

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SHEPHERDS DOWN SCHOOL**

Winchester

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116642

Headteacher: Tony Gazzard

Reporting inspector: George Derby  
25349

Dates of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number: 253869

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shepherds Lane Compton Winchester
Postcode:	SO21 2AJ
Telephone number:	(01962) 713445
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	John Arrow
Date of previous inspection:	26 <sup>th</sup> June 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Shepherds Down is a larger than average maintained day special school catering for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), speech and communication difficulties or autism. A few pupils have sensory impairment. There are, currently, 112 pupils on roll between the ages of 4 and 12. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected for their age. Only 16 pupils are entitled to free school meals, a low number. Two pupils have English as an additional language, but none are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Nearly all the pupils are white; there are two pupils of Asian or Asian British Indian origin and one mixed White and Black Caribbean. Three quarters of the pupils are boys. The school is undergoing its second major re-organisation in five years and will become a primary special school catering for the needs of pupils with a very wide range of disabilities (including pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties) in September 2003. Major building work, to extend and re-furbish the site, has been undertaken over the past two years. Three new teachers have been appointed and pupils with a wider range of needs are being admitted. The school also provides 'outreach' support for pupils in mainstream schools.

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

Shepherds Down is an effective school, which has some very good and excellent features to its work. Despite the considerable disruption and change over the past two years, the school's focus has remained firmly centred on meeting the needs of its pupils and preparing for the changing population. The headteacher's leadership and vision for the school is excellent. The school very strongly reflects its aims in all that it does. It promotes pupils' personal development very well. It also enables pupils to achieve much academically. As a result of all this, and despite the major upheaval staff and pupils have had to contend with, pupils make good gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects and achieve well. The quality of teaching is good. Pupils' response in lessons, and their enthusiasm for school, is very good. The school is managed well. The school gives good value for money.

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

- There is an excellent commitment to pupils' academic achievements and for pupils' personal development; personal development is supported very well, especially through the very good range of spiritual and social opportunities provided.
- The provision in English and for pupils' communication skills is very good.
- The leadership of the school is excellent; the vision for the future development of the school and the strategic planning are also excellent.
- The quality of teaching is good and pupils progress well; long-established staff are very experienced and have a very good knowledge of the pupils' needs and especially of those with autism.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress and the use of data to analyse the school's performance is very strong.

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

- The role that subject co-ordinators play in leading and developing their subjects, especially in the monitoring of planning and teaching.
- Aspects of health, safety and accommodation, some of which affect subject provision, and the amount of resources for information and communication technology (ICT).

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

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

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in June 1998. Despite the upheaval over the past few years and the considerable burden on the headteacher in dealing with the building programme and all its problems, the school has maintained its strengths and improved where there were weaknesses. Considerable work has gone into improving teachers' planning and assessment and this is generally good, although in parts of the school there is some inconsistency. Individual education plans are of good quality and now address those aspects which relate specifically to pupils' special educational needs; clear ways of assessing whether the targets have been met are in place. The school does not have any activities outside

school hours, such as clubs, but has provided good quality residential experiences which pupils have benefited from greatly and during lunchtime very good play opportunities are organised for pupils. The school is exceptionally well placed to improve further.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

<b>Progress in:</b>	<b>by Year R</b>	<b>by Year 6</b>	<b>Key</b>	
speaking, and listening	A	A	very good	A
reading	A	A	good	B
writing	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education (PSHE)	A	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in their individual education plans (IEPs)	A	A		

