

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GILLINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Gillingham

LEA area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113666

Headteacher: Mrs Marion Robinson

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims  
28899

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 251321

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 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gillingham Primary School School Road GILLINGHAM Dorset
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Mike Motley
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> April 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
28899	Mr G R Sims	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school do to improve further
09086	Mrs R Watkins	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
10611	Mr M C James	Team inspector	English Physical education	Educational inclusion
20230	Mrs J Clayphan	Team inspector	Science History English as an additional language	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
16038	Mrs J Bavin	Team inspector	Music Religious education	Special educational needs
20950	Mr R Burgess	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	
21904	Mrs D Gale	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in the town of Gillingham in North Dorset. It has 445 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 11 and is much larger than most primary schools. The school is over-subscribed, and almost all year groups contain more pupils than the annual admission number of 60. The school has a special unit, which caters for 16 pupils with speech and language difficulties. Most pupils come from the town, where statistics show that socio-economic circumstances are just below the national average. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds or from homes where English is not the main spoken language, and only one pupil is at an early stage of learning English. These proportions are below the national average. The percentage of pupils who join or leave the school, other than at the usual times of joining or leaving, is above the national average. Just under two per cent of the pupils claim their entitlement to free school meals, which is below average, but significantly more are known to be eligible to receive them. One in five pupils has been identified as having special educational needs, which is above average, and 20 pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is well above average. The range of needs includes dyslexia, multi-sensory impairment, emotional and behavioural difficulties and a large number of pupils with speech or communication difficulties. Children are admitted into the Reception class at the beginning of the year in which they have their fifth birthday, attending initially on a part-time basis. The attainment of children when they start school varies considerably but is average overall. Apart from the continuing growth in the number of pupils on roll, there have been no major changes since the last inspection. The school's staffing situation is now stable, following difficulties in recent years which affected the education of pupils in the infants.

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

Gillingham Primary School is a good school. The good leadership of the headteacher and her deputy has helped the staff to work together more closely as a team with a common purpose and has resulted in a good range of improvements since the last inspection. Hard-working and committed teachers provide teaching which is generally of good quality and is helping to raise standards. Pupils make good progress overall, attaining standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science which are just above the national average. The staff provide a good level of care for pupils of all capabilities and backgrounds, and there is very good provision for pupils in the school's speech and language unit. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their work. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The headteacher and her deputy provide good, purposeful leadership which is helping the school to improve.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils make good progress overall, attaining standards at the end of Year 6 which are just above the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science, art and design, design and technology and geography.
- The staff provide a caring and safe learning environment and cater well for pupils' personal development. As a result, the great majority of pupils behave well, develop good relationships and have positive attitudes to school.
- The provision for pupils in the speech and language unit is very good.

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

- The quality of pupils' writing.\*
- The consistency of the teaching.\*
- The role of the subject coordinators.\*

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.*

\* These issues have already been identified as priorities in the school's development plan.

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

There has been a good degree of improvement since the last inspection in April 1998. The school tackled its previous key issues well. The planning of the curriculum, particularly for English, mathematics and science, is much improved. Most teachers are providing greater challenge for more able pupils. Staff are now working together in a much more cooperative and collaborative way, which has resulted in a common sense of purpose and a more consistent approach to developing and following whole-school procedures. Greater attention has been given to pupils' spiritual development. Standards are still below average in English by the end of Year 2,

but they have risen in other subjects. Although the quality of teaching is not entirely consistent, the overall quality has improved.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			similar schools <sup>1</sup>	Key	
	all schools					
	2000	2001	2002	2002		
English	B	C	C	C	Very high	A*
Mathematics	B	C	C	C	Well above average	A
Science	A	B	B	B	Above average	B
					Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Very low	E*

**National test results at the end of Year 6:** In 2002, the school's national test results were just above the national average, and the average for similar schools, in English and mathematics, and they were above average in science. These results showed significant progress in comparison to those achieved by the same pupils at the end of Year 2. Since the last inspection, the overall standards have risen in mathematics and science and, to a small extent, in English. The school sets itself appropriately challenging targets, but fell just short of achieving them in 2002. **National test results at the end of Year 2:** The school's results were below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. Overall, they were well below the average for similar schools. Over the last two years, pupils' education in Years 1 and 2 has been disrupted by frequent changes of teacher, and this has had a negative impact on their progress. Since the last inspection, standards have risen in mathematics and writing, but fallen in reading.

**Inspection findings:** The attainment of children when they start school is fairly typical for four-year-olds. Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception classes and achieve average standards in all areas of learning. Pupils of all capabilities make satisfactory progress overall in Years 1 and 2 and good progress from Year 3 to Year 6. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average, but improving, in English and average in mathematics and science. Standards have improved since the 2002 tests, reflecting better teaching and a more stable staffing situation. Pupils achieve average standards in all other subjects by the end of Year 2, although no judgement was made about standards in religious education. By the end of Year 6, standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in science. By the time they leave the school, pupils develop satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills, although there is room for improvement in their writing. The school provides appropriate challenge and stimulus for the more able pupils, and an increasing proportion exceeds the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets, and pupils in the speech and language unit make particularly good progress because of the carefully structured teaching and close attention given to their needs. Pupils develop sound competence in the use of information and communication technology. Standards in art and design, design and technology and geography are above average by the end of Year 6. Standards are average in all other subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The great majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. They participate well in most lessons, particularly when the teaching is stimulating. In a few classes, pupils' attitudes are less positive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils' behaviour around the school is orderly. In most classes, pupils' behaviour during lessons is good, and it is frequently very good. In a few classes, generally those where pupils have had frequent changes of teacher, there is some unacceptable behaviour, although this is improving.
Personal development and	Good. Through their time at school, pupils become increasingly friendly and

<sup>1</sup> The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Year 6) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

relationships	polite and grow in confidence to express their ideas and cope with responsibilities. The great majority relate well to each other and to adults.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The level of attendance is just above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 and 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 overall quality of the teaching is good and, as a result, and because of their positive attitudes to work, pupils learn well in most classes. Most lessons are well planned, and sufficient consideration is given to pupils' differing capabilities. However, the teaching is not always entirely consistent. In some lessons, objectives are not clear enough and work is not sufficiently challenging, and some teachers rely too heavily on the use of worksheets. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall, although greater attention could be given to the development of the younger pupils' writing skills and the way these skills are developed throughout the school in subjects other than English. More rigorous marking of pupils' work would help pupils to become more aware of how they could improve. There has been good improvement in the teaching of mathematics since the last inspection and most teachers help pupils to develop their numeracy skills well by conducting lessons at a good pace and making them fun. The teaching of information and communication technology is sound. Although arrangements and resources for teaching the subject are far from ideal, the teachers make good use of the available equipment for teaching basic information technology skills, but they could make greater use of computers as a tool for learning in other subjects. The teaching for children in the Reception classes is satisfactory overall. Whole-class sessions are generally taught well, but time is not always used as effectively as it could be during the day, and activities for individuals do not always provide sufficient scope for them to learn new skills or develop their writing. In Years 5 and 6, good use is made of teachers' specialisms, resulting in some very good teaching of art and design and design and technology. Geography is also taught very well in Years 2 to 6. The teaching in the speech and language unit is very good; pupils respond well and make visible gains in their learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum fulfils statutory requirements and provides an appropriate breadth of learning opportunities, which are enriched through a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school meets the learning requirements of pupils with a statement of special educational needs well. Targets on pupils' individual education plans relating to literacy and numeracy are specific, but those relating to pupils' social and behavioural needs are too broad to provide a clear focus. The provision for pupils in the school's speech and language unit is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school makes a positive contribution to all aspects of pupils' personal development. There are well-developed policies for pupils' personal, social and health education. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is much improved since the last inspection. Although the school promotes a racially harmonious environment, pupils could be better prepared for life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils receive good care and support within a friendly and caring community. Staff understand pupils well and provide them with good support and guidance. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and keeping track of their progress.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The school brings about a good sense of partnership with parents. Parents are welcome in school. There are good induction arrangements for children joining the Reception classes. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and what is happening in school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher and her deputy provide good leadership which has led to a number of improvements in recent years. Subject coordinators are becoming more involved in carrying out the role of subject leader, but there is room for further development of this role.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations well, makes a good contribution to the continuing development of the school and maintains a careful overview of the school's finances. Governors provide good support for the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The governors, headteacher and senior staff have a good understanding of the school's strengths and have identified appropriate areas for future improvement. Subject coordinators now need to become more involved in monitoring, evaluating and improving their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of its accommodation and resources. Finances are managed very efficiently, as is the school's administration. The school has good procedures to compare its performance with others, to consult parents, and to ensure that its funding and specific grants are spent in the most cost-effective way.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory overall. The school has a good number of suitably qualified and experienced staff, and has achieved stability after a period of change, which affected the achievements of younger pupils. The school's accommodation and range of resources is satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard. They are making good progress and achieving good standards.</li> <li>• The staff are very supportive and provide good teaching.</li> <li>• The school promotes the right attitudes and values.</li> <li>• The school keeps them well informed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• Standards of behaviour.</li> </ul>
<p>[The views of parents are based on those expressed by the 12 parents who attended the parents' meeting and the 56 parents (13%) who returned the parents' questionnaire, some of whom also enclosed written comments]</p>	

The percentage of parents attending the pre-inspection meeting and returning the questionnaire was small. Most respondents, however, had positive views of the school, and the inspection findings largely endorse their views. Some parents would like their children to receive more homework, others feel they get too much. Most parents, and the inspectors, feel the balance is about right. Many parents feel that the standard of behaviour is good, but there are some individual pupils in a few classes who do not live up to the school's high expectations. The school has appropriate procedures for dealing effectively with these pupils.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and achievements

1. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002, the school's results in reading and mathematics were below the national average. In writing, they were well below average. When compared with the results of similar schools, they were below average in mathematics and well below average in reading and writing. The range of attainment in all three tests in 2002 was very wide. In reading, a quarter of the pupils exceeded the national expectation by achieving Level 3<sup>2</sup>, but a similar proportion, much higher than in most schools, only achieved Level 1, which is below the national expectation. In writing, over half of the pupils achieved either below, or at the lowest end of, the nationally expected level. The school's results are affected, to a certain extent, by pupils who attend the speech and language unit who, despite the very good teaching they receive, generally have great difficulty in reaching the expected standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. The school's results have fluctuated over the last five years, but the overall trend is one of improvement in mathematics and gradual improvement in writing. Standards in reading are not as high as they were at the time of the last inspection. The school is well aware of weaknesses in pupils' attainment in English and has been working hard to bring about improvement. Over the last two years, however, efforts have been hampered by lack of stability in staffing. The pupils who took the tests in 2002, for example, had experienced several changes of teacher. The situation is now much more stable, the quality of the teaching has improved and standards are rising again. The inspection findings show that the overall standards achieved by pupils in the current Year 2 is average in reading and mathematics, although still below average in writing.
2. The national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were just above the national average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. When compared with similar schools, the results were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. However, these results indicate good progress through Key Stage 2<sup>3</sup>, when taking into consideration the standards achieved by these pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. A quarter of the pupils do not reach the nationally expected standard of Level 4 in English, and a fifth do not reach this level in mathematics, but almost all pupils achieve Level 4 in science. As at Key Stage 1, the school's results are affected by an above average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs who attend the school's speech and language unit. The fact that some of these pupils might achieve Level 3 is a significant achievement for them, but has the effect of lowering the school's overall results. An increasing proportion of pupils exceed the national expectation. In English, the proportion is over a third, in mathematics almost a quarter, and in science almost a half. This reflects the school's efforts to provide greater challenge for the more able pupils. Since the last inspection, the school's results have improved at a similar rate to the national trend in mathematics and science, but more slowly in English. Standards are higher now in all three subjects than they were at the time of the last inspection, although the results in 2002 did not match those in 2000, which was an exceptionally good year. The inspection findings show that pupils in the current Year 6 attain average standards in English and mathematics and above average standards in science. This picture is similar to that indicated by the 2002 results.

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2 The standard of pupils' work is assessed against National Curriculum Levels. The national expectation for each subject is that pupils should be working comfortably at Level 2 by the end of Year 2, and at Level 4 by the end of Year 6.

3 The words 'Key Stage' refer to the different stages of learning in schools. Children start school in the Foundation Stage, which caters for children aged 3 to 5 and generally refers to children who are in the Nursery, Reception or Early Years classes. Key Stage 1 is the first stage of compulsory primary education. It caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 1 is also frequently synonymous with the term Infants. Key Stage 2 is the second stage of primary education. It caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6. Key Stage 2 is also frequently synonymous with the term Juniors. At the age of 11, pupils start Key Stage 3, which marks the beginning of their secondary education.

3. In 2002, the school narrowly missed its targets in both English and mathematics. Similar targets have been set for 2003, but these are realistic given the school's circumstances, the pupils' prior attainment and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement.
4. Although girls achieve better results than boys at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing, these differences have largely disappeared by the end of Year 6. Over the last three years, there has been little difference in the results in English of boys and girls, and boys have outperformed girls in mathematics and science. This pattern is contrary to the national trend, but is not seen as significant. The school treats boys and girls with parity, and both boys and girls were observed to be equally responsive in the lessons observed during the inspection. There are no groups of pupils in the school whose achievement is less than satisfactory. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are very well integrated members of the community who achieve equally as well as their classmates. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning in Years 1 to 6. The teaching for these pupils is good, and they benefit from good-quality support in lessons from teaching assistants.
5. Children enter the Reception classes with a wide range of attainment, but overall standards of attainment on entry to the school are average. By the time the children enter Year 1, they have attained standards that meet the expectations for their age group. Their achievements are satisfactory. They are taught in two ability groups in order to make the best use of the available space within the two classrooms. However, this means that there is frequent movement between the two classes which can lead to inefficient use of time during the school day. The satisfactory achievement also reflects some lack of expectations on the part of the teachers, particularly in the development of children's writing skills. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in the Reception classes. Those who need extra help with speech and language difficulties are supported carefully. However, the targets of the individual learning plans for those who have social and emotional difficulties are frequently too general, and do not reflect small step-by-step achievement.
6. Standards in speaking, listening and reading at the end of Years 2 and 6, and in writing at the end of Year 6, are broadly average. Standards in writing at the end of Year 2 are below average. Pupils of all capabilities make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, many pupils speak clearly, and put their points confidently and concisely. A significant number, however, still lack confidence in speaking in front of other people. Many pupils read fluently and accurately, and have mastered the skills of skimming and scanning to help them find information. Although they are improving, pupils' writing skills are still weak by the end of Year 2. Many pupils find spelling and punctuation difficult. Standards improve by the end of Year 6, although some pupils still lack confidence in producing extended pieces of writing.
7. Standards in mathematics throughout the school have improved since the last inspection because of good teaching, good coordination of the subject and effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils of all capabilities are making good progress and attain standards which are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils' achievement is greatest in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils are confident in manipulating numbers in their head and can find solutions to simple problems expressed in words and figures. By the end of Year 6, pupils calculate accurately using large numbers, have a very good sense of place value, and apply their knowledge confidently to areas of work which are new, through mathematical investigation.
8. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards in science by the end of Year 2, although few pupils progress beyond this. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress, and standards are above average by the end of Year 6. A significant proportion of pupils exceed the national expectations in science. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' scientific skills are being developed systematically throughout the school. The teachers cover a wide range of topics, and pupils are becoming much more accustomed to learning through scientific investigation.

9. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information and communication technology, and most pupils achieve the expected standards in all aspects of the subject by the end of Years 2 and 6. At the last inspection, standards were above average at the end of Year 6. The current judgement does not mark a decline in standards, but the fact that expectations have risen and there have been considerable advancements in the development of information and communication technology in the last five years. Pupils acquire a broad range of information technology skills, but the school's resources do not allow for extended use of new technology to assist pupils' learning in other subjects. The school is aware of this, and plans for significant improvements to the school's resources are shortly to be fulfilled.
10. In history, music, and physical education, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards which are in line with those expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards which are in line with those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6. Not enough work was seen in religious education to make a judgement on standards at the end of Year 2. In art and design, design and technology and geography, standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2, but pupils make particularly good progress in these subjects in Years 5 and 6 and achieve above average standards. In art and design, pupils acquire a good understanding of different media and skills and how they can be used. In design and technology, pupils have a good understanding of the importance of designing a product, show perseverance in making and perception in evaluating their finished product. In geography, pupils are very confident by the time they are in Year 6, have a good knowledge of geographical locations, and have developed a good range of geographical skills.

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

11. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development have been maintained at similar good levels to those seen at the previous inspection. Pupils are happy to come to school, and they take a good interest and work hard in many lessons. Pupils of all ages are usually friendly and cooperative. They show care and respect for others. In response to the opportunities they are given, they grow in responsibility and gain confidence to tackle work independently. Parents are happy with the attitudes that pupils develop and with the standards of behaviour. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory.
12. Overall, pupils' attitudes throughout the school are good. Most pupils are keen to get involved, so that, in many lessons, their attitudes are quite often very good. In most lessons, pupils listen to the teacher, try to answer questions and concentrate well on their tasks. They relate well to staff and to each other, working together productively when this is required as part of the lesson. Older pupils often show a mature approach and, when teaching is really stimulating, their interest rises correspondingly. For instance, pupils in Year 5 provided with a well-planned, challenging sequence of calculations, showed great concentration as they got to grips with the use of calculators for working out percentages. As a result, their grasp of the method improved rapidly. In such lessons, where attitudes are generally positive, one or two pupils may occasionally lapse into distracting behaviour, but a brief, well-judged reprimand is sufficient to put things right. Even children in the Reception classes mostly concentrate well. When presented with a range of activities, these children manage to make independent choices and, at times, become really absorbed in what they are doing. They also respond well when they are directed at specific relevant tasks. For instance, when a group experimented to find which containers would hold most water, their enthusiasm and attention to the teacher's questioning helped them to make good gains in understanding. On a few occasions, when children are less well managed, they tend to be compliant rather than eager.
13. In some groups, however, principally in Year 3, but at times in Year 4, good habits of attention to work are less well established. The school links this to the discontinuities in teaching staff that pupils have previously experienced. At times, these pupils' concentration is fragile and, though the tasks may be well planned, pupils only maintain satisfactory behaviour and attention to work because of repeated prompting by the teacher about what is required. As a result, the pace of their learning slows. For instance, in one lesson in Year 4, pupils' attention to individual writing tasks was at first patchy and they only made satisfactory progress by the end of the lesson because of the teacher's repeated intervention and insistence that they

concentrate. A few instances occur when lack of attention and unnecessary chatter arise because of rather boring teaching. Behaviour rarely deteriorates to the extent that it becomes unsatisfactory.

14. Pupils with special educational needs are included well in all aspects of school life. Consequently, they share the same positive attitudes to school as their classmates. Because most teachers and classroom assistants identify and celebrate pupils' achievements, they take pride in their work and mostly behave well. A few pupils with particular behavioural difficulties find it hard to always behave responsibly, and a few individuals, usually boys, occasionally show really poor behaviour. During the previous academic year, this resulted in seven short-term exclusions, more than often happens in a primary school. Since then, the number of exclusions has dropped, largely because of the successful arrangements to support such pupils.
15. Behaviour around the school is orderly and good. At playtime, good behaviour is helped by the rota for using the play trail and by the availability of different areas. Pupils' caring attitudes mean that bullying or other harassment seldom grows into a serious problem. Those on the school council are proud of the 'friendship stop' system in the playground that encourages support for any pupil who is feeling lonely. As pupils become older, the great majority are friendly and polite.
16. Through their time at the school, pupils grow in confidence to express ideas and to cope with responsibilities. Younger ones find it difficult, at times, to explain their own ideas and preferences. In contrast, older ones benefit from skills they have gained to evaluate and improve their own work, as when pupils in Year 6 found how to overcome difficulties with their abstract clay sculptures. As a result, they arrived at very attractive results of which they were justifiably proud. Pupils learn to respect each other's differences and, on occasion, are perceptive about the respect due to others' feelings and beliefs. Pupils also recognise the needs of others in the wider community. Those on the school council speak with enthusiasm of the charity fundraising that they help to organise.
17. Attendance during the previous school year was broadly in line with that at most other schools. It is a little lower than at the time of the previous inspection but is edging upwards again. Most pupils come to school regularly, never staying away without good reason, and this aids their progress. The school is aware that a few parents give low priority to education and occasionally keep their children away from school without a good enough reason.

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

18. The overall quality of the teaching is good. It is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in Key Stages 1 and 2. There is, however, a variation in the quality of the teaching from class to class, ranging from some classes where the teaching is consistently very good to a few where the teaching is only satisfactory. In most classes, the overall quality is good. During the inspection, the quality of the lessons varied from unsatisfactory to excellent, but over two-thirds of the lessons observed were good or better, and a quarter were very good or better. The proportion of unsatisfactory lessons was very small and occurred in classes where the teaching, at other times, was good. Nearly all of the parents who responded to the parents' questionnaire feel that their children are being taught well, and the inspection findings largely endorse this view.
19. The quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection. In the current inspection, for example, there was a much higher proportion of good and very good teaching and fewer unsatisfactory lessons. The school is making better use of the expertise of individual teachers than before. In Years 5 and 6, for example, art and design, design and technology, drama and music are each taught by one teacher to all four classes. The increasing proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in their national tests at the end of Year 6 indicates that the school is providing greater challenge for its more able pupils, although in a few classes, this is still an aspect where more carefully differentiated lesson planning could extend some pupils more. The most significant change has been in the way staff now work more collaboratively and cooperatively with each other, for example, by sharing planning tasks and contributing their

expertise. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have undertaken a more rigorous programme to monitor teaching, and the implementation of performance management procedures has helped staff to become more reflective about their own practice.

20. The teaching in the Reception classes is satisfactory overall. It ranges from unsatisfactory to good. The previous report indicated that teaching was sound or better. In the good lessons, what the children should learn is well planned, and teachers use well-considered strategies to interest and motivate the children. In these lessons, children enjoy the challenges and respond with enthusiasm. Relationships are good and a happy atmosphere is created. Assessment is used satisfactorily to ensure that tasks are suitably matched to the children's needs to enable them to make progress. In other lessons, there is an uneven match between expectations and the methods used to support learning, and opportunities are missed to extend the children's learning further. The children are not provided with enough support in the form of prepared resources to help them with their tasks, or what they should learn is too far removed from their understanding. Time and resources are not always used to the best advantage. For example, unsatisfactory teaching occurred when the children were engaged in recreational rather than purposeful play. Also, the daily practice of using the first part of the morning to hear individual children read means that many of the other children are engaged in repetitive activities with little intervention from adults to take their learning forward. Routines are generally well established, but there are times when children are kept waiting, and there are pockets of time which are not used efficiently. Teaching assistants provide helpful and knowledgeable support but are not consistently deployed in the best way. Although teachers make good use of homework so that children can develop their reading skills and number recognition, not enough use is made of links with other areas of learning to develop children's skills in writing throughout the day.
21. The overall quality of teaching and learning in English is good. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The teaching of English has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have better subject knowledge and provide more opportunities for pupils to develop speaking skills, for example through drama activities, than before. This year, the school has devoted a substantial amount of time to developing pupils' literacy skills in Key Stage 1, and early indications from the 2003 national tests indicate that standards have improved. There are, however, not enough opportunities for younger pupils to develop their writing skills through subjects other than English. More such opportunities are provided for pupils in Key Stage 2, and the consequent improvement in pupils' writing is noticeable. However, the marking of pupils' written work is not rigorous enough to help pupils improve even more. The teachers do not give clear enough indication as to what pupils have done well and where they could improve, and spelling and grammatical inaccuracies are rarely corrected in written work produced for subjects other than English.
22. The overall quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where the teaching is often very good. As for English, it has improved since the last inspection because the subject is coordinated effectively and the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well. Pupils are grouped in each year according to ability, which enables teachers to match work more closely to pupils' needs, thereby ensuring that there is sufficient challenge for the more able pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn through investigations, and learning is generally made interesting and fun for the pupils. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is extended and reinforced through work undertaken in other subjects, such as geography and design and technology.
23. The overall quality of teaching and learning in science, design and technology, geography and music is good. In science, teachers are placing much greater emphasis now on learning through investigative work. Teachers have good expertise in design and technology and geography, which enables them to provide lessons which motivate and interest the pupils. In music, much of the teaching is undertaken by teachers with musical expertise. Pupils' progress in music, however, is constrained by the limited amount of time devoted to the subject in Key Stage 1 and the fact that staffing changes in Key Stage 2 are too recent to have had a significant impact yet on standards. In art and design, history, physical education and religious education the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are no subjects in which the teaching is weak.

24. The teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory. Teachers cover all aspects of the curriculum, enabling pupils to acquire a good range of information technology skills at an appropriate level. Wherever possible, the teaching of specific skills is also related to helpful contexts in other subjects. However, although there are some good examples, such as the use of the Internet to research topics in geography and history, teachers do not make sufficient use of new technology as a tool for learning in other subjects. Part of the reason for this is that opportunities are limited by the school's resources and accommodation for information and communication technology, although plans to renew much of the school's equipment should significantly improve the number of computers available for pupils to use in the near future. Another reason is that teachers do not receive sufficient guidance from subject coordinators as to what software is appropriate and available to complement subject teaching in each year. The school has already identified the need to improve the use of new technology across other areas of the curriculum as an important area for development.
25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Because classroom assistants are well-informed and valued members of the staff team, they know and support their pupils well. They recognise when pupils need a fresh approach in order to help them learn, and find resources with novelty value to help sustain pupils' interest. When pupils with special educational needs are supported in this way, they benefit from having the same tasks as their classmates. The sensitive intervention of support staff means that pupils cope with work that has not been modified specifically for them. When teachers use very helpful resources and pitch their expectations so that pupils are challenged at just the right level, as in mathematics in Year 5, pupils with special educational needs reach average levels of attainment. The senior teaching assistant makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning when she uses special resources to help a small group develop reading and spelling skills. In this situation, she uses her good knowledge and understanding of pupils to manage their behaviour well and keep them highly motivated and learning well.
26. In general, the teachers are well prepared for their lessons, and their planning is thorough. They use a good variety of teaching strategies and make good use of resources to capture pupils' interest. In history and science, for example, teachers make good use of video extracts to broaden pupils' understanding and, in geography, they make good use of the local area and places of interest to help pupils to learn from a different perspective. The teachers manage pupils well and, in most classes, there is a good environment for learning, fostered by the mutual respect between pupils and staff, and the willingness of pupils to work hard. Teaching assistants play a significant role in helping pupils to focus closely on their work, and there is very good liaison between the teaching staff and their assistants. There are also good systems for ensuring that assistants are fully briefed on all aspects of the school and that they are aware of the school's expectations. In most lessons, teachers make good use of the time available. Lessons start promptly and pupils are kept fully engaged.
27. In a few classes and in some lessons, the teachers' planning is not always as clear as it could be and does not take full account of pupils' differing capabilities. In such circumstances, either the lower-attaining pupils struggle to complete work or the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. A few teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving, or they give praise for work which is not of an acceptable standard. Too much reliance is placed on the use of worksheets, which rarely provide sufficient scope for pupils to develop their skills, and poor presentation is not challenged. In some subjects, not enough attention is given to helping pupils develop their understanding by evaluating their performance. In physical education, for example, there is a lack of opportunity for pupils to discuss the quality of their work and identify ways in which it could be improved. The marking of pupils' work is generally weak, and does not give pupils a clear enough indication of what they have done well and how they might improve.
28. Homework is set regularly, increasing in amount as pupils move through the school. A number of parents feel their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home; some feel their children get too much, others that they get too little. The inspection findings, along with the views of the majority of parents, indicate that the school strikes an appropriate balance in the quantity and range of homework given. Homework tasks observed during the

inspection in mathematics, for example, provided appropriate reinforcement or extension of work undertaken in class.

