedures for tracking individual progress have been introduced. Monitoring pupils' performance is now regarded as an essential part of raising standards. Current procedures have a sense of purpose and provide the basis for whole school and individual targets.
44. Assessment on entry to the reception class gives a clear indication of children's various levels of development. The school is starting to use results to predict pupils' expected achievement by the end of Year 2. Recently introduced day-to-day assessment in the reception class is simple but effective. Portfolios of work samples for subjects other than English and mathematics have been established and show pupils' rate of progress more clearly. Teachers also evaluate their weekly work in a simple but effective format. They identify pupils who have achieved well and those who need further support. However, the quality of marking varies considerably. Some marking makes helpful reference to pupils'

levels of understanding, whilst other comments are superficial and do not indicate to pupils how they can improve.

45. Much work remains to be done to ensure assessment becomes an integral part of all subjects and is used more effectively so that work matches ability. Recent initiatives have played an important part in raising standards in English and mathematics. The structure for assessment in other subjects and for using information on a day-to-day basis is not as secure. Part of the reason for the below average standards in science at Years 1/2 is teachers' uncertainty about the standards of work pupils can and should achieve. The school is aware that some teachers are not sufficiently confident when assessing precise levels of attainment and has organised a training programme to increase confidence and expertise. Although teachers evaluate their work well, some do not have a clear enough understanding of the value or importance of assessing with precision. Consequently, they sometimes have difficulty in judging the level of work that will raise standards. The school is starting to track pupils' rate of progress from year to year and identify pupils who are underachieving or achieving particularly well. However, improvements in the use of assessment are very recent and it is too early to judge their effectiveness on standards.
46. The school knows its pupils well and monitors personal development very effectively. In the class for younger pupils, the learning support assistant makes notes on pupils she is supporting. At other times, throughout the school, regular informal discussion takes place, thus ensuring that teachers provide appropriate support for all pupils at all times.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school has a stronger partnership with parents than identified at the previous inspection. It recognises that a close working relationship with parents is important in its drive to improve standards. The school is at the heart of a close knit and friendly community. Parents are very supportive and are highly satisfied with the education provided and other aspects of the school. They particularly like the approachability of staff and the welcoming and caring environment in the school. Some parents indicated misgivings about the range of extra-curricular activities and the homework arrangements. Some felt that the school is not working closely enough with them. Inspection evidence, however, indicates that the range of activities outside lessons is very good for a small primary school. The school tries hard to work closely with parents. Parents' views are gauged by the school in an open and friendly way and parents' ideas are welcomed and valued as part of school improvement. The homework arrangements are good and have recently been improved to form an active part of pupils' learning, especially in English and mathematics.
48. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. The small number of children means that the family induction arrangements are very good and children are able to settle quickly when they start school. Parents are given very good information explaining what to expect at school. The home-school books are used very well to record reading and for dialogue with parents. Older pupils use their homework diaries well. This enhances the contribution that parents can make to children's learning at home.
49. The quality of information provided for parents is good overall. There is a large noticeboard with all the latest news and dates for the diary. The regular friendly school newsletters keep parents fully in touch with all news and information. Other letters are good and let parents know what their children will be learning and details about any special activities and trips. The information parents receive about their children's progress is good. Parents have two formal consultation opportunities to discuss their children's work and share new targets for learning. Staff make themselves available at the end of each day to discuss informally any urgent issues with parents. The quality of the annual pupils' reports is very good. Parents are provided with very good information about their

children's performance over the past year, especially for English, mathematics and science. Parents are given some very specific individual advice on how their children's weaknesses can be addressed. The governors' annual report to parents is full, well written and meets all the requirements. The school prospectus in contrast, is out of date and is currently being rewritten.

50. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. Some parents are governors and actively help to move school developments forward. Governors give parents opportunities to raise issues when they hold surgeries before governing body meetings. Several parents regularly volunteer to help in school each week. Parents help with swimming lessons and when other needs arise. The school's theme days need many parents to help and they come forward in large numbers to help make those days special and highly successful. The book fairs are entirely run by parents. The Friends of Yardley School is a very active and hardworking group raising funds and providing the school with a busy social life. The large sums raised paid for many new books and computer equipment. Parents come to school whenever they are invited: for school and church based assemblies, school productions, sports day and educational meetings. In this way parents make a good contribution to children's learning and help improve the quality of school life.
51. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are consulted at all stages of identification and in planning individual education plans to cater for the pupils' needs.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The previous inspection reported that the newly appointed headteacher was providing very good leadership after only a few weeks in post. The current inspection, two years on, confirms that judgement. The headteacher's clear vision for the school's development has provided well-founded educational direction and inspiration. This, together with her energy and total commitment to the school and its pupils, has raised morale and provided a strong sense of community and an ethos for learning in the school. In the returned parents' questionnaires, and in discussion with parents, all said that the school was well led, and attributed the school's marked improvements to the headteacher. Supported by an outstanding governing body and newly appointed staff, the headteacher has very successfully raised pupils' standards of attainment to levels consistent with national expectations. The headteacher, by demonstrating with the staff that all pupils are valued as individuals, has successfully helped them to raise their own self-esteem. Pupils' attitudes to learning have improved very significantly and their behaviour in the classroom and around the school is good. They say that they are proud of the school and enjoy coming to it. Relationships within the school are very good. The school is no longer under-achieving.
53. The headteacher carefully analysed the long list of issues for improvement set out in the last report. She has systematically addressed them through the first action plan, and continued the development through the school improvement plan. Strategic targets have been set for the next five years. The planning is thorough and detailed with clear targets and timescales. It identifies personnel responsible, the expected outcomes and where appropriate, costings for its successful implementation. In planning for raising standards, the headteacher has made very good use of support from the Ashby cluster of small primary schools, a 'beacon' school, the local secondary school and the local education authority's advisory service.
54. The headteacher's very good leadership has engendered a strong sense of teamwork amongst staff, governors and parents. All are involved in planning and are determined to move the school forward. The governors are now a highly effective and efficient body providing very strong management support to the headteacher. They have undertaken a

programme of training by the local education authority. They and their sub-committees meet regularly to monitor all aspects of the school's work. They are extremely knowledgeable about the school and its strengths and areas for development. Each governor is linked with one or more subjects, or with special educational needs. They have a very good policy of visits to classrooms, focussing on particular aspects of development planning and reporting back to the headteacher and the governing body. Professional expertise amongst the governors, for example in information and communication technology and finance, is extremely helpful to the school. This is shown in practical terms in the provision of computer hardware and software, as well as in budgeting for development and monitoring expenditure. The governors' annual report to parents is an excellent document. It gives a very comprehensive account of their work throughout the year, a detailed assessment of the school's current situation and targets and aspirations for the forthcoming year. The governors are very aware that a number of the school's policy documents are substantially out of date and have produced a programme for their revision.