Pupils' achievements are good overall across the school. They are particularly good for pupils' communication (using spoken language, symbols and signs) and the way teachers, support staff and speech and language therapists work together to focus on pupils' needs is very strong. The use of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) helps pupils to develop ways of communicating with others and to identify their needs and wants. This has become well established over the past two years and 'exchanges' are now being planned in informal social situations such as in the dining room at lunchtime. Across the school, pupils' progress is very good in literacy and good in numeracy. The use of PECS and the systematic teaching of sounds in words has strengthened pupils' reading skills, as has the very good attention to the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils regularly share books and are heard to read. Pupils make good progress in writing, although in some classes there is little use of computers to support the writing for those pupils who could benefit from this. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and has had a positive effect on pupils' progress. The progress which pupils make in ICT is satisfactory but could be a lot better. Pupils have just begun to be taught in a systematic way but with too few computers available, at present, their ability to practise what they have learned over the week is limited. Pupils' progress in relation to their targets in IEPs is very good. These are closely related to the pupils' specific needs and often related to improving their communication or other personal skills. The school has set targets for raising whole school attainment, as it is statutorily required to do. The school's current target was to maintain the previous level set for 'average' progress. This is entirely appropriate in the school's very difficult circumstances, although the school is well on the way to exceeding this. The provision for pupils with autism is very good and they make very good progress because their needs are well understood. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls, pupils with English as an additional language or by pupils from minority ethnic groups.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils arrive cheerfully at school and settle quickly to lessons. They are interested and responsive. They become very involved in all school activities and show pride in their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. This is an orderly school community where the pupils behave well in the classroom and playground. They are reported to behave very well on school trips and out in the community. Pupils are kind to one another and mix amicably together. Occasional difficult behaviour caused as a result of a few pupils' complex communication difficulties is dealt with very effectively and sensitively.
Personal development and relationships	Very good and a significant strength of the school. Pupils grow in independence and confidence as they proceed through the school. Pupils' very good communication skills and the high quality of their personal relationships give pupils the ability to cope in a wide range of situations.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance figures are high for this type of school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 - 6
Lessons seen overall	good	good

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

The quality of teaching is good. Nearly all the teaching was satisfactory or better, although a very small amount, mainly by staff relatively new to the needs of the pupils, was unsatisfactory. However, this is not typical of the quality of the teaching and an examination of pupils' work confirms this. Overall, the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the pupils' needs is one of the strongest features of teaching, especially of those pupils with autism. The teachers' very good management of pupils and the high quality of support by teaching assistants contributes to effective teaching. As a result of the interesting ways of teaching, including the use of multi-sensory approaches, pupils work hard in lessons. Teachers work very hard to provide meaningful and interesting experiences to help their pupils learn, although their planning does not always show outcomes for individual pupils or groups and there is some inconsistency in its quality. Work, however, is usually well planned to meet the pupils' needs and, even if teachers have not provided detailed written plans, they have a clear view in their minds as to what they want pupils to achieve. Computers are increasingly being used to support pupils' learning, but the practice is not yet consistent across the school and there are missed opportunities for this to support pupils' writing. Information and communication technology is soundly taught, although the methods teachers use are narrow because of a limited availability of equipment. The teaching of English (including literacy) is very good; there is generally very strong support for pupils' communication, although occasionally some staff miss opportunities for promoting the use of sign and symbols. The teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is good. Skilful questioning supports pupils' understanding well. The teaching of science is satisfactory with good attention given to practical work, although more thought needs to be given to how pupils plan and undertake investigations. The teaching of pupils with autism is very good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Staff have worked hard to ensure that the planning aids pupils' progress; activities are interesting and very relevant to the pupils' needs. This is the third revision of planning since the last inspection and has been revised to take into account the needs of the new pupils the school will have on its roll. Most teachers plan in detail, state specifically what pupils are to learn, relate this to longer-term programmes and evaluate the effectiveness of their planning. However, there is some variability in this across the school. There is a suitably wide range of subjects taught. The provision for pupils with autism is very good and meets their needs very well. Links with mainstream schools are very good and a small number of pupils transfer there each year. The community, and visits to support many subjects, are very well used to enhance pupils' learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Spiritual development is very well promoted through assemblies, lessons, the celebration of festivals and the care for pupils' individual needs. Social development is very good because pupils communicate with peers and adults in a wide range of social settings. The opportunities for moral and cultural development are good, although better planning could introduce pupils to a wider range of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural experiences.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides very good quality educational and personal support and guidance. Staff know the pupils well and work well together to promote pupils' personal welfare. Child protection procedures are satisfactory, although there has been little staff training recently. Health and safety measures are sound but some aspects need improvement. Assessment procedures are very good. The use of the information to guide planning is good. The school analyses this information very well and uses the data effectively for target setting.