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

29. The curriculum is satisfactorily broad and relevant throughout the school and fulfils statutory requirements. A suitable balance of time is given to subjects at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, an unusually large amount of time is devoted to teaching English because the school rightly diagnosed that standards needed to be raised, and they are now starting to improve. It does, however, mean that some other subjects do not have enough time for teachers to give justice to the full width of skills. In art and design, for example, pupils draw and colour, which is quick and easy to organise, but they do very little painting on a large scale. Provision for teaching religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There are comprehensive and well-developed policies for pupils' personal, social and health education including citizenship, sex and relationship education and drugs' awareness.
30. The previous inspection found that there was a need to define exactly what was to be taught and when. This has been clarified, and there have also been improvements to curricular planning, which is now satisfactory, including science. The school makes provision to ensure that its higher-attaining pupils make appropriate progress in English, mathematics and science, although written tasks in some subjects are not systematically adapted to cater for pupils of varying abilities.
31. The headteacher and the deputy head have worked hard with the subject coordinators to review and improve the curriculum so that each subject's new curriculum map clearly shows links between subject areas. It is too soon to judge their success in practice, but there is mention of teaching literacy and numeracy skills in many subjects. At present, although provision for teaching literacy and numeracy is good during English and mathematics lessons, opportunities are missed to develop these skills elsewhere across the curriculum so that provision overall is only satisfactory.
32. The curriculum provided for the children in the Reception classes is satisfactory. It shows appropriate breadth across the areas of learning. However, the style and organisation of the day in the Reception classes imposes limitations on how well the curriculum is taught. This has not been evaluated well enough to ensure that time is used efficiently to give maximum opportunities for learning.
33. The school continues to provide a good and varied number of extra-curricular activities, some of which change during the year. This is particularly true of the sports offered. Because many of the activities are very popular among the pupils, for example music club, computer club and juggling, they become available for different year groups during the year. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have the opportunity to take part in some of the activities provided at lunchtimes. In addition, educational visits are arranged throughout the school, which enrich pupils' learning. Pupils in Year 6 take part in two days of outdoor educational activities, which are valuable in raising pupils' self-esteem and in developing their ability to take part in new activities and to work as part of a team.
34. The school has recognised the importance of catering for pupils' personal, social and health education by developing a comprehensive scheme which deals with a whole range of issues, such as the importance of caring for ourselves and others, and accepting responsibility. Health education is an important aspect of the curriculum, and the school has worked hard and gained a healthy-living certificate. Sessions are delivered well and have a positive impact on pupils' development. The school council was set up a year ago in order to develop pupils' understanding of working to help the community, and it is having a satisfactory impact. At present, the organisation is still totally led by adults. Pupils are proud to be council members. They are thoughtful, and the youngest members have organised themselves to set up a 'Friendship Stop' at playtimes to befriend anyone who needs someone to play with.

35. The school successfully meets the learning requirements for pupils with special educational needs outlined in statements of special educational needs and individual education plans. Most targets for literacy and numeracy and the improvement of physical coordination are specific and measurable. Consequently, staff, parents and pupils know when they have been achieved and that they need to move learning on to the next step. Social and behavioural targets are less consistently useful. Some phrases are too open to interpretation to ensure that all adults and the pupil concerned know exactly what they are aiming for. The provision for children with special educational needs in the Reception classes is satisfactory. The teachers' analyses of children's needs provide a comprehensive picture of each child. However, the targets that are set are frequently too wide for good progress to be made.
36. The school makes good provision to ensure all pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum. The school has an appropriate policy for equal opportunities, and staff are careful to follow its contents in all aspects of their planning, especially in relation to the statutory curriculum. Staff make sure that pupils are involved, as far as possible, in a full range of activities, regardless of differences, for example, in attainment levels or gender. The school is especially careful in its provision for the pupils in the speech and language unit, including them whenever possible in class and whole-school activities. In making suitable efforts to include pupils in all appropriate activities, the school allows them to achieve as much as they can.
37. There are satisfactory links with the local community, which benefit pupils' achievements. Good use is made of visits, both in the locality of the school and farther afield, to enhance the curriculum, such as when pupils in Year 2 looked at local buildings and found out their use. However, residential visits are limited, because of organisational difficulties. Visitors are welcomed into school quite frequently. For example, a member of the local museum brought in artefacts from the museum for pupils in Year 6 to investigate during a history lesson. In addition, links with the local church add to the breadth of pupils' experiences.
38. Good links with other local schools enable pupils to take part in a range of team sports and competitions, and those involved talk enthusiastically about their experiences. A friendly partnership with local pre-school providers is in place, so that children benefit from meeting visiting staff and from introductory visits to the Reception classes. Good pastoral links are also in place with the neighbouring secondary school to which most pupils transfer, to help them look forward confidently to the move. Curricular links are underdeveloped at present. However, a current local initiative aims to build educational continuity between Key Stages 2 and 3, and the school is keen to support this.
39. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for their cultural development is satisfactory. Significant improvements have been made since the previous inspection, especially in the provision for pupils' spiritual development. All statutory requirements are now met. The coordinator has made an important contribution towards the improvements that have been made.
40. The school now makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies are well planned and most thoughtfully delivered, with pupils often making a suitable contribution themselves. Pupils are helped to gain knowledge and insight into their own, and other people's, values and beliefs and, in particular, they are encouraged to respect and value the opinions of others. Moments of quietness are provided for pupils to reflect on what they have heard and to consider how they should respond themselves. Appropriate opportunities are now planned for pupils' spiritual development in the subjects of the curriculum, with interesting and thought-provoking activities being provided in a number of subjects, such as English, art and design and music.
41. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The headteacher and staff, as well as providing good role models themselves, regularly remind pupils of the correct forms of behaviour and give reasons for them. Discussions often take place in lessons, and rules of conduct are emphasised when necessary. Expectations of pupils are high, and they are regularly praised and rewarded for maintaining these high standards. They are encouraged to develop a clear understanding of right and wrong and to treat staff, visitors and other pupils

with courtesy and respect. Most pupils also have a high degree of self-discipline and they show great concern should any of them not maintain the expected standards.

42. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils are encouraged to form good relationships with each other, their teachers and other adults. As they progress through the school, pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively, to take turns and to share resources, such as when taking part in experimental work in science, or in working together in music and physical education. Older pupils are particularly caring of younger ones, and they relate well to them during lunch-times and break-times and, in fact, whenever a need should arise. Younger pupils, in turn, are keen to seek out the company of older pupils. Suitable opportunities are provided for pupils to take on responsibilities within their classrooms, and they are keen to be involved in these tasks. Older pupils carry out their particular responsibilities, such as arranging the hall for assemblies and acting as librarians, with great care and efficiency. Pupils' social skills are further developed through their involvement in extra-curricular activities and fund-raising.
43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. They are taught about aspects of British culture in subjects such as English, art and design and history. An appropriate emphasis is laid on their knowledge and understanding of other cultures during assemblies and during lessons in subjects such as geography, music and religious education. The school makes some provision for making pupils aware of the multi-cultural society in which they live. They consider some of the different forms of worship, ritual and life-style, celebrate festivals such as Eid and Diwali, and there is a suitable range of books in the school library. However, few displays of pictures or religious artefacts are evident in the school, and so pupils are not regularly reminded of the richness and variety of our diverse society.

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

44. Pupils receive good care, support and guidance within a friendly and caring community. Parents are satisfied that their children like school and are happy there. Provision for the care of pupils is better now than at the previous inspection, when it was satisfactory.
45. Teachers and other staff understand pupils well, and match support to their individual needs. The initial period of part-time attendance helps children to cope happily when they first join the Reception class. Those joining other classes are supported by staff, and by other pupils, so that they soon settle into the routines and make friends. Teachers make good use of consultation meetings with parents to consider pupils' personal needs as well as their academic development. Good attention is given to supporting any pupil with personal individual needs arising, for instance, from social circumstances. Full attention is paid to providing relevant support if a pupil has particular medical needs. Care for any who become sick or injured is similarly very good. Child protection procedures are good. Staff are alert to act promptly on any concern, and the headteacher, as designated person, pays good attention to maintaining liaison with social services over any issue that arises. Staff are also assisted by relevant outside support agencies who give advice and help about a range of special educational needs and behavioural issues.
46. The management of behaviour is good because expectations are upheld with a good degree of consistency. Simply-expressed, sensible rules are in place to help pupils to remember what is required. The awards system is used to good effect to motivate pupils to behave well and to work hard. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, usually apply suitable behaviour management strategies successfully to correct quickly any lapses in behaviour. There is effective support for those pupils who find it particularly hard to behave sensibly, including those with identified behavioural difficulties. The school's expectations about care towards others mean that bullying or other such unkindness is rare, but staff respond firmly to any instances. Pupils are confident that staff will give thorough attention to problems of any kind and resolve them fairly. They like having the 'worry box' that provides an extra way of telling staff about any concern. The lunchtime supervisors are appropriately trained and make a good contribution to pupils' wellbeing.

47. The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. Registration systems are in order, and suitable steps are taken to follow up any unexplained absence. There is satisfactory liaison with the educational welfare officer to ensure proper follow-up of any serious concerns about absence. Firm expectations about punctuality are upheld effectively.
48. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory. Appropriate checks and risk assessment procedures are in place, but there is room to update the policy to reflect current provision and practice. Full attention is given to the safe management of features such as the play trail. The school has appropriate procedures to ensure safe access to the Internet.
49. The school's assessment and recording procedures are good. Information is analysed to help pupils to improve. The strategies and practices used by the school allow teachers to develop a clear understanding of pupils' abilities. This information is used well to set pupils in ability groups for specific subjects and provide targets for improvement.
50. The school has good procedures for assessment of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. There is insufficient assessment of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. All pupils have targets for English and mathematics. Assessment in most other subjects is also good and is carried out at the end of each unit of work in most subjects. This information is recorded in individual files which are passed on to the next teacher. The school utilises a good range of annual formal assessment procedures. This information is used well by the school to set individual targets for pupils to achieve by the end of each year.
51. The procedures for assessing children's progress in the Reception classes are satisfactory. The results are recorded so that there is a tracking system for each child's progress. The children are also assessed regularly against step-by-step targets in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematics. The information gained helps to inform the setting of different groups. However, this information is not used rigorously enough when planning work appropriate to children's needs. Assessment is not sufficiently well established as part of an on-going routine, where, for example, staff or assistants regularly make observational notes on the children as they are engaged in their learning.
52. The school has good systems for identifying the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs. They meet the requirement of the new Code of Practice to negotiate targets with pupils well, by ensuring that at least one target is chosen by pupils themselves. Pupils respond very well with thoughtful and sensible targets. They clearly believe that their views are heard. This is evident in the painstakingly honest and perceptive comments that pupils add to their pastoral and personal support plans. These contributions demonstrate the good level of trust that pupils have in their teachers. This is accounted for by most teachers working together under the strong leadership of the teacher who, until very recently, was special educational needs coordinator.

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

53. The school brings about a good sense of partnership with parents. The welcoming atmosphere, noted at the previous inspection, is very apparent, and the steps taken to keep parents informed have improved and are now very good. As at the previous inspection, the partnership developed supports pupils' attainment and personal development. The number of parents choosing to return pre-inspection questionnaires is lower than often happens. However, parents who do give their views feel welcome in the school and show a good level of satisfaction with the way it provides for their children. They are confident that staff will respond willingly if they have any queries or problems.
54. There are well-established procedures for the induction of children entering the Reception classes which are appreciated and liked by parents. The system includes very good links with the feeder nurseries, which enables staff to visit them and get to know the children before they join the school. There are very good opportunities for children and parents to visit the school. The effective liaison with the nurseries ensures that information and records can be shared and used to help the children settle happily into school. There are good links between

teachers in the Reception classes and with parents of children with special educational needs. This means that, wherever possible, a close dialogue is maintained.

55. The very good arrangements for informing parents start with an induction meeting before their children join the Reception classes. Every year, teachers in each year group hold a meeting early in the autumn term to tell parents about the work pupils will be doing, including the homework they will get, so that parents can give relevant support at home. Parents can also meet the class teacher early in the autumn to talk about the targets included in their children's annual report, and in the next term can come to another meeting to discuss progress. Parents attend these consultation meetings in very good numbers, and teachers do their best to talk at another time to the few who stay away. On a less formal basis, monthly drop-in sessions have been introduced, when parents can look at their children's work after school, and these are proving successful in stimulating parents' interest. The reports sent home at the end of the year give parents a good amount of information about how their children are doing and the progress they have made during the year; parents are encouraged to add their own comments to them. While most parents like to come and discuss their children's work, teachers find that a sizeable minority do not manage to support their children at home by hearing them read every day. Teachers are active in exploring new ways of encouraging such involvement, for instance by awards for pupils with a good record of entries in their home-reading records. The headteacher and other staff try to inform and involve parents when any problem arises, for instance with the behaviour of their children.
56. Very good steps are taken to develop partnership with parents of children with special educational needs. The school invites the parents of pupils with special educational needs to take part in annual reviews of statements and six-monthly reviews of individual education plans. Most parents welcome these opportunities to contribute to their children's learning.
57. The flow of general information about the functioning of the school is well calculated to encourage parents' interest. They appreciate the regular informative newsletters. The prospectus and governors' annual report are both well-presented, with a broad range of helpful information.
58. The parents' and teachers' association gives good support through fundraising for extra resources and facilities, For instance, the association paid for the new play trail that adds considerably to the range of playtime activities. A few parents regularly help pupils' progress by giving good support in lessons while others, who cannot undertake a regular commitment, help with particular events, for instance by accompanying educational trips.

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

59. The overall quality of the leadership and management provided by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the school's key staff is good, although there is room for improvement in the role played by subject coordinators. Since the last inspection, the leadership of the headteacher and her deputy has brought about good improvement to many aspects of the school's work and has raised the awareness of the staff of what the school needs to do to improve further. Good features noted in the last inspection have been consolidated and there is now a much more purposeful sense of direction than before.
60. The headteacher herself provides good leadership. Equally good leadership is provided by the deputy headteacher, whose strengths complement those of the headteacher well. The headteacher has a quiet, but determined style of leadership, which seeks to use the strengths of the staff in order to bring about improvement. She has a very clear understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. She provides clear educational direction for the staff, who respond well to her leadership. Her most significant achievement since the last inspection is the way she has brought about change in the way staff now work together and contribute their expertise for the good of the school. The previous inspection noted a lack of collaboration amongst staff, but the headteacher has managed to transform these attitudes so that almost all staff now work together cooperatively and collaboratively. As a result, there is now good shared commitment and a capacity to succeed in the future. The staff work together well to fulfil the school's aims, foremost of which are to help each individual to reach

their full potential. This is nowhere more evident than in the very good work undertaken in the speech and language unit.