55. In a 'follow-up' inspection report of June 2002, it was noted that 'too much reliance was being placed on the headteacher for leadership and direction'. An important step towards some delegation of responsibilities has been taken in the appointment of a teacher with responsibility for the management of the infant and reception class. A part-time teacher has also been appointed to share the headteacher's teaching role, allowing her more time to manage the school's curriculum development and teaching and learning. She now has a weekly programme of classroom visits to share and monitor teaching, after which she provides effective feedback to teachers. However, the role of the other teachers as subject managers is still under-developed. In a small school, this is constrained by the time available. Consideration should now be given to raising standards further in science in Years 1 and 2 and some non-core subjects through regular sampling of work across the school and the establishment of uniform assessment procedures.
56. The school has a very good policy for performance management approved by the governing body. This is in operation and linked to the school's planning in providing opportunities for staff development. Outcomes are apparent in the raising of standards, and the staff's increased expertise following attendance at meetings and training courses. There is a very strong commitment in the school to raising standards further. The good all-round progress since the previous inspection indicates that the school has the potential and is now poised for further improvement.
57. The school's finances are well managed. Day-to-day control is expertly overseen by the administrative assistant, making full use of available technology. Monthly print-outs of income and expenditure are made available to the headteacher and governors. The minor recommendations of the most recent auditor's report have been carried out. Although the school's income per pupil remains high, the school has spent its funds wisely on extra resources and staff. Specialist teachers are employed for music and to support pupils with dyslexia. The provision of extra teaching assistants has had a positive impact on the standards achieved, particularly by those pupils with special educational needs. The ratio of pupils to computers has improved and there are plans to expand provision further. Funds specifically allocated for pupils with special educational needs and staff development are properly allocated and used. The governors allowed a large proportion of the school's income to be carried forward last year. This was in anticipation of furnishing and equipping a new building. When this did not come about, the governors promptly and effectively re-allocated the funds to include extra resources and staff. The governors are fully aware of the necessity for obtaining best value and cost effectiveness and carefully monitor the school's financial situation.
58. The level of staffing is now good with the headteacher teaching for half the week. The staff are suitably qualified to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. The

level of support provided by classroom and learning support assistants is high. These members of staff contribute substantially to pupils' learning, particularly those of lower attainment. They are well deployed and briefed by the class teachers. The school's policy for the induction of new teachers is out of date. However, the establishment of a new staff since the last inspection and the good teamwork now in place indicates that procedures for introducing staff new to the school are good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs, well supported by the headteacher maintains accurate records and provides effective support for this group of pupils.

59. The school's unsatisfactory accommodation is a continuing problem and constrains its development. Housed in two buildings on opposite sides of a road, with its administration based in a third building, time is wasted as pupils move under supervision from one building to the other. There is no secure outdoor accommodation for children in the reception year, limiting their physical development and opportunities for them to use large toys. The headteacher, governors and parents have lobbied hard for the school to be extended onto a single site, and plans have already been drawn up. It is envisaged that this will come about in the near future. Meanwhile, the school has made and is making the best use of the existing premises, attested by the improvements already noted. The premises are kept very clean and in good order by the caretaker. The school has access to a spacious field for sports and games.
60. Resources for learning are satisfactory for most subjects and good for English, information and communication technology, art and music. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Learning resources for information and communication technology in particular have been expanded and a comprehensive reading scheme and library resources have been substantially funded by the Friends of the School. Resources for children in reception are still unsatisfactory, largely because of the lack of suitable accommodation.
61. In view of:
- the very good leadership of the headteacher;
 - the very good support provided by governors;
 - the pupils' higher standards of attainment;
 - much improved attitudes and behaviour;
 - the good teaching and learning support;
 - the good links with and involvement of parents;
 - the excellent commitment to improvement and potential for success;
- the school has made good improvement since the previous inspection and is now providing good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to improve standards and the quality of education provided further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- * raise standards in science at Year 2 by:
 - maintaining the high profile given to developing the subject;
 - developing procedures for the subject co-ordinator to monitor the subject more effectively;
 - fully implementing the scheme of work for all pupils in Year 1 and Year 2;
 - developing assessment procedures to help identify the needs of individuals and particular groups of pupils;
(See paragraph numbers: 3, 16, 23, 102 and 103)

- improve provision for children in the reception year by:
 - giving them more opportunities to develop their physical and creative skills;
 - planning their work so that it is more appropriate to their needs, using the Foundation Stage curriculum;
 - continuing to develop the expertise of the teacher for this group of children;
 - developing strategies which allow the children to experiment and play in a secure area;
(See paragraph numbers: 2, 9, 24, 63, 64, 65, 78 and 80)

- develop assessment procedures in the non-core subjects by:
 - extending the current practice used in English and mathematics to cover all subjects;
 - ensuring that assessed work is matched to National Curriculum levels;
 - teachers working together to establish a common view on standards;
 - maintaining clear records of achievement and using these to plan appropriate work for all pupils;
(See paragraph numbers: 19, 45, 55, 66, 93, 99, 116 and 121)

- develop the arrangements for monitoring standards, teaching and learning in the non-core subjects by:
 - extending the current practice in English and mathematics to cover all subjects;
 - incorporating the subject co-ordinators into the process of lesson observations so that they become more aware of standards within their subjects;
 - ensuring that following observations, high quality feedback is given to colleagues;
(See paragraph numbers: 55, 94, 98, 107, 111, 116 and 121)

- * improve the accommodation by:
 - maintaining the high profile of the needs of the school with the appropriate authorities;
 - continuing to press for the planned extensions.
(See paragraph numbers: 2, 9, 24, 59 and 65)

In addition, the governing body may wish to include the following minor issue in its action plan:

- * review and update the current curricular policies

The areas for improvement indicated with an asterisk (*) are included in the school's improvement plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	1	9	7	0	0	0
Percentage	6	6	50	38	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	62
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002			14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	12	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (92)	86 (83)	100 (83)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	12	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (83)	86 (83)	71 (83)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002			8

The numbers of boys and girls in the Year 2 group are fewer than ten. For this reason the results, other than the overall totals, are omitted from the table.

As the total number of pupils in Year 6 is fewer than ten, no results are reported.