Links with parents are very good. There is a very effective partnership between school and home.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good with very good features. The headteacher provides an extremely clear educational direction and provides excellent leadership. The school's strategic plan is highly comprehensive. The management of the school is good. The senior management team are an effective group. They, and the subject co-ordinators, have their responsibilities clearly defined, although there are currently inconsistencies in the monitoring of planning and, in the past year, there has been little monitoring of teaching. All staff support the school's aims and values exceptionally well.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors are highly supportive and the chair, in particular, supports the school well and is well informed. Governors fulfil their statutory duties adequately and gain a wealth of information from the LEA, the headteacher and subject leaders to monitor the school's work. Some governors have spent time in school monitoring the subjects they are responsible for or aspects of the school's work such as Annual Reviews. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement as a result.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and senior staff have been instrumental in checking on the quality of teaching in the recent past. The headteacher's monitoring has been highly comprehensive. Although teaching is monitored through the school's very effective performance management systems, there have been few checks on the quality of teaching across subjects or in specific areas of the school's work over the past year. However, the headteacher has a highly detailed knowledge of the school and its performance through assessment data collected. Co-ordinators' roles need extending so that they check on all aspects of quality and standards in their subjects. However, review of school improvement targets and action is highly evaluative.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial planning procedures are of a very good quality and very effectively overseen by the finance officer and the governor responsible for finance. Finance is very well linked to school improvement priorities. Governors are highly effective in monitoring the budget.

Despite the school's best efforts to improve facilities, some aspects of the accommodation have a negative affect on pupils' learning and on their health and safety. There is good speech and language therapy provision but occupational therapy has been withdrawn recently. The school applies best value principles very well.

## 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>• Pupils like school and are well taught.</li> <li>• Parents feel welcome approaching the school for help or to make a suggestion.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Children are helped to become mature.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work pupils get to do at home.</li> <li>• The re-instating of occupational therapy.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Parents are generally pleased with all that the school does. The inspection team supports all of their positive comments. Some parents are concerned about the range of activities outside lessons but the inspection team considers that the provision of activities at lunchtime and at other times is good and residential trips very good. Some doubts were expressed about the amount of homework but the inspectors conclude that the work the pupils are encouraged to do at home is appropriate. Occupational therapy provision is now insufficient to meet the needs of pupils, as outlined in their Statements and Annual Reviews.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**There is an excellent commitment to pupils' academic achievements and for pupils' personal development; personal development is supported very well, especially through the very good range of spiritual and social opportunities provided.**