61. The school is managed well. There is an effective management structure, with capable staff fulfilling the roles of key stage coordinators and regular input from the special educational needs coordinator. Day-to-day procedures are efficient and well organised, and there are good systems of communication. The school secretary is very efficient, providing very good support for the headteacher and staff, and has a very good understanding of the school's procedures. There are regular meetings to keep staff informed of what is happening and to provide a forum for discussion and professional development. Staff from each key stage meet together to discuss issues pertinent to their part of the school, and teachers within each year group meet together to plan lessons and coordinate their work. There are very good procedures for managing the work of teaching assistants and midday supervisors.
62. The staff value all pupils equally as individuals and works hard to make sure that the school meets their needs. The school improvement plan seeks to provide opportunities for all pupils, paying attention to the more able and those with particular needs. The school's aims focus on the importance of respecting others, regardless of gender, race, social or cultural background, and staff are successful in fulfilling this aspiration. The school is particularly successful in supporting pupils within the speech and language unit and helping to integrate these pupils into mainstream classes. The school has appropriate procedures for supporting pupils who are learning English as an additional language. There are only two such pupils in the school at present, one of whom was absent during the inspection and the other of whom attends the speech and language unit. The school has an appropriate policy to promote racial equality and good procedures for dealing with any reported incidents of bullying or racist behaviour, although such incidents are very rare.
63. Since the last inspection, subject coordinators have taken on greater responsibility than before. Coordinators undertake their tasks seriously. Some subjects, such as English and mathematics, design and technology and geography, are led and managed well. There is also a very clear understanding of how the school should develop its provision for information and communication technology. There is an expectation that coordinators should monitor teachers' planning and pupils' work. This happens, but some coordinators are reluctant to exercise real leadership through such activities by being more rigorous in their evaluation of what is effective and what could be improved. There is little opportunity for most coordinators to monitor the quality of teaching and learning within their subject, with the result that they do not have an entirely clear picture of their subject throughout the school, of where there are particular strengths which should be shared or areas which need to be improved. Whilst the school provides an appropriate curriculum for its pupils, much of the responsibility for planning the curriculum in each subject devolves to the teachers in each year group rather than allowing the subject coordinator to ensure that there is progression from one year to the next. Coordinators have yet to take on responsibility for identifying ways in which information and communication technology can be incorporated more frequently into the teaching of their subjects. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory. There has not been enough evaluation of current practice to ensure the consistent balance of the curriculum and efficient use of teaching time.
64. At the time of the inspection, a very new coordinator for special educational needs had been in the school for four weeks. She was still getting to know staff and pupils and had not identified specifically how her time would be spent once this initial period of induction is complete. Therefore, judgements about the leadership and management of this provision refer to the work of the previous coordinator for special educational needs. Provision has been very well managed and well led. There are very good systems in place to help teachers and classroom assistants support individual pupils in their learning across the curriculum. Under this leadership, most teachers provide a very thorough and helpful review of pupils' progress in relation to their individual targets.
65. Overall, the school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating its own performance and taking effective action are good and have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher and senior management team have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas

for improvement, based on their own observations, their monitoring of teaching, and the tracking of pupils' progress. The areas they have identified for development within the school's improvement plan are very appropriate, and good progress has been made in meeting the targets outlined in the current plan. Governors and staff are appropriately involved in determining the main thrust of the school's improvement plan, and governors and headteacher monitor progress in implementing the plan carefully. The coordinators for English and mathematics have had opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching, but other subject coordinators are not yet involved in this important area, which has the potential to develop and improve the quality of teaching.

66. The governing body makes a good contribution to the continuing development of the school. Governors understand its strengths and know where there is room for further improvement. They meet their legal obligations, for instance, developing and agreeing the policies required to underpin the work of the school. Together with the staff, they have composed a set of aims that give a very good sense of direction to the school's efforts for further improvement. They visit regularly, with a clear purpose and agenda. They monitor carefully the progress and implementation of policies through these regular visits. They are well informed on the progress of the school's improvement plan. They ensure their spending decisions are followed up and improvements are measured, where practicable. They have given careful attention to the appointment of the next headteacher. Governors are aware of their own development needs and make use of the training opportunities available for governors in their locality. The governing body has been short of co-opted members but is now having some success with efforts to recruit from the local community.
67. The school makes very good use of its resources. For example, there is very good use of the different subject specialisms amongst the staff throughout the school. Very good use is made of all available finances to improve and maintain high levels of provision and to fund new initiatives. For example, where information and communication technology was judged to be in need of improvement, the combined efforts of senior management and governors have contributed to formulate the plans for improvement. The school currently has a budget surplus in excess of five per cent, and this will be used to fund the improvement to these resources. The day-to-day running of the finances has been delegated to the headteacher, who is supported by a very effective bursar. She has excellent skills in organising and managing the computerised systems, which enable information to be produced at a moment's notice. The very recent audit report recognised the very high standards, practices and financial systems at the school. The minor recommendations in the report have already been introduced and implemented in full. The school has good procedures to compare its performance with others, and consults parents regularly.
68. There is a good number of suitably qualified and experienced staff in relation to the needs of the school. The school has now achieved a stable staffing situation after a period of change that affected pupils' achievements in Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage. Teaching staff have an appropriate range of experience. A programme of performance management is in place, and good attention is given to providing in-service training in line with the needs of the school and of individual teachers. There is a very generous number of classroom support staff, with a good spread of relevant experience and qualifications. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' achievements because they are well organised, well briefed and regularly attend training sessions relevant to the needs of the pupils. Administrative and other support staff also contribute well to the smooth functioning of the school. Suitable support is extended to all staff, including newly qualified teachers, when they first join the school. They are enabled to quickly feel part of the team and they know that they can turn to others for help or advice.
69. Accommodation is satisfactory. Some classrooms in Key Stage 2 have been enlarged after criticisms made in the previous inspection report. Plans are in place to enlarge others that are still rather cramped. The building that houses the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2 provides a good learning environment. At the previous inspection, the outdoor hard play area was found to be small for the numbers of pupils using it. However, an imaginative programme of improvement, including a play trail and the levelling of other areas, means that good use is now made of available space, and the outdoor facilities satisfactorily meet pupils' needs. The

specialist accommodation for information and communication technology is unsatisfactory, because the computer network spans two small adjacent rooms. As a result, a teacher cannot easily talk to a whole teaching group at once or supervise all pupils effectively at the same time. At times, this slows the pace of a lesson and hampers pupils' learning.

70. Learning resources were good at the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. They remain good in several subject areas and are at least satisfactory in others. The book stock has improved and is satisfactory. However, the computers, though at present still adequate because their use is well organised, have become rather dated.

## **THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE UNIT**

71. The provision for girls and boys with speech, language and communication difficulties within the school's speech and language unit is very good. The teaching provided by the whole team of staff is of a consistently high quality. This accounts for pupils achieving very well and most of them moving into mainstream education before they reach the end of Year 6. The quality of support for pupils with speech and language difficulties when they are taught in mainstream classes alongside their classmates is also very effective when it is provided by staff from the unit.
72. The unit consists of two bases; one for pupils between the ages of four and seven and one for pupils between the ages of seven and eleven. There are places for 16 pupils and, at the time of the inspection, the unit was full. Each base has a full-time teacher, a full-time nursery nurse or classroom assistant, and a part-time speech and language therapist. The base for younger pupils also has a part-time speech and language therapist assistant.
73. All the pupils supported by this provision have been referred to the school by the local authority's psychological service and speech therapy department. They either have a statement of special educational needs or a statement is being prepared. Pupils are from the North Dorset area and travel to school by taxi with an escort, which means that their parents do not have easy contact at the school gate each day. Pupils in both bases have severe speech and/or language disorders, but are of mainstream ability. However, while their precise difficulties vary considerably, they affect other areas of learning such as the acquisition of numeracy and literacy skills to varying degrees for each pupil. Those who are developing English as an additional language have difficulties in their home language and progress at a similar rate to their classmates.
74. The team has worked together, and with professionals from outside the school, to develop a very good understanding of the complexity of pupils' needs. This understanding affects everything they do. Every exchange with each pupil is a result of meticulous assessment, knowing that pupil extremely well and evaluating every teaching strategy that is tried. Additionally, every exchange focuses on taking each pupil forward in their understanding and use of language. This team is constantly analysing and reviewing its practice. However, relationships between adults and pupils are neither 'clinical' nor 'cosy'. Everyone relates warmly to pupils who, therefore, have fun, behave impressively, work very hard and learn very well. Within this context, pupils are challenged to work very hard; the pupils realise this and enjoy their work. During the inspection, for example, a small group of younger pupils concentrated impressively to recognise and articulate increasingly difficult combinations of letter sounds.
75. A particular strength of the provision is that the entire team never loses sight of their commitment to prepare pupils as fully as possible for education in a mainstream setting as soon as possible. To this end, members of the unit staff work closely with colleagues in the main school. The unit coordinator receives planning documents from class teachers ahead of time so that she can plan for each pupil's individual inclusion programme. This means that she knows what the staff in the unit need to work on before pupils join the mainstream classes. This system works very well, enabling pupils to achieve success, even in activities which have the potential to cause them considerable difficulty. This was evident when an inspector saw a pupil from the unit tapping out the syllables of her name as quickly and confidently as anyone in the music lesson she had joined. Inclusion in mainstream classes is

built up gradually, with carefully monitored levels of support, which clearly contributes to pupils' all-important success.

76. The unit team wisely avoids providing any one communication approach to the exclusion of others. This ethos of pragmatically selecting and adjusting different approaches in order to meet the needs of those pupils they are working with at any one time is a significant factor in pupils learning so well. For example, several pupils have made very good progress in linking sounds to letters since the unit started using a system of 'cued articulation' which gives them small physical movements and extra visual clues to help their recall. Similarly, visual timetables are used at the beginning of the year but withdrawn if pupils no longer need them. Whereas, when staff know that a Makaton<sup>4</sup> sign will emphasise key vocabulary and concepts helpfully for a pupil, they then use it.
77. In summary, teaching and learning are very good because staff:
- assess pupils closely and use the information to meet individual needs very well;
  - never lose sight of their goal to prepare pupils for working successfully in a mainstream setting;
  - work closely as a team in which members challenge each other and keep evaluating what they do;
  - realise how important it is for pupils to feel secure and confident in order to learn effectively and ensure that the resources they use and the comments they make all support this;
  - have the confidence to stand back and allow pupils time to communicate with each other independently of an adult. This means that pupils begin to value authentic communication rather than speaking only automated responses.
78. The unit has benefited from improvements in the main school. Over the last few years, mainstream class teachers have become increasingly welcoming of pupils from the unit. This has been helped by speech and language therapists working with unit staff to develop teachers' understanding of the needs of pupils with speech and language difficulties and by offering 'two-way inclusion'. This means that when class teachers identify a pupil who will benefit from the small-group work that the unit can offer, that pupil may work in the unit for specific sessions. Consequently, pupils with speech and language difficulties work with others in their year group, both in the unit and in mainstream classes. A direct result of this good communication between unit and mainstream staff is that pupils from the unit receive a very well-balanced curriculum that both addresses their primary speech and language needs and their wider learning in a range of subjects. During the inspection, for example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 learnt about Tudor houses as well as focusing intently on social behaviour.
79. The unit team is very aware of the value of working closely with parents, especially when informal daily contact is impossible. Not only do they use daily home-school books in the base for younger pupils, but they use video in both bases so that parents regularly see the improvements their children are making. Parents value the support they receive and demonstrate this by contributing to the home-school books as well as by sending messages such as, 'Words cannot express my thanks' and, 'It has made a great difference'.

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<sup>4</sup> Makaton is a sign and symbol language programme for teaching communication, language and literacy skills to children and adults with communication and learning difficulties.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing\*, particularly in Years 1 and 2, by:
  - making better use of the many opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills through subjects other than English;
  - being more rigorous in the marking of pupils' written work, including written work which is produced for other subjects, and by ensuring that pupils learn from their mistakes;
  - raising teachers' expectations and providing more opportunities for writing during the day in the Reception classes.

*[Paragraphs: 1, 5, 6, 13, 20, 21, 27, 85, 86, 95, 98, 101, 102, 117, 118, 138, 142, 146 and 163]*

- Improve the consistency of the teaching\* throughout the school by ensuring that:
  - teachers' planning always has clear, achievable objectives and takes full account of pupils' differing capabilities;
  - teachers raise their expectations of what is an acceptable standard of work and what pupils are capable of achieving;
  - teachers mark pupils' work more rigorously, giving them clear indication of what they have done well and how they might improve.
  - teachers place less reliance on the use of worksheets;
  - more effective use is made of time and resources in the Reception classes.

*[Paragraphs: 5, 19, 20, 21, 27, 51, 82, 84, 85, 86, 88, 117, 120, 138, 142 and 149]*

- Improve the role played by subject coordinators\*, by ensuring that:
  - coordinators exert real leadership within their areas of responsibility;
  - coordinators monitor the quality of teaching and learning and use their evaluation to provide points for development and any necessary training in order to raise teachers' expertise;
  - coordinators play a greater role in planning the whole-school curriculum for their subjects;
  - coordinators identify ways in which the use of information and communication technology can be incorporated more frequently into the schemes of work for their subjects;
  - there is effective coordination of the work in the Foundation Stage.

*[Paragraphs: 24, 59, 63, 65, 108, 115, 121, 127, 131, 138, 151, 161, 167]*

\* These issues have already been identified as priorities in the school's development plan.