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	60	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.22
Average class size	20.66

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	104

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	233,739
Total expenditure	205,969
Expenditure per pupil	2,942
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,140
Balance carried forward to next year	40,910

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 35%

Number of questionnaires sent out	66
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	52	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	70	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	30	22	0	0
The teaching is good.	65	35	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	52	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	26	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	26	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	74	9	13	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	74	26	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	30	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	30	9	9	0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63. At the time of the previous inspection, children received a satisfactory range of experiences but did not have enough time to develop early independent writing skills. There were shortcomings in creative development and arrangements for outdoor play were unsatisfactory. The recent interim inspection in June 2002 indicated that, although some areas of provision had improved, arrangements for outdoor play and physical development were still inadequate and contributed to unsatisfactory provision overall.
64. A similar picture emerges from current inspection evidence. There is room for optimism, however. The newly appointed reception teacher is a good practitioner who has started to initiate many positive changes. Planning has improved and pays greater attention to the six areas of learning for children of this age than in the past. Activities are well organised and the teaching assistant provides high calibre support which makes a strong contribution towards children's learning. However, the Foundation Stage curriculum is not firmly established. The school has already sought external advice in order to improve the organisation of the curriculum. Teaching still focuses too strongly on methods advocated for teaching the National Curriculum. Consequently, children in the reception year do not experience a broad enough range or rich enough variety of activities. There are still too few opportunities for children to develop independent writing or creative skills adequately.
65. Provision for physical development remains a major problem. Ambitious plans to address the issue are nearing fruition. Although children have access to wheeled vehicles and spend time in the school playground, they do not have a secure outdoor play area in which to experiment for themselves. Newly purchased resources are starting to encourage a more interesting range of physical education activities. However, there is insufficient apparatus specifically designed for children of this age. In addition, activities are not always purposeful and there is not the right balance between child-initiated tasks and those that need adult support. Some work relies too heavily on the use of worksheets and more-able children suffer most because the work does not cater for their needs. Lengthy literacy and numeracy sessions are inappropriate for children who lack maturity and concentration.
66. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The class teacher and teaching assistant work well together and behaviour management is very good. Assessment is improving. Results of assessments to establish children's various levels of development on entry to school are starting to be used effectively to predict standards at the end of Year 2. The teacher and support assistant use simple, but effective, systems for assessing day-to-day levels of understanding. However, initiatives are recent and it is too early to judge their impact on standards.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Most children enter the school with well-developed personal, social and emotional skills. The teaching of personal development is a strong feature and children make good progress. By the time they reach Year 1, many will achieve the Early Learning Goals and beyond. Reception staff create a feeling of mutual respect. Children of all abilities are confident to contribute, because they know their ideas are valued. Both teaching and support staff set very good examples. Relationships are very strong and all children are totally at ease with adults and other children. Despite only being in school a short time, reception children confidently explained their work to the whole class at the end of a science lesson. Assemblies include playgroup children and are used effectively to promote positive values of kindness towards each other.

Communication, Language and Literacy

68. Although levels of development vary considerably from year to year because of the small number of children involved, most enter the school with adequately developed early reading skills. However, their speaking and listening and early writing skills are not as well developed. Through sound teaching, they make satisfactory progress. The vast majority of children currently in the reception class are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals of this area of learning by the time they reach Year 1.
69. Children develop their speaking and listening skills well through a variety of activities. They talk confidently in front of the whole class, explaining in simple terms and chatting confidently to each other. When working in the 'Yardley Hastings Village Shop', they explained clearly what they wanted to buy and the activity was full of good-humoured discussion. Some lack maturity, but most are very articulate and all gain in confidence.
70. The school uses elements of the National Literacy Strategy well to develop secure word building skills. Children enjoy books. In discussion, they are interested in print and even children who have not started to read are well motivated. One boy was very clear why the picture of the knight was the best part of the story. He confidently explained that he liked knights because they had swords. Others have a long list of favourite stories and more-able children display a good level of independence. Reading books are very appropriately matched to ability and the school establishes good reading routines. Children have many opportunities to share books and read on a one-to-one basis with adults. Parents also provide a good level of support.
71. Some children write their name unaided; others make recognisable marks. Letter formation is weak and activities mainly involve tracing and colouring. There is too little opportunity for children to write independently, especially when much of the worksheet based activities requires very little writing. The school recognises that the structure of the literacy hour is not always appropriate for some children new to school. It tries hard to ensure these children receive separate work during these sessions. However, children who lack maturity and concentration do not make as much progress as they could. A wider variety of activities that are more appropriately matched to their needs would improve this situation.

Mathematical development

72. Children's mathematical skills are appropriately developed on entry to school. Although little direct teaching was observed during the inspection, children experience an adequate balance of activities to increase confidence, make satisfactory progress and develop sound mathematical understanding. They order numbers to twenty and make good use of the 'village shop' to develop confidence with using money. All recognise the value of coins to at least 10 pence and count accurately as they purchase their goods. They have secure knowledge of shapes, such as squares, circles and triangles. By the time they reach Year 1, most will have achieved the Early Learning Goals.
73. However, the teaching of numeracy for at least an hour is inappropriate for some, because they are unable to concentrate for that length of time. Although the school provides opportunities for learning in a less formal way, it does not include a rich enough variety of activities. Children play in the sand, but this makes little contribution to their mathematical development, because activities lack purpose and structure.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children enter the school with a sound knowledge of the world in which they live. They make steady progress through satisfactory teaching. They develop greater understanding through purposeful activities linked to half-termly themes. During the week of the inspection, they were working on the topic of light. Staff promoted language development well in their discussion and children displayed good knowledge. They explained simply what it felt like in the dark box and what they could see when they shone the torch onto shiny paper.
75. Children develop secure computer skills. They displayed a good level of independence as they used a graphics program. More-able children knew how to save their work unaided.
76. All the current reception age children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning and, because of the satisfactory teaching they receive, are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Physical development

77. Physical development is similar to other children of this age on entry to school.
78. The school does its best to provide enough opportunities for children to develop physical skills appropriately. However, the constraints of the building and inadequate outside areas make it almost impossible. Current provision is unsatisfactory and has not improved enough since the time the school was previously inspected. Although plans are in hand to improve provision, children currently in the reception class receive very little of what they need and do not make enough progress to reach satisfactory standards. They have no secure separate play area and no indoor physical education apparatus designed specifically for children of this age. In order to use the main playground, they have to cross a road. The school has recently purchased a range of wheeled vehicles for outdoor play and this is a step in the right direction.
79. Children write with reasonable pencil control. When observed making lanterns in their work on Florence Nightingale, they demonstrated good control of scissors as they cut slits in the paper. The results were very pleasing. However, there are too few opportunities for children to explore and experiment with tools and materials of their choice.

Creative development

80. Although children have good opportunities to develop creative skills adequately through play activities and music, opportunities to develop artistic skills are not as well promoted. All too often, children do not paint, explore and experiment with a wide enough range of materials and media. Activities do not encourage creativity when they are too tightly structured. This is an area of weakness identified during the previous inspection.
81. When opportunities do arise, children learn well and make good progress, because they enjoy the practical nature of the work. In one lesson, there was great excitement as they showed the Rangoli patterns they had created with paint, coloured sand and glue.
82. Artwork is effectively linked to topics and examples of pupils' previous work show good quality self portraits and appropriate examples of children's paintings. Despite the lack of opportunities, children make enough progress to achieve most of the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year.