1. The headteacher inspires and motivates the staff team exceptionally well. He values their contributions and guides them to make improvements where needed. This also applies to the pupils who respect and value his approval when showing him their work or telling him what they have done. Because everyone is highly valued, staff and pupils in turn value each other. High levels of respect for individuals permeate everything the school does.
2. The commitment to make things better and to ensure that pupils do their very best is high. This is central to the ethos of the school and is reflected in all that it does. The quality of educational and personal support for pupils is also high and is very well supported by the wide range of staff working in the school, especially the team of speech and language therapists. As a result, the pupils make very good progress in their personal development and especially in their ability to communicate with peers and staff. Pupils love school and enter their classrooms enthusiastically at the beginning of the day, ready for work. Parents say that their children would like to be at school during the holidays. There are very good, trusting relationships between staff and pupils and these result in the pupils' very positive attitudes and very good behaviour. Even where the pupils' behaviour, because of their special educational needs, is problematic, staff handle them sensitively (but firmly); this minimises the effects of this and pupils quickly calm and continue their work.
3. Detailed attention is given to pupils' individual needs and very careful assessment results in well detailed and planned individual education plans and programmes to support learning. Pupils with complex learning difficulties, especially communication needs, are very well catered for. This is because of the very good teamwork between staff, particularly with the school's therapists. Support staff and teachers carry out the programmes designed by the therapists very well. The school makes considerable efforts to ensure that all the provision outlined in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need is available and is currently campaigning to re-secure the allocation of occupational therapy recently withdrawn from the school. The school views as important the contribution that all staff make to pupils' learning, identifying that it is the 'whole' contribution which adds to the success of pupils' achievements. It had planned specialist accommodation for the 'new' school and an approach for even more improved integrated working, some of which cannot now go ahead.
4. Lessons in personal, social and health education contribute very positively to pupils' personal development, especially in raising pupils' self-esteem. Pupils are also given many opportunities to work together, collaborate and research in lessons generally. This contributes very well to their social development and ability to get on with one another. Residential visits and the very good use of the local environment also add much to pupils' relationships and understanding of the society they live in. The school considerably values the opportunities pupils can gain from placements at mainstream school, both socially and academically. It has very clear guidance for staff which outlines how pupils will be identified for individual inclusion/integration programmes, the roles to be taken by school and home, how pupils and mainstream school staff will be supported by school staff and the processes that will be followed when pupils have experiences in mainstream (including record keeping). Records show that 34 pupils have transferred to mainstream since the last inspection; the planning for the support and transition of pupils is very thorough. Plans for future developments are positive. The school has now acquired a base in a mainstream school for which it is responsible and plans are in place to provide even more extended opportunities for a wider range of pupils. In addition, the school provides support for pupils who are not on its roll but are on the roll of mainstream schools. This 'outreach' provision is very well managed and schools report that the support received from Shepherds Down is very good. This is confirmed by inspection findings.
5. Assemblies, religious education lessons, display and the school's care for individual needs contribute significantly to pupils' spiritual development. Religious education contributes well because of respect shown by pupils during activities. Drama also makes a significant contribution and staff plan well to

create 'wonder' in lessons, such as when lights were dimmed and 'wind' blew in a lesson during the inspection. Display celebrates good work and gives it status in pupils' eyes. Assemblies instil joy in pupils and provide time for reflection.

**The provision in English and for pupils' communication skills is very good.**

6. The staff have a very good understanding of pupils' communication needs and how to promote the wider aspects of English. The use of the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) has had a very positive effect on helping pupils to communicate using symbols and is now being expanded beyond the classroom into social settings such as lunchtime.
7. This very good provision is due to very good teaching and because a very wide range of activities is provided in lessons which motivates and inspires pupils. Teachers' enthusiasm for books, stories and poems inspires pupils' interest and involvement. It stimulates them to give their views. Instructions and questions in lessons stated by staff are very clear and help pupils to take part. Activities and resources are always well-prepared. They include toys and articles that are attractive to the pupils and help their understanding. Some of the most useful materials are teacher-made. Lessons often include music, rap and songs to set a mood or show teaching points. Games are used well. There is much shared 'fun' - for example, when Year 5 pupils found rhyming words in a story. There is thorough teaching of letter sounds, spellings, rhymes, grammar and word and simple sentence structures. Some excellent teaching of how to use strategies for reading were seen in lessons in Year 2 and 3 and excellent adult-made books for pupils in these year groups are based on pupils' own experiences. They include very good quality photographs and simple text that includes the high frequency words the pupils are learning. Very good teaching of PECS was seen in Year 3. This included excellent multi-sensory work where a book was made for pupils with severe communication difficulties that followed the story in the class 'big book'. Reading of the story included exciting sensory experiences, such as travelling in the 'tunnel' through a long black cloth. Adults are very encouraging of pupils and discipline is strong. Pupils are inspired to follow their lead and praise each other. Lesson and communications are paced well, with adults giving pupils sufficient time to work out their ideas and answers. Drama is very good and enriches learning in many subjects, such as through the role-play of Florence Nightingale in history. Book bags and choosing books to take home in the well stocked library helps pupils to extend their experiences of literature. The wide range of different types of books especially for younger pupils helps this. Good teamwork is evident and the high quality teaching assistants teach individuals and groups well. Pupils' performance is carefully monitored and sometimes assessed more formally. Pupils learn very well in lessons and records show that they achieve very well. The standards of handwriting are strong, although writing could be better promoted for some pupils by the use of ICT. Pupils love having opportunities to choose books and toys and respond well to these.
8. The key features of other aspects of English provision are:
  - the very good way the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented;
  - the very good leadership and management by the co-ordinator;
  - the high quality of the assessments made on pupils so teachers clearly know where pupils' skills lie and where they need to improve. This includes the breaking down of the 'P' levels (pre-National Curriculum attainment levels) into targets for planning and assessment;
  - the sharing of ideas about work for lower attaining pupils between teachers, assistants and speech and language therapists;
  - the special approaches for teaching phonics and to help pupils with communication difficulties;
  - the strength of the previous, present and future targets for development with costings;
  - the good quality training for staff in specific approaches and programmes to help pupils with communication difficulties; and
  - the very good plans to further develop the use of signing (Makaton), PECS and the social use of language programmes (SULP), including the use of the computer for pupils to produce their own symbols.