81. Other issues which should be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:

- Provide greater input into pupils' multi-cultural development. *[Paragraph 43]*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

112

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

54

[In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	27	48	32	2	0	0
Percentage	3	24	43	29	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

### 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)	445
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	20
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	86

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	42
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

### Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	30	33	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	17	27
	Girls	28	28	28
	Total	47	45	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (84)	71 (84)	87 (83)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	28	29
	Girls	28	29	29
	Total	47	57	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (81)	90 (86)	92 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	38	28	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	30	36
	Girls	23	24	28
	Total	50	54	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (76)	82 (75)	97 (98)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	31	32
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	52	55	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (70)	85 (78)	85 (90)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

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

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

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
363	7	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
77	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)	18.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	26
Total aggregate hours worked per week	513

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	944,822
Total expenditure	971,651
Expenditure per pupil	2,265
Balance brought forward from previous year	97,030
Balance carried forward to next year	70,112

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	445
Number of questionnaires returned	56
Percentage of questionnaires returned	13

Percentage of responses in each category<sup>5</sup>

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	55	38	4	2	2
My child is making good progress in school	48	46	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good	29	60	9	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	38	46	14	2	0
The teaching is good	50	48	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	52	43	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	66	25	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	71	27	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents	45	43	11	2	0
The school is well led and managed	59	30	9	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	42	51	5	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	38	39	9	2	13

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<sup>5</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

## **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**

82. The provision for children in the Reception classes is satisfactory as it was at the time of the previous inspection. There are 57 children in the two Reception classes, many of whom have had pre-school experience, having attended one of the three main feeder nurseries. Standards on entry to the school vary from year to year, but most children enter the Reception class with average attainment. By the time they reach Year 1, most children attain standards which are typical for their age in the six areas of learning. Their achievements are satisfactory overall. The curriculum provides a suitable range of learning opportunities and teachers provide a caring atmosphere. However, the organisation of time during the day and inconsistency in teachers' expectations and strategies means that the children's achievements are not as good as they could be in some areas of their learning. Leadership of the Foundation Stage has been unsatisfactory in identifying and dealing with these issues. The children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, although the targets on the individual education plans for children with social difficulties are frequently too wide and do not provide for step-by-step achievement.

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

83. By the time the children enter Year 1, most achieve the expected standards in terms of their personal, social and emotional development. The children demonstrate an ability to persevere and concentrate on their tasks and to take turns and share equipment, with little dissension between them. When using the sand tray or the role-play area, they show that they are able to cooperate and work together constructively. There is good and friendly communication between them. They have many opportunities to choose activities independently and to select their own resources, which they do with confidence and initiative. Most of them behave well and are considerate of others when moving around the classroom or playing with resources and equipment. They know the need to wait patiently if the teacher is working with other children, and the importance of taking turns. They show positive attitudes to all the learning activities. They go about their tasks with a keenness to know more about the world about them. Activities such as circle-time<sup>6</sup> games and songs help the children to socialise and work together, while at the same time encouraging them to be aware of the needs of others. The children are aware of the class rules, which incorporate the need to consider others, but they frequently just recite them rather than consider their purpose and meaning.

84. The teaching in this area of children's learning is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Teachers are well aware of individual needs and are warmly encouraging. Good relationships are established, and adults give praise and involve children in discussion to promote their confidence and self-esteem. Good opportunities are provided within lessons for children to make progress and to socialise. However, some opportunities are missed to develop children's learning in this area further, as expectations are not consistently built into the daily routines.

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

85. By the time the children enter Year 1, the majority meet the standards expected for their age group in communication, language and literacy. Their achievements are satisfactory. Those children who have specific difficulties are supported carefully by teachers and other assistants, and they make satisfactory progress. Most children use an appropriate range of vocabulary to talk about what they are doing. When engaged in their activities, they talk and

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<sup>6</sup> During 'Circle Time' pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and, therefore, pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

plan together, and this is particularly obvious in the role-play area. Their listening skills are good. They enjoy listening to stories and join in happily with familiar repetitions and also listen to and follow instructions carefully. Most children are beginning to show a positive enjoyment of books. They have a good awareness of the sounds that letters make and try to use these to help them with their reading. The strategy for teaching phonics<sup>7</sup> has had a beneficial impact on the progress children make in learning to read and write although, conversely, they do not always demonstrate a secure sight vocabulary of common words. The more able children read with confidence from their reading books, and demonstrate an ability to read unfamiliar text at the appropriate level. The lower-attaining children are still at an early stage of acquiring reading skills but handle books correctly and enjoy looking at the pictures. Most children are beginning to try to write for themselves, but achievements in this area are variable. Although the more able children demonstrate a good level of confidence and write carefully about what is familiar to them, many of the children are overwhelmed by their writing tasks. This is because they are not given the right support and writing is not modelled sufficiently for them so that they can write with confidence. Some children have been encouraged to adopt a joined-up style of writing, but as their printing style of writing is not consistently well formed, even by the more able children, this is not beneficial. Most of the children show that they are keen and eager to write, as could be seen from their frequent attempts during role-play opportunities. There are too few lively displays with supporting words to build the children's awareness of the vocabulary they could use, and there is insufficient use of classroom-based computers to help develop the children's skills.

86. The teaching in this area of children's learning is satisfactory. It is good in the shared time of literacy, when the teacher uses effective questions and initiates discussion about the books the children are looking at and what should be learned. The children are interested and respond with relevant questions and comments. The teaching is only satisfactory when the children are engaged in group work. Frequently, not enough ready-prepared resources are at hand to guide their writing, and there is a mismatch between teachers' expectations and the methods used. Time and teaching assistants are not always used to the best advantage to help children develop their skills, and not enough use is made of structured links with other areas of learning to develop children's skills in writing throughout the day.

### **Mathematical development**

87. The attainment of the children in their mathematical development by the time they enter Year 1 is in line with what is expected. The children demonstrate secure concepts in this area of their learning. Their achievements over time in their early understanding of number, shape and measure are satisfactory overall. Some of the more able children are beginning to do simple calculations with numbers to ten. They sequence numbers higher than 20, and many of them show a good ability to understand and recognise the patterns when counting in tens. The lower-attaining children and children with special educational needs count and match to ten and are beginning to answer questions such as, 'How many altogether?' with the use of practical aids. The children are beginning to understand the use of mathematical language, as was seen as they explored containers to help them understand vocabulary such as 'empty', 'half empty' or 'nearly full'. They understand terms such as 'counting on' and 'counting back.' Some are becoming aware of how to recognise time by using the clock face, but for many this is still a difficult concept.
88. The teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. The teacher uses effective strategies, questioning and examples to promote children's understanding when guiding them through new concepts. In some whole-class sessions, the teaching is good. On these occasions, tasks are matched well to the children's abilities, teaching assistants are used efficiently to support learning, and there is sufficient challenge to ensure that the progress children make within a lesson can be good. However, this is not consistent, as other learning opportunities are not sufficiently based on the children's previous experiences and lead to some confusion.

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<sup>7</sup> Phonics is a teaching programme aimed at developing an awareness of sounds in the spoken and written word. Pupils learn to read and pronounce words by linking the sounds they hear spoken with the letters, letter groups and syllables they see written.

This was exemplified by the difficulties many children had with understanding the concept of time. There are sound opportunities for the children to explore mathematics during the daily lesson, but less opportunity through carefully planned links with other areas of learning.

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

89. Most children enter the school with a sound knowledge of the world in which they live. Children of all capabilities make satisfactory progress so that, by the time they enter Year 1, they attain the expected standards. They demonstrate an avid curiosity in the world around them and a great desire to know and understand more. They explore their local environment through topics based on stories, such as 'Rosie and the Hen', and through other opportunities to examine natural objects, such as exploring the effect of the wind on bubbles. When provided with a range of natural and other materials to explore in their time for 'free activities', they do so with gravity and concentration. They become aware of the difference between the past and the present by considering how they have changed since babyhood. When discussing old and new toys, the teacher created an atmosphere of wonder, so that the children were enthralled and listened and discussed what they were seeing and hearing with perceptive comments and questions. The children have relatively few opportunities to use computers, but they are helped in their understanding of technological equipment by the guided use of listening equipment. The children's handling of practical equipment develops satisfactorily and they use a range of materials and construction kits to construct their own vehicles, roads and other objects. They learn about different cultures through the recognition of different festivals and songs, and the provision for this element of their learning is satisfactory.
90. The teaching seen within lessons was good. Teachers frequently provide a wide range of experiences for the children. However, although such activities are beneficial, teachers have not created a sufficiently stimulating environment within the classroom that arouses and sustains the children's curiosity. Opportunities are missed for the planned development of the children's literacy skills through this area of their learning.

### **Physical development**

91. The children develop sound skills and achieve the expected levels of attainment in their physical development by the time they leave the Reception classes. Within the classroom, the children manipulate and handle small tools with dexterity. When using pencils, paintbrushes or scissors, their skills are good. They handle and build models with construction sets and manipulate different materials and equipment with ease. Children with particular needs are supported carefully by teaching assistants, who help them to become more adept. It was not possible to see the children during a physical education lesson during the inspection, but their participation in circle games and drama shows that the majority have sound coordination and can run and change direction with sound bodily control.
92. Satisfactory teaching ensures that appropriate attention is paid to the development of finer skills in the classroom, and sound opportunities are provided for the children to practise and develop these. The use of the outdoor area also helps in the development of physical skills. Sometimes, these recreational outdoor sessions do not develop children's expertise enough, as there are too few purposeful planned activities for the children to choose from. However, there is some good development of children's personal skills, as they learn to take turns and work cooperatively in a happy atmosphere.

### **Creative development**

93. By the time the children enter Year 1, they meet the expected standards in their creative development. They display a sound, and often good, level of creativity in many areas of their development. For example, two children together chose their own materials to make a parachute, while one child successfully created her own head-dress using a range of paper, feathers and decorative materials. In both these examples, the children used their own initiative and chose the materials independently. A scrutiny of previous work shows that children learn how to mix paint and become familiar with different techniques for painting and

creating pictures of their own and use a range of materials to create their own models. They excitedly create their own sculptures by using clay, which they decorate with natural materials to pleasing effect. They enjoy singing in a cheerful atmosphere as they tunefully and regularly participate in a range of lively action songs. Their keen imagination is obvious from their participation in role-play activities, where they enjoy 'dressing up' and becoming imaginative characters.

94. The teaching provides many sound opportunities for children to develop their creativity, but other opportunities are missed to extend this further. In some areas, the emphasis on children's happy enjoyment is not used sufficiently to enrich and extend their ideas further, such as in music and drama, and in some aspects of their painting. The role-play areas are not stimulating enough to build on the children's obvious potential. They could, for example, be more helpfully organised or based on a specific theme with a range of appropriate equipment and resources.

## ENGLISH

95. Standards in speaking and listening and reading at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, and writing at the end of Year 6, are broadly average. Standards in writing at the end of Year 2 are below average. No significant difference was noted in the performance of boys and girls. Based on pupils' previous attainment, they are making satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, and good progress in Years 3 to 6. In the national tests in 2002, standards at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading and well below average in writing. The school's results are affected, to a certain extent, by the above-average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, who attend the school's speech and language unit. The subject coordinator, together with the school's assessment coordinator, analysed the school's results and implemented a series of measures to improve standards. These have been generally successful, and standards are improving. The school's results in 2002 at the end of Year 6 were slightly better than at the time of the previous inspection. They were also better in writing at the end of Year 2, but were lower in reading.
96. At the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' speaking and listening skills are broadly in line with national expectations. At the end of Year 2, pupils listen attentively to their teachers, and to each other, and most show a clear understanding of what they have heard. Many answer clearly and confidently, providing, on some occasions, extended answers. They successfully use a range of appropriate vocabulary to add detail to their comments. A significant number of pupils, however, lack confidence in speaking at length, and they tend to answer either in single words or short phrases. At the end of Year 6, most pupils listen carefully in a variety of contexts, such as the instructions given to them by their teachers and in class discussion. Many pupils are articulate speakers, who provide detailed answers, explanations and arguments. They speak clearly, and put their points confidently and concisely. As at the end of Year 2, however, a significant number of pupils find speaking difficult, and they are not confident in speaking in front of other people.
97. At the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' reading is in line with the nationally expected standard. By the end of Year 2, many pupils read texts fluently and accurately, with an appropriate level of understanding. They show a sound understanding of phonics, as well as having a suitable sight vocabulary. Pupils show a secure understanding of the books they read, and most are able to express opinions about their contents. At the end of Year 6, many pupils read with fluency, accuracy and evident enjoyment. They readily talk about what they read, making appropriate reference to characters and events in the stories. They identify key events and themes, and use relevant information to support their views. Pupils regularly use reference books to find information, and many of them have mastered the skills of skimming and scanning to help them find that information.
98. At the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in writing is below that expected nationally, and at the end of Year 6 it is broadly average. By the end of Year 2, many pupils write suitable portions of text, including stories, news and poems. Some pupils introduce interesting detail into their work, sometimes writing at length and making good use of punctuation. A significant majority, however, as at the time of the previous inspection, do not use capital letters and full-stops

consistently, correctly or independently, to add structure to their writing. Many pupils find spelling difficult, but the majority usually produce spellings of simple words that are phonetically acceptable. Pupils' handwriting skills are reasonably sound, although a number of pupils produce letters that are sometimes incorrectly formed and variable in size. Pupils join their letters, but whilst some pupils produce a neat script, a number find the task difficult. At the end of Year 6, many pupils successfully write for a variety of purposes, and they place emphasis on the use of parts of speech, such as adverbs and adjectives, to add detail to their writing, as well as using an increased range of punctuation, including inverted commas. On occasions, pupils' work is sustained into longer pieces of writing, and appropriate imagination, interest and depth is introduced. Some pupils, however, lack confidence in producing extended pieces of writing, in particular lacking the vocabulary to significantly improve the quality of their work. Most pupils join their letters in an appropriate handwriting style, but not all pupils are equally neat in the presentation of their work. Pupils' spelling is usually satisfactory, and they use dictionaries and a thesaurus to improve this aspect of their work further.

99. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers now have a good subject knowledge overall. Lessons are suitably planned and organised, with teachers following the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to listen to stories and various forms of instruction, and they make good use of intonation in their voices, as well as humour, to help maintain pupils' interest. Where teaching is good, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to speak at length and develop their speaking skills, for example, by making particularly good use of questioning and drama activities. In other lessons, however, teachers do not always provide pupils with enough chances to speak, tending to ask questions that only require one- or two-word answers.
100. Teachers are careful to provide appropriate reading books for pupils, and all pupils have books suitable to their needs. Detailed records are kept of the books read, and pupils are provided regularly with new ones. Most of these books are interesting, and this is contributing to the enthusiasm that pupils now show. Pupils are provided with appropriate opportunities to read, and suitable support and encouragement are provided by teachers, learning support assistants and parent helpers. Pupils are usually keen to read and, even when they find the text difficult, most are prepared to tackle the words presented.
101. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 provide an appropriate range of writing activities and opportunities for their pupils during lessons, both in English and in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education. However, in Years 1 and 2, where more time is spent on practising the basic skills of, for example, spelling, handwriting and phonics, fewer opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils respond appropriately to the opportunities provided in all aspects of the subject, and this allows them all, including those with special educational needs, to make at least satisfactory gains in their knowledge and skills. Where teaching is good, lessons are brisk in pace, and pupils are provided with clear advice about improving their work, the pupils work well for extended periods and make good progress. Good relationships are developed between teachers and pupils throughout the school, and teachers provide appropriate support during lessons. In this, they are helped well by the learning support assistants. Pupils' attitudes to English are good, and sometimes very good. Most work well on their own, and in groups when required, and they generally persevere with the work set. A number of pupils are keen to produce a neat and careful standard of presentation in their books, but a significant number take less care, in particular showing some inconsistency in their work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but they do not always provide clear advice to pupils about improving their work. In particular, some teachers tend to be too generous with their praise, especially in relation to presentation, and teachers rarely correct pupils' English usage within the context of other subjects. This impedes the further development of pupils' writing skills. Most pupils use a word processor competently, but they do not have regular opportunity to use new technology to help them draft and re-draft their work.
102. The school uses the National Literacy framework as its scheme of work, and all the various aspects of work are suitably covered. Appropriate plans are produced by staff, but currently, in

Years 1 and 2, rather too much time is allocated to practising basic language skills, rather than developing these skills through producing more extended pieces of writing, for example, in subjects such as history and geography. The coordinator is well informed, and she provides appropriate support to her colleagues when it is requested. Through studying samples of pupils' work she has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in that work. She also has the opportunity to monitor the work being tackled by pupils in their classrooms. Her leadership is good, and she has made an important contribution to the improvement in standards now being seen. A good, and much improved, range of assessment procedures is in place, with teachers keeping a variety of information about each pupil's performance. The information which is recorded is used effectively to identify pupils' current attainment and the progress they have made. It is also used to help the planning of appropriate future work for pupils. Improved use is now made of other curricular subjects to help develop pupils' literacy skills, especially in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are also provided with opportunities to use the library, and the current provision and quality of books have improved since the time of the last inspection. During their literacy activities, suitable opportunities are sometimes provided for pupils to develop their spiritual understanding, especially when listening to well-told stories and poems. Particularly good examples of this were observed in Year 5, where pupils became enthralled by the texts being read.

## **MATHEMATICS**

103. Standards in mathematics are average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Achievement by pupils in Year 6 is good when compared with their prior attainment. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Pupils are making greater progress, particularly in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 5 and 6. An increasing number of pupils are attaining the higher levels, Level 3 at Year 2 and Level 5 at Year 6. Work is more carefully matched to pupils' needs, as a result of teaching groups based on pupils' prior attainment and higher-attaining pupils are now challenged. The improvement since the last inspection is the result of better quality teaching, good coordination of the subject, effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and increased emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of provision and standards.
104. In the 2002 tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, results were below the national average. Current standards for most pupils in Year 2 are similar to those expected nationally. In the 2002 tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, the school's results were just above the national average. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils in Year 6 achieved well. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are higher now than at the time of the last inspection. Each area identified for improvement at the last inspection has been addressed successfully.
105. Higher-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Achievement is greatest in Years 5 and 6 because of the good, and often very good, quality of teaching, particularly the very effective classroom management, lessons that proceed at a very good pace and the very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Achievement is good overall because of the organisation of pupils within year groups, based on their prior attainment and current needs, and the good attitudes towards mathematics displayed by most pupils.
106. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' work is close to the levels expected for their age. Pupils in Year 1 are familiar with a range of mathematical language, for example, they confidently use 'count on', 'more than' and 'total' in relation to addition, and 'minus', 'less than', 'count back' and 'difference' in relation to subtraction. Pupils are expected to explain their strategies when they solve problems. Pupils in Year 1 develop confidence to explain how they arrived at a particular answer. By the end of Year 2, pupils recognise that addition is the inverse of subtraction and use this knowledge to solve number problems. They can find solutions to problems expressed in words and figures. They know that a triangle is two-dimensional and has three sides and three corners. Pupils discuss the features of shapes, and higher-attaining pupils know that a pyramid has triangular sloping faces which meet at the top. By the end of Year 2, pupils use mental recall with confidence. Most recognise that multiplication is the inverse of division and apply this relationship simply, without the need for pencil and paper. Higher-attaining pupils understand the meaning of words such as 'estimate' and 'circumference'. Using money, this group of pupils can approximate to the nearest 10p and calculate mentally that 65p is the correct change from £1 after spending 35p in a shop.

107. By the end of Year 6, pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed effectively. Most pupils are confident with using number. They calculate accurately using large numbers, have a very good sense of place value and recognise equivalent fractions and percentages. Pupils have a clear understanding of different mathematical shapes and explain confidently the properties of various regular and irregular shapes at a sophisticated level. For example, higher-attaining pupils recognise that a parallelogram has two pairs of parallel sides and two pairs of opposite angles that are equal. Pupils use previous knowledge well and apply this confidently to areas of work which are new, through mathematical investigation. Pupils work well together to look for and try out new ideas.
108. Pupils develop speaking and listening skills effectively in mathematics. There is appropriate emphasis on the development of subject-specific vocabulary, and there are good opportunities for pupils to learn through investigations in mathematics lessons. This provides the opportunity for pupils to tease out their thoughts and develop their mathematical ideas. Whilst pupils are familiar with and confident in the use of information and communication technology, there are currently few opportunities to develop their skills in this area in mathematics. The school is aware of this and the purchase and implementation of appropriate hardware and software is a priority for improvement.
109. Learning is made interesting, challenging and fair. The good relationships established in class and well-ordered routines promote pupils' eagerness to learn. This, together with lessons conducted at a brisk pace, contribute positively to mathematics being seen by the pupils as fun. Good examples of this were observed during the mental starter in Year 2 when pupils were enjoying counting on in tens. Pupils in Year 6 work out equivalent fractions confidently. One of the major strengths of teaching in mathematics is promoting pupils' confidence to attempt questions, even if they are not sure of the answers. The use of resources to provide a visual image of different aspects of mathematics is particularly effective for pupils less confident of their mathematical skills. This visual impact helps pupils understand both basic and complex concepts and helps pupils learn more rapidly and with greater understanding. Pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are good. Most pupils work at a good pace and most are attentive and well behaved. They work effectively both individually and in small groups. Pupils' relationships with teachers and with each other are good.
110. Pupils are making good progress and achieving well due to good teaching. The overall quality of teaching in mathematics is good. It is often very good in Years 5 and 6. Questioning across the school is precise and probing. Pupils offer to answer questions, but teachers occasionally use direct questioning to ensure all pupils are giving their full attention, as well as to assess pupils' understanding. In the instances of very good teaching, the lessons are very well planned and structured and the pupils are set clear objectives, which they understand. There are very clear expectations for behaviour, which are shared with pupils, and lessons take place at a very good pace, starting with brisk sessions of mental arithmetic, which encourage and motivate pupils. At the end of these lessons, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have learnt.
111. Teachers plan thoroughly to ensure that learning is suited to the needs of all pupils and set clear specific objectives. Their effective classroom management and organisation ensure that no time is lost, that all pupils are fully occupied and that appropriate resources are at hand. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted and is firmly embedded into the planning. This ensures that pupils of whatever ability are catered for well and, where available, teaching support is used strategically to support pupils who have the greatest need. This gives all pupils a wide range of opportunities for learning, which often extends into other areas. As a result, good learning, related to everyday experiences in mathematics lessons, is reinforced and consolidated throughout the curriculum.
112. The presentation of pupils' written work is variable, and this has, rightly, been identified as an area for improvement. Most work is marked and sometimes supported by positive remarks. In the best examples, there are constructive comments to indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve. Teachers assess and record pupils' progress regularly. This information is used to set targets for improvement. It is not, as yet, used consistently through the school to inform pupils of these individual targets.

113. Teaching assistants play a significant role in helping pupils to focus closely on their work and sort out their mathematical ideas. This is particularly beneficial for pupils who have special educational needs. This approach makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers ensure that the staff who support pupils are clear about what is to be learned. Their role is clearly built into the planning. Teachers clearly identify the tasks and actions for support staff to carry out and provide further opportunities for the teaching assistants to assess and evaluate the results of their interaction.
114. The coordinator provides good leadership and has a very good overview of the subject. She has established a very clear action plan to address the current areas for development required to raise standards. This includes ensuring staff are confident and work as a team. The coordinator regularly monitors teachers' planning and reviews pupils' work, providing feedback and agreeing targets for improvement with staff. Observation of teaching has taken place and has been used to identify areas for development. The setting of targets is also integral to raising standards, and these are set through effective use of assessment data collected from direct classroom observation, analysis of national and optional test results and other tests. Work is scrutinised carefully for any apparent weaknesses, and this influences future teaching and planning to support learning in classrooms. The school encourages the involvement of parents through the provision of appropriate homework to consolidate and reinforce what is learned at school. Parents provide good support for pupils with their learning at home.
115. There is a good level of resources for mathematics, including helpful materials for pupils. Resources are accessible to both staff and pupils. The resource priority is to provide a good range of software to support the teaching and learning of mathematics through information and communication technology.

## **SCIENCE**

116. Standards of attainment in science at the end of Year 2 are broadly average. At the end of Year 6, they are above average. The teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 showed pupils' attainment to be similar to the national average, and the national test results at the end of Year 6 were above the national average, having been maintained at this level for the past three years. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. There has also been good improvement in planning the science curriculum, which was identified as a weakness in the last report. There is now a well-devised and detailed scheme of work for teachers to follow, but there is still scope for teachers to be more aware of which topics pupils have already tackled and at what level of difficulty. Pupils' scientific skills are being developed systematically throughout the school, and there is increasing emphasis on the provision for investigative and experimental science. There was no discernible difference during the inspection between the learning of boys and girls.
117. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are working at the expected level in all aspects of the subject, but few of the more able pupils progress beyond this. Pupils have started to develop a satisfactory breadth of scientific knowledge. Pupils apply this knowledge well and are starting to extend their thinking independently. For example, pupils in Year 2 used magnets to determine which materials in the classroom were magnetic and then devised a further question to be explored later. One pupil wondered, 'Why don't all metals work with magnets?' Pupils use specific vocabulary effectively. In Year 1, for example, pupils classified vegetables by which part they ate, using 'stem', 'flower', 'leaf', 'root' and 'seed' to describe why they put them into different groups. Samples of pupils' work indicate that pupils sometimes use their literacy skills to record their findings, but that much recording is done on worksheets which limits the development of writing skills. There is limited evidence that pupils use science to develop their mathematical skills. Good use is made of videos to enhance pupils' understanding, but pupils do not frequently use computers to further their scientific knowledge.
118. By the end of Year 6, many pupils are working beyond the expected level in all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils are accustomed to predict, to investigate their hypotheses and check their findings for accuracy, although in some classes investigations are conducted by the teacher,

which limits the development of pupils' own skills. They have covered a wide variety of topics and have developed their knowledge of scientific vocabulary very well. For example, in a lesson in Year 5, pupils had dissected a lily flower and they named the parts associated with pollen and reproduction accurately and in great detail. Levels of knowledge about the topic in that lesson were particularly high. Opportunities are missed to develop pupils' writing skills fully. There is little evidence that pupils regularly use science to further their information and communication technology skills, but towards the top of the school they use their mathematical knowledge well to record their findings clearly in charts and line graphs.

119. Most pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs achieved well during the lessons observed, but samples of work show that when written tasks have not been adapted for their levels of understanding, their recorded progress slows to barely satisfactory.
120. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. During the inspection week, there was some very good teaching in one class in each of Years 2 to 6. Teachers in parallel classes plan closely together which ensures that pupils learn the same topics in similar ways. Where teachers had also considered the objectives they wanted pupils to understand by the end of the lesson, and noted the necessary steps to achieve them in detail, it was noticeable that the quality of the lessons was better throughout. In the very good lessons, teachers had high expectations of what their pupils would find interesting and gave additional information which fascinated them. For example, in the lesson in Year 5 about pollination, the teacher described how cross-pollination leads to new varieties of plants. Teachers introduce their lessons clearly, using a good mix of questions and information so that pupils recall what they know already, are focused for the main part of the lesson, and ready to think. However, the main task is not often adapted to suit the rate at which different groups of pupils learn. This means that pupils who learn more slowly depend on good support from adults in order to keep up. In lessons where teaching was satisfactory, the more able pupils were not fully stretched by the general task. Teachers generally keep a good pace so that pupils remain interested, but teachers do not all use the final few minutes of lessons to maximum effect to reinforce the learning that pupils have achieved during the session. Samples of pupils' work reveal that it is marked with ticks and praise, but that many teachers miss opportunities to extend their pupils' thinking or correct literacy errors. Teachers are increasingly aware of the importance of providing spiritual, moral, social and cultural opportunities in science. For example, in a lesson in Year 3, pupils reflected on the importance of treating all living things with respect. Throughout the school, teachers provide clear codes for good behaviour which promote good relations in classrooms and produce an atmosphere conducive to learning and, when appropriate, pupils work sensibly in groups.
121. The coordinator, who has been in post for a year, provides satisfactory leadership and management overall. He has ensured that staff have an appropriate and detailed scheme of work and has made the development of the use of information and communication technology a priority for next year. He is well aware of other areas that need developing, such as seeing teachers' plans when they have been annotated and starting to monitor teaching and the quality of pupils' work in depth. A useful, newly-produced outline curriculum map indicates where skills can be developed through other subjects. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are satisfactory, but at present there is no tracking of pupils' progress through the school. Resources for science are satisfactory and are used well in lessons.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

122. Standards at the end of Year 2 are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection and are broadly in line with those expected nationally. There has been an improvement at the end of Year 6, as pupils now attain standards which are above those expected nationally.
123. The achievements of the pupils in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory. There was limited opportunity to see lessons during the inspection, and this meant that only one group of pupils was seen in Year 1. There is also only a very limited amount of work on display, and the pupils' work in art and design is not celebrated as much as it could be. The evidence from previous work and talking to pupils shows, however, that they have a satisfactory base of

knowledge and understanding gained from their experiences. An appropriate number of pupils in Year 2 demonstrate that they know how to use pencils in different ways to create lines and shading, while others do not have the ability to observe closely enough to make accurate representations. In this area of art, they make a good start in Year 1, where many of the observational drawings show a fine eye for detail. The pupils know how to mix colours to create different effects and paint in response to music. They successfully undertake work in three dimensions, using clay to make their own pots. However, they have little recall of the work of different artists.