ENGLISH

83. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 is average. This confirms the finding of the Additional Inspector who carried out an interim inspection of the school in June 2002 and represents good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were found to be below average, particularly in writing. In the intervening period, the school has identified in its improvement plan the initiatives necessary to raise standards. These included the purchase of a new reading scheme, concentration on guided reading sessions and greater emphasis on improving speaking and listening. The school analyses carefully pupils' national and other test results to identify individual needs and organises appropriate training for teachers to help them to develop pupils' independent writing.
84. As well as these specific measures, the school's considerable success in improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour has contributed to the rise in standards. The previous report noted that some pupils became inattentive when asked to listen for too long. The additional inspector also commented that some pupils found difficulty in concentrating when others were speaking. She judged that pupils' speaking and listening skills were below average. Teachers' better management of the literacy hour is helping to remove this problem. In the lessons observed pupils, even in the youngest class, listened to the teacher and to each other carefully. In a very good assembly presented by Years 3 and 4 pupils, they listened raptly as the pupils read out their poems on 'Friendship' and acted out a modernised version of the parable of 'The Good Samaritan'. In the Years 5 and 6 class, the teacher strongly insisted on the pupils' full attention to her teaching and to other pupils' responses.
85. Pupils' speaking skills are improving. Those heard to read spoke clearly about what they had read. When describing their favourite books, some pupils spoke fluently, using good vocabulary. In some lessons too, pupils describe their experiences well. In a history lesson, for example, pupils gave good accounts of their role-playing of servants during a visit to a Victorian mansion. Though teachers are aware of the planned emphasis on developing pupils' speaking, they sometimes miss opportunities to encourage extended speech. A lesson on playscripts, for instance, offered an opening for pupils to talk about drama and films but was not developed.
86. Standards of pupils' reading at the end of Year 6 and Year 2 are at expected levels. Group reading and the purchase of a comprehensive reading scheme have contributed to pupils' confident reading of a good variety of texts. Pupils of higher and average attainment in all years read accurately, mostly with good expression. They observe punctuation marks carefully and read dialogue expressively. They show good understanding of what they have read and predict what might happen later in the story. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 read technical vocabulary accurately in non-fiction texts. Pupils of lower attainment and those with special educational needs also reach satisfactory standards at their own levels. They have a satisfactory range of words which they readily recognise, and tackle unfamiliar words confidently. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are not always sufficiently challenged by the level of books they read.
87. Pupils' reading diaries show that they read regularly at home. The diaries are a good link between school and home with comments written by teachers, parents and pupils. Many pupils have a range of fiction and non-fiction books of their own and describe their favourites, giving good reasons for their choice. The younger pupils are familiar with terms, such as 'author', 'title', 'index' and other book features. Older pupils readily use dictionaries and thesauruses to enlarge their vocabularies.
88. The previous inspection reported that pupils' writing was below average in both infants and juniors. The Inspector following up the report in June 2002 commented that pupils did not produce enough writing for a range of purposes. While the small numbers of pupils involved in national tests does not provide a reliable guide, there has been progress in pupils' standards in recent years. Analysis of this year's work shows that average and

- higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 are writing connected sentences with satisfactory spelling and punctuation to form more extended pieces. They plan stories in Year 2 and write poems in blank verse using imaginative vocabulary. Most pupils at this level use joined up writing and understand the correct use of capital letters and different forms of punctuation. In Year 1 a pupil writes complex sentences, such as, 'As he flew higher, he began to feel nervous'. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs write sentences mainly using capital letters and full stops correctly. Their spelling is phonetic but recognisable.
89. There is a good range of writing by Year 3 to 6 pupils. Years 3 and 4 pupils make satisfactory progress from their work in Year 2 though there is a wide range of ability in the class. Higher attaining pupils show a good development of vocabulary and style in their writing. They write stories, instructions and descriptive pieces including accounts of 'The Five Pillars of Islam' and the Jewish 'Seder Meal'. Lower attaining pupils make sound progress over the two years, writing sequential sentences with some understanding of different styles of writing. Spelling and punctuation are inconsistent, but show developing awareness of the underlying principles. In Years 5 and 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, with some pupils writing good extended narratives, descriptions, biographies, playscripts and poems. These pupils use language confidently and are beginning to develop individual styles. In both years, there is not a great difference in the quality of writing by those of 'higher' and 'average' attainment. In a good lesson, pupils considered words beginning with 'tele', 'super', 'aqua' or ending with 'phobia'. They came up with good lists of words and either worked out their meaning, or looked them up in a dictionary. The good level of vocabulary included words, such as 'aquaphobia', 'arachnophobia' and 'superficial'. One pupil knew that 'aqua' and 'hydro' were Latin and Greek for 'water'.
90. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the lessons observed were predominantly good. They showed good levels of concentration and were anxious to learn successfully. When asked to work in groups without the direct supervision of the teacher, they got on with their work, collaborating well with each other. The presentation of their written work and handwriting is variable, however, and too many pupils are satisfied with less than their best in this respect.
91. Teaching in one of the lessons observed was satisfactory. In the other two it was good. In the higher quality lessons teachers set a lively pace which fully held pupils' attention. The lessons' objectives were shared with the pupils and the review at the end of the lessons discussed whether these had been achieved. The organisation of the literacy hour was good, with an appropriate balance between direct teaching and pupils' individual and group work. Teachers managed the learning well. Teaching assistants played a full part in the lessons, giving individuals and groups of pupils good support and particularly helping pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. This support helps to ensure that all pupils are included and participate fully in lessons.
92. Planning is detailed showing what is to be learned and the objectives for the different age and ability groups which can number as many as five. The National Literacy Strategy is firmly established and teachers' planning is supported by the scheme of work drawn up by the Ashby Cluster of small primary schools.
93. Procedures for assessment are sound. Pupils' progress is tracked through analysis of the results of national and other tests, writing targets which are inside the cover of each pupil's writing book, and their reading records. Staff have produced portfolios of work assessed in terms of National Curriculum levels. Marking of pupils' written work is very good. It comments in detail on their writing with helpful and supportive advice. However, teachers sometimes do not comment on poorly presented work or sufficiently identify basic errors in spelling and punctuation.

94. The co-ordinator oversees teachers' planning, leads staff meetings concerned with English and discusses informally issues of curriculum and assessment as they arise. Monitoring of lessons is at present carried out by the headteacher who provides written or verbal feedback to the teachers.

MATHEMATICS

95. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were below expected levels for pupils at the end of Year 6 and Year 2. Since that time, there has been good progress overall and inspection evidence indicates that standards now meet those expected nationally for pupils in Year 6 and Year 2.
96. Within each class, there are at least two year groups. The teachers plan for the wide age and ability range in each class well, and because of this, pupils are given challenging work in their lessons. In the class with pupils in Year 1 and Year 2, for example, there is a wide range of work undertaken with the more-able pupils in each year group working alongside each other with appropriate work set for each individual. In the single lesson observed for this class, the pupils worked well when they calculated amounts of money and the change they should have when certain amounts had been spent. The more-able pupils within this class were using calculations beyond £1.00 accurately. The teacher produced worksheets which involved the pupils in making up games adding and subtracting amounts of money. This they did confidently and accurately. They used a range of coins in their work and they recognised and used them well. The middle-attaining group of pupils used the same basis for the game but they used lower value coins and worked to totals of 50 pence. In this task they were supported very well by the teaching assistant. The lower attaining group of pupils worked on adding and subtracting with a small range of low denomination coins. Analysis of pupils' previous work indicates that they make good progress over time. The higher attaining pupils add two two-digit numbers accurately carrying figures beyond ten. They measure a range of items using non-standard measures. For example, they estimate the length of their desks and check their estimates using the span of their hands. They begin to use data to make simple graphs and block diagrams. Pupils have a sound understanding of two-dimensional shapes and identify the names and some properties of the more basic shapes.
97. Between Years 3 and 6 pupils continue to make good progress, largely because of the good teaching they receive overall, and the very good teaching they receive for much of the time in the Years 5/6 class. Pupils in the Years 3/4 class become more confident in handling larger numbers. The higher attaining pupils use three-digit numbers well and they add and subtract these numbers accurately. They begin to use standard measures and when checking length, they use centimetres and millimetres effectively. This group of pupils is confident when using multiplication tables and recognise that this is a quick way of adding up a list of the same number. The average group of pupils undertake similar work to the higher attaining group, but they use smaller numbers and are less confident in mathematical operations. However, they know the basic number bonds and double and halve two-digit numbers accurately. They readily identify the difference in two-dimensional shapes and know that some have regular patterns and some are irregular. In the Years 5/6 class, pupils are given challenging work to match their abilities and because of this they make good, and often very good, progress in this class. The high quality planning gives clear indications of what and how the pupils are to learn. Though there is a high percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register within this class, they are challenged equally well as the other pupils and they make similar progress. Within the lesson observed for this class, the pupils were handling numbers very confidently and some of the higher attaining pupils were adding two sets of numbers at the same time. They calculated the squares of numbers to 15 and the square roots of these numbers to 100. The lower attaining pupils added single groups of numbers accurately and they were

given appropriate work to develop their own skills with using numbers in real situations. The support that this group was given by the teaching assistants was very good and contributed well to the progress made by the group. The analysis of pupils' work indicates that they have a wide range of mathematical experiences. They use the four rules of number in their calculations accurately, and recognise when each rule is to be used. They calculate ratios and proportions, recognising, for example, means, averages and medians. They make frequency tables and display the results in a variety of ways, including bar charts and different types of graph.

98. In the few lessons observed, the quality of teaching varied from satisfactory to very good, but overall it was good. Inspection evidence overall supports the findings based on lessons observed. Pupils are given a wide range of mathematical experiences throughout the school, though in the class for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, there is more challenge and each pupil is given work which is specific to him or her. The quality of teachers' planning is good overall and reflects the better use of the National Numeracy Strategy since the time of the previous inspection. The strategy was still to be fully implemented as the staff had not been effectively trained in its use at that time. The work of the subject leader in developing the use of the strategy has been the most significant aspect of the improvement seen in standards in the subject. She has a very clear understanding of how the subject is to be developed and works closely with her colleagues to ensure that this is implemented.
99. Teachers assess pupils' work satisfactorily. The procedures include analysis of pupils' work and regular tests to check their understanding of mathematical processes. The school has begun to track pupils' progress in the subject, though this is at the early stages of implementation. Pupils' work is marked accurately though this does not always indicate to pupils how they can improve.
100. Numeracy is used satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects. For example, when pupils measure their work in design and technology and use graphs to record results in science.

SCIENCE

101. Standards at the end of Year 6 have improved significantly since the previous inspection. At that time standards were below average, more able pupils did not receive sufficient challenge and pupils' enquiry skills were weak. In 2002, pupils achieved well above average results and girls performed particularly well to reverse a trend of underachievement. Better use of data analysis, combined with a well-structured training programme for teaching scientific enquiry and independent learning skills have been the key to the school's success. Although the current Year 6 are not working at the same high level, because of a greater percentage of pupils with special educational needs, most are on course to achieve at least average standards.
102. The picture is not quite so positive at the end of Year 2. Although there has been some improvement since the previous inspection, it has been from a very low starting point. Current achievement is unsatisfactory; pupils do not reach standards of which they are capable and the rate of improvement has been too slow. The more able underachieve to the greatest degree. Several factors have contributed to low standards. The school has only recently started to target areas of greatest weakness and teachers have not been secure in their own assessment of the standards pupils can and should achieve. Data analysis has focused more on the weaknesses of Year 6 pupils. Several recent initiatives are starting to have a positive impact. Teachers now have better subject knowledge and recently introduced systems for identifying those who achieve well and those who do not understand have started to impact positively. Although pupils currently in Year 1 and Year 2 still have weak enquiry skills, they have broader scientific knowledge.