124. There is a better celebration of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6, where the pupils' achievements are good. There are colourful examples of pattern-making, work on textiles and still-life drawings which show the broad spectrum of pupils' achievements. Such work shows the developing understanding of the use of skills alongside creativity. In Year 5, for example, the pupils make attractive textile pictures using a diverse range of materials, while learning new techniques in the form of fabric painting and sewing, including the use of a sewing machine. By the end of Year 6, pupils have acquired a good understanding of different media and skills and how they can be used. They have confidence in their own knowledge and ability. This is exemplified when, after studying the work of Barbara Hepworth, they use clay to produce their own sculptures. All the pupils worked on this with avid concentration and strived to fulfil their planned design or successfully modified it when necessary. The good self-esteem of the pupils with special educational needs is obvious and their achievements are recognised and celebrated.
125. Although there were examples of very good and excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6, which have an impact on the high standards in this part of the school, the scrutiny of pupils' work, particularly in Years 1 and 2 shows that the overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, the lack of bold creativity in the outcomes of the pupils' work suggests that they are not being extended sufficiently. There is an emphasis on drawing. Part of the programme for art and design in Years 1 and 2 is based on links with other areas of the curriculum, but these are rather tenuous and restrictive. For example, pupils worked together on a picture of the creation, but tiny cut-out drawings and over-direction by the teacher did not represent good development of art-and-design skills. However, the collaborative task on creating a garden was more successful and gave greater scope for pupils to express their ideas and creativity. Elsewhere in the school, not enough thought is given to how a particular project should be used to develop pupils' skills in the most effective way. In the very good and excellent lessons that were observed, the teacher had the necessary expertise and expectations to ensure high standards. Excellent demonstration by the teacher kept the pupils interested and motivated them to try their own ideas and use the skills they were learning. Time was used well and continual support and discussion by the teacher helped to extend the pupils' understanding and encourage further effort. This led to enthusiastic and motivated pupils who applied themselves to their tasks with the utmost concentration and absorption. The use of information and communication technology is satisfactory, but there is little evidence of pupils using their literacy skills to write evaluations of their work.
126. Many of the art and design activities make a good contribution to the pupils' personal development. A good feature of a lesson in Year 4 was the way that quiet music was played at the end of the lesson while pupils quietly used the opportunity to look at, reflect on and evaluate the ideas of other pupils. The pupils in Year 3 suggested seven messages of peace to be attached to their outdoor sculptures and taken by the wind around the world. There are many good examples of the pupils working together and supporting each other. However, art and design only makes a satisfactory contribution to their cultural development, as there is little evidence of the study of work from a wide range of cultures.
127. The coordinator for the subject is knowledgeable and has supported teachers whenever necessary. She has had the opportunity to monitor some of the aspects of teaching and learning so that she has an awareness of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She has carefully adapted elements of the nationally available schemes where necessary to meet the needs of the school, although some aspects of the curriculum are in need of further review. The present system for teaching art and design in Years 1 and 2 is not entirely successful in

allowing for sufficient breadth to the curriculum, as the pupils' achievements could be better than they are. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' work are satisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

128. At the time of the last inspection, standards in the subject were judged to be in line with national expectations. It was only possible to see a small part of design and technology teaching in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection due to the way in which the teaching of the subject is planned. However, on the evidence of previous work, and talking to pupils and teachers, standards at the end of Year 2 are similar to those expected for the age group and their achievements are satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, the pupils attain standards that are higher than those expected for the age group, which represents good improvement since the previous inspection. This is due in no small measure to the use of the considerable expertise for teaching in Years 5 and 6. The achievements of the pupils in Key Stage 2 are good. The progress pupils make in their understanding through worthwhile projects is consistently very good in Years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs are helped to make good progress by individual support whenever necessary.
129. From their earliest time in school, pupils are actively involved in the designing process as well as making the item. A good start is made in Year 1, where pupils consider different ways for joining paper. They use the term 'fixing', exploring the use of glue, sellotape and other means of joining, and decide whether their fixings are permanent or temporary. This knowledge and understanding is developed further in Year 2, where pupils consider the best types of paper for making paper chains. They also consider more intricate ways of joining and how fasteners can be used to fit for a purpose, developing wider skills which enable them to consider and make predictions about what they are doing. They have sound recall of previous work, such as the way they made moving pictures.
130. Pupils in Key Stage 2 understand how to design and evaluate what they have made, as well as appreciating design aspects of made objects. This means that when pupils design moving objects, wheeled vehicles, sandwiches, biscuits and structures, they know that they have to consider the purpose, users and safety, for example, of the finished article from the very beginning. Focused tasks are planned well to practise certain skills, such as measuring and shaping materials for constructing bridges, as was seen in work completed by pupils in Year 6. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are well aware of the need to plan thoroughly and to evaluate the finished product. This they do in depth, conducting surveys among the class and testing what they have made. The completion of a project on racing cars was an excellent example of this. The culmination of many weeks' work, where pupils used a full range of equipment including batteries and motors, showed the extent of pupils' skills and knowledge. Excitement ran high when the completed racing cars competed against each other as part of the evaluation process. The pupils are very good at saying what they found difficult, and considering how they can change or modify their design.
131. The teaching of design and technology is good overall. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teaching and learning for the pupils in Key Stage 1 is at least satisfactory. The teaching of the pupils in Key Stage 2 is good overall, and some very good and excellent teaching was observed during the inspection. Lessons are prepared and organised well, so there is little loss of time, and work on practical activities is maximised. Classes are managed well, and there are very good relationships between pupils and teachers. In these lessons, not only does the teacher have the necessary subject expertise and high expectations for what the pupils should achieve, the strategies employed ensure that the pupils work with a sense of purpose and gain maximum enjoyment from what they have learnt. Due to the restricted facilities, there are few opportunities for the pupils to explore food technology. However, teachers make the best use of what is available so that the pupils can investigate, for example, sandwich making and packaging, and make different types of biscuits. There are however, insufficient opportunities for the pupils to use information and communication technology within their design process. In Years 5 and 6, the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are generally incorporated well into lessons, but opportunities are missed to develop pupils' literacy skills in Key Stage 1. The subject makes a good contribution to

pupils' personal development, as they learn to reflect on their work, to work together and value the ideas of others.

132. The leadership of the coordinator is good and having a positive impact. She has carefully evaluated the subject and has a good picture of strengths and weaknesses. For example, she recognises the need to focus on key skills for the younger pupils. She has successfully implemented the parts of the nationally available schemes that she felt relevant to the school, making appropriate alterations where necessary. The quality of planning has improved since the previous inspection, and the curriculum provides good breadth and balance. The design-and-technology process is understood and taught well. There are good procedures for assessment, although the coordinator is planning to change the system in order that they relate more closely to what is happening in the school. Resources are good and used effectively to support the making of pupils' designs.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

133. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. Standards have been sustained in Key Stage 1 and improved in Key Stage 2.
134. By the end of Year 2, pupils have studied the human and physical features of their locality. Pupils indicate they are aware of their local area and compare it with a Scottish island. They display a satisfactory understanding of how to make a plan and recognise key areas in the local area and locate them on a large map. The good use of photographs and familiar areas increases pupils' understanding about the purpose of maps and how to plan a simple route. They write interesting descriptions of rain-forests in their literacy work.
135. Pupils are very confident by the time they are in Year 6 and have a good knowledge of where they can locate mountain ranges, countries, continents and oceans throughout the world. Pupils are very clear about what they are expected to achieve. They begin to pose and phrase their own geographical questions about mountain climates, such as, 'What sort of weather conditions prevail?' In a very good lesson in Year 5, pupils worked in groups to make a presentation to the class on the efficiency of different materials in filtering water. They used note-taking skills to good effect. In the concluding session, they eagerly offered their findings using appropriate vocabulary. The good use of a variety of tasks ensured pupils worked hard and concentrated well. The high expectations of the teacher about the quality of pupils' responses using the appropriate geographical terms was very good. The lesson moved at a good pace and retained the interest and enthusiasm of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, who were well supported so that they made a significant contribution to the lesson. Pupils in Year 6 are confident about using a range of maps to identify local water resources and locate specific local features. They recognise the significance of scale and which map is appropriate for their purpose. In a study about mountain climates, the teacher used a range of questions to assess their knowledge and understanding before moving into more detail about how to research further geographical features.
136. Pupils learn how to draw up tally sheets and use this information to construct bar charts to record information about world climate. This reinforces their mathematical skills in a cross-curricular fashion and helps them to use their learning in an everyday context. In all of the lessons observed during the inspection, particular emphasis was paid to speaking and listening. These opportunities encouraged pupils to convey their ideas and opinions to their classmates, who listened carefully and responded appropriately using correct terminology.
137. The overall quality of the teaching is good and pupils learn well. There is some very good teaching in Key Stage 2 and evidence of very good learning. Teachers plan well. Their management of classes is secure, and no time is wasted through having to manage unacceptable behaviour. This is achieved through lessons being conducted at a brisk pace, effective use of resources and good subject knowledge. The preparation and very good interaction between teachers and pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, create a very good environment for learning, which promotes enthusiasm and stimulation. Teachers use a good range of strategies to encourage pupils' learning, including the very good support which is offered to pupils with special educational needs. These pupils make good progress.

138. The management of the subject is good. The scheme of work forms a detailed and helpful guide for teachers, with clear identification of what pupils have to learn by the end of each unit of work. This ensures a consistent approach which develops pupils' skills systematically. Monitoring of pupils' work is done through observation of classroom and corridor displays and monitoring of teachers' planning. Effective assessment and recording procedures are in place, which provide teachers with sufficient information to plan lessons to build effectively on pupils' past learning. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills through extended writing, reading and research, but the marking of pupils' work indicates that these opportunities are not always used to best effect. Information and communication technology is used at times, as pupils research using the Internet, but this area has not yet been fully developed. Resources are good in range and quality.
139. Good use is made of places of interest in the area to investigate geographical features. This enhances pupils' learning through first-hand discovery and experiences, such as conducting a building survey, and develops their skills of enquiry. Research and visits further afield, such as that to Hengistbury Head as part of their study of rivers and coastlines, lead to stronger, more effective learning, as well as bringing the subject alive.

## **HISTORY**

140. Standards of attainment in history are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards have generally been maintained at this level since the previous inspection, although the reduced time available for teaching history in Years 1 and 2 has resulted in little recorded work. Achievement is satisfactory across the school. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates, although at slightly lower levels.
141. By the end of Year 2, pupils have started to build a firm foundation of knowledge and skills. They understand clearly that many aspects of the past were very different from their lives today, and they are able to define things that have changed and those that remain the same. Pupils have studied events such as the Gunpowder Plot and the Great Fire of London and understand why they happened. They used their literacy skills well to write lively reports of the Fire, but the standard of presentation was often disappointing. Pupils become increasingly able to count on time-lines.
142. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made satisfactory progress in the development of their skills and knowledge. They have a growing understanding of chronology and are confident about the order in which civilisations and periods of history occurred. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils demonstrated a wide knowledge about events in Britain after the Second World War, such as the creation of the Welfare State and the National Health Service, as well as social conditions and changes in the fifties and sixties. Pupils understand clearly how the same event may be presented in different ways and cited a child's experience of the war compared to that of a soldier. There is also good understanding of how to discover about the past through using the Internet as well as information books, looking at artefacts and taking part in archaeological digs. Pupils use their mathematical skills well when using time-lines, for instance, they understand the meaning of the terms 'BC' and 'AD' and explain them clearly. Opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their writing skills in ways other than just using them to record information and the marking of pupils' work does not give them guidance on how to improve their literacy skills.
143. Samples of pupils' work indicate that the quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good aspects. During the inspection, the teaching ranged from very good, to one lesson which had unsatisfactory aspects involving a task. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1. In the very good lesson in Year 4, teachers used resources very well so that pupils were deeply involved and made very good progress in their learning. Pupils interviewed ten adults who had all been intimately connected with the Second World War. They had prepared a list of relevant questions and were fascinated at the different answers they were given. The session provided very good moral and social opportunities for pupils to be polite to and considerate of elderly people. Where teaching was strongest, teachers had planned thoroughly so that they kept a brisk pace and built steadily on the pupils' knowledge. This enabled pupils to understand clearly each part of the lesson and to be challenged and focused on new learning. In Year 6,

for example, some pupils thought about the implications of the creation of better jobs in the sixties on young people who then had money to spare for the first time ever. Teachers use video resources well so that pupils gain good, new insights into life at various times in the past. In Year 3, for example, pupils became acutely aware of differences in living conditions between rich and poor in Tudor England.

144. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The coordinator leads clearly. She has devised a comprehensive curriculum map and annotated it to show where aspects of other subjects can be taught. She sees teachers' plans and samples of pupils' work, but has not monitored teaching. Assessment is simple and generally adequate. There is a suitable range of educational visits which enrich pupils' knowledge. Resources are satisfactory and used well.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

145. Standards in all aspects of the curriculum for information and communication technology are at the expected level by the end of Years 2 and 6, and pupils of all capabilities are making satisfactory progress throughout the school. Information and communication technology was identified as a particular strength of the school in the previous inspection, as the school was better equipped, and placed much greater emphasis on the subject, than most schools at that time. Although the school has maintained its standards and has continued to provide thorough teaching throughout the school, its resources are now showing the signs of age and there has not been any significant investment to update what is provided. However, the current development plan has identified ways in which the school's provision needs to improve, and major investment in new resources is about to take place. There are sensible plans for making the best use of the existing equipment once these new resources arrive.
146. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are working at the expected level in all aspects of the curriculum, though few have progressed beyond this. Pupils understand how new technology can enable them to exchange and share information, for example, by producing charts using data-handling software or short pieces of writing using a word processor. Because of the limited amount of time they are able to spend using computers, they do not have many opportunities to review and modify their work, although they understand the basic principles of being able to edit work in process. Pupils know that computers can be used to find things out. In a good lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils were given the opportunity to explore an encyclopaedia on CD-ROM and take notes, which they would use at a later stage to write about their findings. There was good input by the teacher during this session to help pupils to develop discernment in what they wrote and the realisation that information could be gathered not just through the written word, but through observation of pictures and illustrations. Pupils have learnt essential skills, such as logging onto the school's network, locating programs and printing out their work.
147. By the end of Year 6, pupils are working at the expected level in most aspects of the subject, but few pupils are working beyond this level, except in the aspect of exchanging and sharing information, where some higher-attaining pupils demonstrate good skills in setting out text in different ways. A number of pupils, for example, take up the opportunity for involvement in lunchtime activities with the subject coordinator to put together a school newssheet and, in one lesson in Year 5, some pupils showed good skills in presenting the information they had entered into a spreadsheet in an attractive way. Pupils use a word processor competently, although they do not have frequent enough access to computers to develop real skills in reviewing and modifying their work or developing really fluent keyboard skills. They are competent in finding out information from the Internet, and good examples were observed in which pupils had conducted research in history and geography. Pupils have learnt the principles of constructing simple databases. The pupils are developing an understanding of how computers can be used to monitor and control events, although the school's resources for this aspect of the curriculum are in need of updating. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, they have acquired a broad range of skills which enable them to operate computers with confidence.

148. The biggest barriers to pupils making greater progress in information and communication technology are the quality of the school's resources and the accommodation. At the time of the last inspection five years ago, the school was ahead of many others, having a good range of resources, a network linking all classrooms and two small rooms forming a computer suite. Since that time, however, the equipment has aged, the operating system used is no longer supported, technology has advanced and expectations have risen. Without the financial resources to make major alterations, the school has done all it can to overcome the difficulties imposed by the accommodation. Pupils are rarely taught as a whole class. In Key Stage 2, the general pattern is for half of the class to have guided reading sessions with one or more teaching assistants, whilst the class teacher teaches information and communication technology to the remaining pupils. In Key Stage 1, pupils are divided into smaller groups, each undertaking a variety of activities. The system is beneficial to pupils' learning, in that staff are able to give pupils closer attention than in a whole-class situation. However, this benefit is offset by the drawbacks of the accommodation. The computer suite is housed in two small rooms separated by a corridor, which makes it very difficult for the teacher to be fully aware of what is happening all of the time or to make teaching points to the whole group, other than when pupils come together in one room at the beginning or end of the lesson. The system works because pupils generally behave well and responsibly, but it is far from ideal.
149. The quality of the teaching in both key stages is satisfactory. Most of the lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory and some were good. The teachers have a sound understanding of the curriculum and sufficient confidence in teaching the subject to enable pupils to acquire a broad range of skills. The teachers' planning for their information and communication technology lessons is generally satisfactory and is based closely on the school's scheme of work. In some lessons, teachers do not take enough account of pupils' differing abilities. Some teachers, however, provide good challenge for the more able pupils. The teachers endeavour to provide a meaningful context for the development of pupils' skills. In a good lesson in Year 5, for example, in which they were learning how to use formulae in spreadsheets, pupils were working with data collected as part of their geography project on water. Teachers introduce their lessons well, giving clear explanations and making good use of the digital projector to provide clear demonstrations, which all pupils can see. They involve the pupils well during these sessions, and ensure that they have understood new concepts or what they have to do before asking them to work on their own or with a partner. Pupils respond well during their information and communication technology lessons and are keen to put into practice what they have been taught.
150. Whenever possible within the context of their information and communication technology lessons, teachers endeavour to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills as, for example, in the lesson in which pupils were learning how to take notes. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils used a spreadsheet to investigate how the area and perimeter of a rectangle might change if the length or breadth was doubled or halved. However, the constraints imposed by accommodation and resources make it difficult for new technology to be used more widely to develop literacy and numeracy skills or as a tool for learning in other subjects outside the timetabled information and communication technology lessons. The school has identified the need to make greater use of new technology in all subjects as one of the main priorities within the current school development plan.
151. A new and enthusiastic coordinator assumed responsibility for the subject at the beginning of the school year. He provides good leadership and manages the subject well. The teaching scheme is thorough and covers all aspects of the curriculum. He, along with the previous subject coordinator, provide good help for other members of staff, but other subject coordinators are not yet sufficiently involved in identifying ways in which information and communication technology can be used to enhance teaching and learning within their subjects. There are good assessment procedures, but not enough opportunity for the coordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in other subjects. The school has maintained its positive approach to the subject and major investment is shortly to be made which will bring significant improvement to the school's resources. The machines used in the two small computers rooms will be located in Key Stage 1, thus providing greater opportunity for the younger pupils to broaden their skills, and a new suite of computers, with an up-to-date operating system will be installed, thus providing better opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2.

The new investments should also significantly improve the operating reliability which has proved a problem in recent months.

## **MUSIC**

152. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment meets national expectations for their age. As they move through the school, boys and girls make satisfactory progress in their ability to sing tunefully and to experiment with sounds, rhythm, dynamics and tempo. Because pupils with special educational needs share the same curriculum in lessons with their classmates, they make similar rates of progress in relation to their prior attainment.
153. Music teaching is good throughout the school because good use is made of teachers who have expertise in the subject. Consequently, pupils make good progress in lessons. The coordinator is a subject specialist who teaches in Year 2 and works closely with her colleagues in Years 1 and 2. She has successfully introduced resources that help teachers who are not subject specialists to teach the subject well. There is a teacher who is very new to the school teaching the subject with skill and confidence for pupils in Year 4, and a subject specialist teaching Years 5 and 6.
154. However, the impact of this good teaching is not being fully felt. This is because, in Years 1 and 2, music lessons are short. Timetabled slots are for 30 minutes, but time is often lost in the move from other lessons to the music room in the adjoining building. The shortness of time means that the more advanced skill of evaluating their work and that of others has less emphasis than other aspects of the subject. The reason for good teaching not yet raising standards in Key Stage 2 is because staff changes that have enhanced the subject are too recent to have had full effect.
155. Nevertheless, there has been good improvement since the last inspection, as the coordinator has successfully raised the profile of the subject which makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils now have more regular opportunities to sing and to appreciate a wide variety of music in assemblies and through music clubs as well as in lessons. The school is aware that this has increased pupils' enjoyment of the subject but that a few older boys are harder to win over. Staff are also aware of the power of live music and musicians in contributing to pupils' interest, and they seek opportunities to use this, involving outside groups as well as their own pupils in performing for the school. The strengths found at the time of the last inspection in providing sufficient opportunity for pupils to experiment with their own compositions, to record these on paper using symbols or simple notation and to perform with and for each other, have been successfully retained.
156. Music makes a satisfactory contribution to other subjects. When younger pupils tap out the rhythm of their name it helps to reinforce their awareness of words splitting into syllables. Throughout the school, it encourages pupils to listen carefully. Similarly, lessons that talk about the structure of music encourage mathematical concepts, and pupils use computer software to help them represent musical moods with symbols and sounds. While the coordinator has made a good contribution to the development of this subject, the leadership of the subject is sound overall. This is because the role has not been used to take action to accelerate improvements in pupils' standards of attainment.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

157. Standards by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with those expected. No difference was noted in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils are making satisfactory progress. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the school's previous inspection.
158. By the end of Year 2, pupils move confidently around the hall, showing clear awareness of space and other pupils. Pupils in Year 2 confidently develop the gymnastic skills of climbing, jumping and rolling, using both the floor and suitable apparatus and introducing appropriate balances into their work. They successfully work with a partner to produce a sequence of movements involving mirror-images. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 readily develop their skills of

moving with a ball and passing it to a partner, showing appropriate accuracy and control. They improve their skills by undertaking simple rounders and tennis activities. Pupils understand and explain the need to warm up for, and recover from, exercise.

159. By the end of Year 6, in games, pupils successfully develop their bowling, throwing, hitting and fielding skills, and they show appropriate levels of performance, in catching in particular. Most control a ball well when using a bat, and they strike the ball accurately. Pupils develop their skills further when taking part in small-sided team games based on cricket. Pupils in a number of classes readily develop their athletic skills of running, throwing and jumping. Most show the expected levels of skill, displaying suitable techniques and control in all areas. All pupils in Key Stage 2 go swimming during the year, and by the end of Year 6 about 80 per cent of pupils swim at least 25 metres unaided. They show suitable swimming techniques in a range of swimming strokes. Pupils recognise and explain some of the effects that exercise has on their bodies.
160. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some good practice was also observed during the inspection. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers provide suitable planning, clear instruction and careful demonstration, together with a varied range of resources, allowing all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make satisfactory gains in their physical skills. All members of staff change appropriately for lessons, and they regularly join in the activities with pupils, which helps the pupils identify ways in which they might improve their present performance. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and have suitable expectations of the pupils' performance. Where the teaching is good, where the teacher is confident, provides particularly good instruction and coaching and has high expectations, pupils make good gains in their skills and techniques. In all lessons, pupils join in appropriately and make a satisfactory physical effort. Lessons are generally conducted at a lively pace, with teachers showing good control and management skills. Teachers usually take the opportunity to use pupils to demonstrate good practice, but opportunities are often missed for the pupils to discuss the quality of the work seen, to identify the ways in which they might develop their own work further. Teachers and teaching assistants provide help and support to pupils in all aspects of their work, and this contributes towards their progress. In turn, pupils show good attitudes, enjoying themselves, working well, especially with a partner or group, and carrying equipment carefully and safely, as requested by staff.
161. The school now has a suitable scheme of work, based on the government's curricular guidelines, and all appropriate aspects of work are covered well. The resources to support all aspects of work are also much improved. The coordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and, through seeing plans and keeping photographs, she is fully aware of the work being tackled. As yet, she has little opportunity to observe lessons taking place, in order to see for herself the standards being achieved. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, with suitable information being recorded about individual pupils to identify both their current attainment and the progress they are making. Activities involving counting and measuring, in various aspects of physical education, especially in relation to athletic activities, give appropriate support to the school's initiatives to develop pupils' numeracy skills. The school makes good provision for extra-curricular sporting activities and the school has a number of successful sports teams. These activities contribute well to the development of pupils' social skills. The school also has a number of more able pupils, who have been helped to gain recognition in various representative teams, for example in swimming and athletics.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

162. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the major world religions. There are no discernible differences between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils make satisfactory progress between Years 3 and 6 because teachers closely follow the locally agreed syllabus which is planned to ensure progression. These standards represent good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below those expected by the end of Year 6 because the subject had not been taught throughout the school.

163. During the inspection, only one purely religious education lesson was seen for pupils in Year 2 and, while music and art lessons used the creation story as a starting point, no discrete religious education lessons were seen in Year 1. It is not possible, therefore to make a secure judgement about pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching and learning for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school submitted a sample of work from these year groups for analysis, but this sample was understandably small. This work indicates that teachers are planning and providing the agreed syllabus. However, given the nature of the subject, which involves much discussion in order to meet the attainment target to 'learn from religion', and the immaturity of pupils' writing at this age, the sample does not provide secure evidence of standards. Nevertheless, in the one lesson seen in Year 2, pupils had a good knowledge and understanding of recent work on Judaism and confidently used relevant vocabulary, such as 'synagogue' and 'Torah'.
164. Although the teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2, teachers are still finding their way with the subject and the syllabus, which is currently under review. The coordinator has helped to ensure that staff understand the locally agreed syllabus and follow it assiduously. This enables them to give accurate information at a suitable pace. Strengths in the teaching of religious education lie in the management of pupils' behaviour which helps pupils to develop positive attitudes to the subject. This is evident in the thoughtful and sensible responses that pupils make in their books and which develop as they mature. For example, after a lesson about symbols, one pupil in Year 4 wrote that a wedding ring symbolised love that 'will never break'.
165. Following the agreed syllabus so closely means teachers give pupils suitable opportunities to make links between religious beliefs and their own lives. The ability to reflect upon their knowledge and understanding in religious education and apply it to their own lives is a basic skill in the subject. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are willing to attempt this. This was apparent in work in Year 6 based on information about Ghandi and his response to racist treatment. Pupils were asked to imagine and write how they would have reacted in similar situations. Pupils with more secure literacy skills understandably express their feelings more fully than those who find writing more difficult. These pupils describe their responses in terms of straightforward action. Examples such as these indicate that the subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
166. Opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in religious education are satisfactory. For example, older pupils report the raising of Lazarus in the style of a newspaper report. However, teachers do not consistently exploit these opportunities to develop pupils' literacy skills by addressing the spelling of the subject's vocabulary, or how pupils develop their ideas. Lessons which link religious education with subjects such as art or music have the potential to enrich the curriculum. However, teachers do not always identify a clear learning outcome that relates to religious education and so risk not exploiting the learning opportunities fully. The use of mathematics in the subject is limited. However, pupils in Year 3 made good use of recent work on capacity to estimate how many cups of water it would take to fill a small table-top font. The school has made a satisfactory start to using information and communication technology, which is identified in planning for each year group.
167. The coordinator is well aware that the next step is to raise standards further by using teachers' new-found confidence and increasing their expectations of pupils. Because she looks at samples of pupils' work, she has identified that standards are increasing for younger pupils. Very few of the oldest pupils, who have had less of their time in school with the subject being taught conscientiously, make comparisons between religions or between their views and the beliefs of others. However, greater proportions of younger pupils are developing from describing and explaining religious beliefs to the more advanced skill of comparing views. Although the subject is led soundly, the coordinator's knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in the subject are not fully exploited to raise standards of pupils' attainment or the quality of teaching.