103. Pupils in Year 2 have a clear understanding of the importance of exercise and a secure awareness of the elements that are necessary for life. They have a basic understanding of electricity and are beginning to apply their knowledge well to other areas of the science curriculum. This was demonstrated effectively in a lesson on light and dark for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. Many had only recently found out how to make a bulb light. Some did not understand that they needed a complete circuit, but all were learning from their mistakes. More able pupils considered whether torches worked in the same way and came to the correct conclusion. They used good scientific vocabulary in their discussion and referred to the light 'reflecting'. However, opportunities to carry out independent investigations have not been a strong feature in the past and pupils do not always find it easy to predict what may happen or explain their findings. Although pupils in this lesson made good progress, evidence taken from the previous year's work shows that pupils have made slow progress over time and the more able have received very little to challenge or inspire them. Many pupils lack confidence when asked 'Why?' and are not inquisitive enough to find out more.
104. Pupils in Year 6 have covered a wide range of topics across the science curriculum. They make satisfactory progress and acquire a sound level of scientific knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as others because they receive a good level of support and respond well to the practical nature of the subject. All abilities have secure knowledge of the function of the heart and a good understanding of the impact of smoking on health. They use numeracy skills well to collect and present data in their deduction that thighbone measurement increases with height. They know light travels in a straight line and are aware of the importance of fair testing. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils organised their work very independently and most demonstrated secure knowledge of non-reflective materials. They decided that one person should judge outcomes 'to make it less variable'. However, even here, there was a lack of enquiry. Pupils of all abilities were reticent to predict and some pupils dismissed the fluorescent armband as non-reflective. They did not question why it was used for safety materials.
105. In the small number of lessons observed, the quality of teaching was consistently good, demonstrating the positive impact of training on teachers' subject knowledge. Good features that are common to all lessons are high quality Ashby Cluster group planning and the contribution of good quality learning support staff. In the Year 6 lesson observed, activities were very well matched to the different ability groups. Pupils were already well motivated because they had enjoyed trying to 'Zap the Alien' with a torch and mirror in their previous lesson. They were totally engrossed. Even potentially difficult pupils wanted to succeed. There was great excitement as one group watched a beam of light reflect on the ceiling. The teacher had high expectations and pupils used their numeracy skills accurately to measure the length of a shadow. Pupils wanted to do their best and, consequently, all abilities made good progress. However, a broader view of teaching, taken from other inspection evidence, demonstrates that the overall quality is satisfactory, rather than good. Samples of previous work reveal that pupils of different abilities and different age groups frequently complete the same work. For some it is too hard; for others it is too easy. Marking varies considerably in quality. Some marking makes helpful reference to pupils' levels of understanding, whilst other comments are superficial. There is hardly any reference to how pupils can improve their work.
106. Although there are some very good individual examples of research skills development, using a computer program, the school is aware of the need to incorporate information and communication technology into topics in a more structured way. Currently, computers do not make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Links to other subjects, such as design and technology, are starting to take place. There are many good examples of pupils using their literacy skills well in their planning and recording, but these links are not developed in any systematic way.

107. The recently appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a clear sense of direction for the subject. She has developed a well-structured action plan with appropriate targets for development. She has already undertaken training and is very aware that there is much work to be done. The school has established effective links with Hartwell 'Beacon' School to enable Year 5 pupils and staff to collaborate on an investigative science project. Further training sessions are planned for the current academic year. Although the co-ordinator has a monitoring programme in place for the spring term, she has not been able to observe lessons or work alongside staff. Consequently, she does not have a clear enough overview of standards.
108. Despite the slow rate of progress in the past, the future looks far more positive. The clear commitment of staff, the improving quality of teaching and the more precise use of assessment indicate that the school is well placed to continue to raise standards in the future.

ART AND DESIGN

109. The previous inspection identified standards as being below those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In the intervening period standards overall have improved and whilst it is not possible to make a secure judgement on standards at Year 2, standards at Year 6 are above those expected nationally because of the good progress pupils make. This improvement is because of the greater emphasis that has been placed on the subject and the very good use made of the staff's skills. One of the teaching assistants is a very experienced artist and her expertise is used very well when working closely with the class teachers, to help pupils use the correct techniques when painting, drawing and in developing three-dimensional work.
110. The high expectations the teachers have of the pupils and the way in which the pupils react to this have a positive effect on their learning. The pupils have developed good colour sense and mix paint well to create different tones within their work. They handle equipment confidently and have good control over brushes when they undertake watercolour painting. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to develop their artistic skills. They make puppets and experience working with a variety of media, including clay. The displays of pupils' work encourage them to strive to achieve the best possible results. At the entrance to the school, for example, visitors are welcomed with clay plaques made by the pupils and throughout the school, the teachers have used the pupils' work well in displays.
111. The quality of teaching in the single lesson observed was excellent. Teachers plan challenging work to help the pupils make good progress and they use time and resources very well in order to develop learning at a fast pace. The co-ordinator has no specific time allocated to monitor standards in the subject, but this is done informally in discussion with colleagues. The quality of resources provided for the pupils is good and they respond well by taking good care of them.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. Pupils' attainment meets national expectations in Year 6. Standards have risen considerably since the previous inspection when they were found to be unsatisfactory. No lessons in the Years 1/2 class could be observed during the inspection and there is insufficient evidence of pupils' past work to form a secure judgement on their standard of attainment. However, teachers' planning and the acquisition of a range of resources and materials indicate that coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum is met in Years 1 and 2. Pupils experience designing and making toys and cards with moving parts and work with textiles and food. Planning is strongly supported throughout the

school by the school's participation in the 'cluster' meetings of the local small primary schools.

113. Pupils in Year 4 have built air-propelled rockets, concluding that the higher the air pressure the further the rocket will travel. They followed this up by constructing vehicles from interlocking plastic pieces, as well as using cardboard and paper. They propelled these with a pneumatic pump. Pupils' evaluation of their work showed that the wheels of the second vehicle needed to be strengthened to bear the force. The work links well with their study of pneumatic forces in science. Year 6 pupils successfully investigate and evaluate different types of bread, design a recipe for their own, mix and bake it and test the result. They use information and communication technology well to record their findings. In a good project on hats, they take some to pieces to see how they are made. They successfully design and make their own winter hats from a range of materials.
114. Pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 shows satisfactory progress in designing with carefully labelled sketches and diagrams. Pupils translate their ideas into designs showing careful lists of materials, ingredients and tools required. Procedures for making are broken down correctly into a series of steps. Pupils evaluate their work noting where improvements could be made. They present their work with care and take a pride in it. Pupils with special educational needs work equally well and make good progress.
115. The teaching of the one lesson observed was good. The teacher organised the lesson well, developing skills appropriate to the different age groups in the class. She supported and guided the pupils in their work without over-directing them. Good relationships in the class and interesting tasks made the lesson an enjoyable and profitable experience. The teaching assistants made good contributions to the pupils' learning. Analysis of the junior pupils' workbooks indicates that teaching is well informed and systematic. Marking comments are encouraging and helpful, although teachers have not developed a uniform system of assessment. Teachers' long-term planning shows satisfactory development of the subject skills and coverage of the range of activities. In the short-term, there is sometimes a lack of detailed objectives, and the activities to achieve them.
116. The school's provision of resources and attention to overall planning have brought about satisfactory improvements in standards. The co-ordinator's role in stimulating and effecting further progress and the assessment of pupils' work is not fully developed.

GEOGRAPHY

117. No lessons could be observed during the inspection. The judgement that pupils' attainment in Years 2 and 6 is satisfactory is therefore based on analysis of their work, a portfolio of last year's work and activities across the school, as well as discussion with pupils. This is an improvement on the last report when pupils' attainment was found to be below expected levels at the end of Year 6. Teachers' planning indicates that the school provides a satisfactory curriculum to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
118. The limited amount of written work in the pupils' books this year is accounted for by the half-termly 'blocking' of geography and history. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have drawn maps of their route from home to school. The maps are correctly and carefully drawn, and include symbols for landmarks along the way. Pupils have also used information and communication technology well to construct graphs and tables showing their method of getting to school, by car or on foot. Pupils have also considered the contrasts between their own environment and that of Tunisia, visited by 'Barnaby Bear'. They illustrate these with drawings of the desert, camels, palm trees and clothes.
119. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 study different kinds of settlements. They develop their mapping skills satisfactorily by drawing maps of local and other regions indicating towns, roads and

public services which they also list. They use the maps to calculate distances, using lengths of string to measure them. They have good opportunities to think out answers to questions, such as, 'What services does this community need?'

120. In Years 5 and 6, pupils studying their historical topic of Ancient Greece, complete a map showing the principal settlements, seas, islands and adjoining countries. They describe successfully the main features of the country's physical geography, climate and its reliance on the tourist industry.
121. The portfolio of last year's work shows satisfactory development of skills in mapping across the school, of using photographs to study physical features of locations and field trips to provide first hand experiences and evidence. Pupils' books indicate that teaching is based on the National Curriculum requirements. Pupils with special educational needs complete similar work to their classmates and make sound progress. This indicates that they are well supported in their work. However, on occasions, there is insufficient distinction between the work teachers set for the different year groups in each class. This means that their expectations are too low and pupils' skills development is not fully extended. As noted in the previous inspection report, assessment procedures have not been established. It was not possible to hold a discussion with the co-ordinator, a part-time teacher, as she was not in the school at the time of the inspection.

HISTORY

122. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were at expected levels for pupils in Year 6 and Year 2. Pupils' progress and the quality of teaching were satisfactory overall. However, it was noted in that report that there were too few opportunities for pupils to develop research skills.
123. Current inspection evidence presents an improving picture. Standards throughout the school are similar to those found in other schools and progress is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory, sometimes good. The school has increased opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning and research skills. As a result, there are many examples of good quality independent research projects, using information books and CD-ROM very effectively.
124. Younger pupils have an appropriate understanding of then and now. They display a secure basic knowledge of events and recall dates accurately, because the subject is taught well and they are highly motivated to learn. In discussion, Year 2 pupils were well informed about Florence Nightingale. They knew the important events within her life and had a clear understanding of improvements she had made to working conditions in Crimean hospitals. Most knew why she was called 'The Lady with the Lamp' and over half knew that the queen referred to in the story must have been Queen Victoria, 'because it happened in olden times'. A few higher attaining pupils had researched information at home on the Internet and displayed impressive knowledge about the 'Order of Merit' medal.
125. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrate increasing security with the subject. In one lesson, they showed clear understanding of the contrasting lifestyles of rich and poor in Victorian Britain. Their recent visit to Holdenby Hall had effectively enhanced learning. Pupils talked knowledgeably about the different conditions experienced by servants, rates of pay and types of work available. They developed literacy skills well when they wrote an account of life as a Victorian servant, researched information and used planning sheets to focus on one aspect of Victorian life.
126. From examples of previous work, it is clear that pupils in Years 5 and 6 continue to make at least satisfactory progress because they enjoy the subject. They develop a mature

approach. This was demonstrated well in pupils' projects about 'Ancient Greece'. Many were of good quality, with detailed information and careful presentation. Comments on the quality of their own work were accurate and refreshingly honest. Marking was also effective because it showed each pupil not only how to improve, but also how much their work was valued.

127. In the small sample of lessons observed, teaching was good in one lesson and satisfactory in two. In all lessons, teachers plan well for different abilities. They bring the subject alive through an interesting range of activities and educational visits. In Class 2, the teacher used the pupils' recent visit very effectively to motivate them and good quality discussion ensued. Teaching assistants provide effective support, thus enabling pupils with special educational needs to participate fully. Attractive classroom displays make good use of books, posters and artefacts to create interest. However, in the past, pupils in mixed ability classes have not always been given work that matches their ability. There are too many examples of different age groups completing the same work.
128. The school uses educational visits well to support learning. Every class participates in activities that bring history to life. Evidence of past opportunities includes photographs of a very successful 'Roman Day'. Pupils dressed in appropriate clothing, studied and sketched artefacts and learned about Roman shoe making. They remembered the day vividly and consequently, retained knowledge well, using literacy skills well to write records of their visits. The school makes good use of its links with other schools to share resources.
129. Each teacher assesses individual levels of understanding at the end of a topic and identifies pupils who achieve well and those who need further input. The steady development of portfolios provides useful information about progress and indicates the standards pupils can and should achieve. Although the school is very aware that further work remains to be done, it is well placed to develop the subject in the future.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

130. Pupils' standards in information and communication technology in Years 2 and 6 are satisfactory overall. The school has invested heavily in computer hardware and software and in staff training. This has brought about the considerable improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were below national expectations and progress was unsatisfactory.
131. No lessons could be observed during the inspection in the Years 1/2 class. Evidence from pupils' work and displays around the school show that pupils word process their sentences and stories and produce labels for items in the classroom. They are familiar with the processes of saving and printing and choose appropriate font size and colour for their work. Pupils also successfully use graphics programs to create pictures with abstract designs, shapes and colour fills. Good data handling work shows pupils producing charts and graphs about their different eye colours, and in geography their means of getting to school by car, bus or on foot. They show a good knowledge of how computer microchips affect their daily lives through their use in electronic equipment, such as calculators, televisions, keyboards and cameras. Pupils correctly draw and label the function switches of a cassette tape recorder. Teachers' planning indicates the use of control technology in programming a movable robot.
132. In a good lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 built well on their previous learning of spreadsheets. They are familiar with the purpose of spreadsheets as a means of calculation and correctly referred to columns and cells. The teacher provided data about the income and expenditure over a four-week period of a car-wash business. She carefully explained formulas for different kinds of calculation. The pupils' task was to calculate

income, expenditure and profit over the four weeks. They worked singly or in pairs and most successfully completed the task. The task of other pupils not at the four computers was to compose 'What if...?' questions. They devised, for example, such questions as, 'What would the profit be if the rent was doubled?' and they wrote formulae that would be needed. Pupils with special educational needs worked either with the teaching assistant or in pairs with other pupils. All pupils worked with interest and application during the lesson and made good progress.

133. One of the school's development aims is to ensure that opportunities for the use of information and communication technology are included across the curriculum through teachers' planning. Analysis of pupils' work and displays around the school show that this is being achieved for example in English, design and technology, mathematics, geography and art. Pupils show a ready familiarity with the computer keyboard. For example, they quickly used the correct keys for their spreadsheet calculations. Other pupils successfully researched information in a history lesson. Overall progress is sound and the recent installation of new machines gives the impetus for further rapid development.
134. The variety of examples of information and communication technology across the curriculum indicates that teachers' knowledge and skills are at least satisfactory. In the lesson observed, they were good. The teacher clearly explained and demonstrated what the pupils were to learn. The lesson was imaginatively planned and well managed. The teaching assistant contributed well to the learning and achievement of a group of pupils. Long-term planning is usefully based on the Ashby Cluster curriculum map which is based on National Curriculum requirements. It shows good development over Years 1 to 6 of the different elements of the subject. Governors' professional expertise has provided invaluable advice, encouragement and practical help to the school.

MUSIC

135. No lessons or musical activities could be observed during the inspection. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement about teaching, or pupils' achievement. The previous report found that standards achieved throughout the school were close to national expectations, and attributed improvements in teaching to the appointment of a specialist teacher. The specialist is still in post and teaches all the classes weekly. She teaches two groups of recorder players and takes a weekly hymn practice. Her planning file is comprehensive and demonstrates that the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met. Music contributes to pupils' cultural development. Linking with other subjects, such as art, physical education, geography and religious education, pupils are introduced to music from South America, Asia, Africa and Australia.
136. The teacher notes pupils' progress on 'achievement sheets'. Pupils complete well-designed response sheets when listening to music. They write thoughtful reactions to such music as 'The Planets' suite. In class, pupils learn skills of performing through singing and instrumental playing, and composing. They learn to read and use rhythmic and graphic notation. The recorder players are taught to read musical notation. The planning file shows systematic development of skills in these areas.
137. The school's provision of tuned and untuned classroom instruments, as noted in the previous report, is good. There are opportunities for pupils to learn the violin, guitar and keyboard from staff of the county music service.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. The report at the time of the previous inspection identified standards as being in line with those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. These standards have been maintained for pupils by Year 6, but it is not possible to make a secure judgement for Year 2, as it was not possible to observe any lessons for the Years 1/2 class. However, evidence from teachers' planning indicates that all pupils are taught the full subject curriculum and have regular and frequent opportunities to develop their physical skills. The very good range of physical activities beyond the normal school curriculum ensures that pupils make satisfactory, and often good, progress in the subject.
139. The curriculum is planned so that the pupils are taught specific skills within set blocks of time. At the time of inspection, for example, the main focus was on 'Creative Games Making'. In the lesson observed for the Years 3/4 class, the pupils were aware of the need to warm up their bodies prior to exercise. This they did well, with stretching and running activities. Within the main part of the lesson, pupils worked in groups of three or four to make up a game when given a set range of equipment. The results were varied and inventive. They used balls, for example, for dribbling, bouncing and throwing at targets. They incorporated several distinct activities into one overall game, making up their own set of rules and scoring systems as they tried out the game they had invented. Within the games, pupils showed sound standards of attainment in throwing, catching, batting and bouncing. They used a good range of different types of equipment to do this. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was good. The strongest elements were the planning and the pace at which the lesson moved. The teacher encouraged the pupils to analyse their own and others' performance and in this way they could see how they could improve. By the time they leave the school, almost all pupils attain the expected standards by successfully swimming 25 metres.
140. The range of activities offered to pupils beyond the school day is very good. The teachers have arranged for a wide range of visitors to help the pupils in developing physical expertise. These include players from Northampton Town Football Club, the local rugby club and the Northampton County Cricket Club. Additionally, the staff provide opportunities for developing pupils' skills in football, basketball, dance and athletics. Outdoor activities are enhanced through the residential visits undertaken to such places as Snowdonia.
141. The school provides a sound range of resources. There is a wide range of small equipment and in the hall there are climbing frames and gymnastic equipment. The school field is adequate for the size of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. At the time of the previous inspection, standards met the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Strong links between the local church and the school contributed well to pupils' understanding. Knowledge of other world faiths was less secure and the range of artefacts to support learning needed improvement. The school has maintained its good links with the church and has taken positive steps to improve resources. It has broadened pupils' knowledge of other faiths and the multi-cultural world in which they live. Currently, pupils of all abilities make steady progress and achieve expected standards.
143. Whole school acts of collective worship and class assemblies follow well-organised themes and make a positive contribution to religious understanding. Pupils look forward to these occasions because they are of good quality and have a strong sense of community. These occasions are used very effectively to strengthen links with the community, when pupils in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 join with playgroup children. During the week of the inspection, pupils from Class 2 prepared a very successful whole school assembly, to

which their relatives were invited. The theme was 'The Value of Friendship'. Pupils' behaviour was impeccable. Everyone spoke with clarity and maturity. They conveyed the message very strongly. The parable of 'The Good Samaritan' was particularly effective because pupils who were listening responded well to the modern day interpretation. A very poignant moment came when pupils offered friendship bracelets to others.

144. The locally agreed syllabus provides a firm structure for the balanced coverage of religious education. The school thoughtfully monitors and evaluates planning at the end of each topic. Last year's programme on Sikhism was adapted to meet the needs of current pupils more effectively. Pupils throughout the school acquire a good balance of knowledge and understanding about Christianity and other world faiths. Alongside a secure grasp of information, they develop good insight into feelings and attitudes about events. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have learned about Diwali. They had good recall of the main reasons why Hindus celebrated the Festival of Light. They developed a sound knowledge of other celebrations, such as birthdays, weddings and christenings. In previous work, younger pupils had written very expressively about their feelings as they watched a candle flicker. Some felt happy: others sad and one pupil movingly reflected upon the day 'the planes crashed into the twin towers'.
145. Older pupils discuss feelings and know the value of sharing ideas in their personal and social development lessons. Pupils who have experienced behavioural difficulties in the past have benefited most from these sessions and now want to be part of a caring community. Pupils enjoy discussion and respect each other's opinions. Religious education makes a good contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
146. In their work on Islam, pupils understand the reasons for fasting and feasting, they know about the five pillars of Islam and the main features of a mosque. They display a good level of understanding about Ramadan and Eid and know the holy book is called the Qur'an. There are many examples of good quality independent research.
147. Although very little direct teaching was observed, its quality was satisfactory and pupils of all abilities made adequate progress. Work is linked well to other subjects and teachers pay careful attention to the development of literacy skills. In a lesson for Year 1 and Year 2, the teacher effectively linked ideas to the class science topic on light and dark. Pupils consolidated knowledge well when writing simple messages on their Diwali cards. Some extended their ideas with thoughtful vocabulary. One pupil wrote, 'May Diwali make your day shine'. The teacher created an appropriately calm atmosphere and valued pupils' contributions. Pupils were interested and the lesson was a success. However, teachers do not always match work accurately to the ability or maturity of pupils in mixed-age classes. Pupils often complete the same work. The more able miss valuable opportunity to acquire greater depth of knowledge and the less able find the work too demanding.
148. Literacy skills are used effectively when pupils write and record their feelings during religious education lessons.