**The leadership of the school is excellent; the vision for the future development of the school and the strategic planning are also excellent.**

9. During the past five years the headteacher has very successfully led the school through a period of considerable change and in the recent past through a massive upheaval due to major building work. In 2001 and 2002, the school gained an Achievement Award and has been judged as 'highly effective' by the LEA.
10. The headteacher's exceptionally high standards and commitment to the school has meant that he has successfully brought the school through this period of potential instability with the minimum of disruption to the pupils, ensuring little impact on their achievements. In fact, the school's targets for pupils' progress (set in liaison with the local education authority and taking into account the possible negative effects on the pupils' learning) have been exceeded.
11. Maintaining progress and staff morale has been central to all the headteacher's thinking and planning. Strategic planning is exceptionally detailed with priorities very clearly identified and strategies to achieve these employed. Financial planning is very carefully considered in the light of the identified priorities and the progress of the budget monitored very carefully. Governors consider very well the value for money they get and whether cost effectiveness is achieved. The steps taken to achieve effective transition in terms of what the 'new' school might look like in the future are very well defined. Plans are also reviewed and modified in a way which allows flexibility, especially when responding to pupils' changing needs. Excellent analysis of the school's successes and areas for further improvement are discussed with senior managers as well as with the well informed governing body. A governor appointed with detailed knowledge of the new intake of pupils is helping to support further governors' understanding of the issues facing the school and the planning needed to ensure pupils' needs are met from the outset.
12. Staff have generally been very well prepared and consulted on the arrangements for the considerably different school planned from September 2003. The headteacher has made considerable effort to reassure them, especially during staff re-organisation and transfers to other schools. The transition through this period has been exceptionally smooth, although pupils and staff have had to be re-located to different parts of the building at short notice. He has been very well supported by the highly competent senior management team which have taken on board their key responsibilities very well. They have been a great support to staff and pupils although their monitoring role has somewhat lessened and become more informal because of all the pressures placed upon the school. Recently, because of major building problems, some which have potentially affected the health and safety of pupils, the headteacher has had to assume a role as 'project manager', having to negotiate alterations to the building with architects and site staff mid-way through the work. Correspondence shows this has taken a considerable amount of time and energy and there are still many outstanding accommodation issues.

**The quality of teaching is good and pupils progress well; long-established staff are very experienced and have a very good knowledge of the pupils' needs and especially of those with autism.**

13. The single most successful aspect of teaching is the teachers' very good knowledge of their pupils. The staff have a high commitment to improving their knowledge and expertise and this has broadened over the past year in preparation for the new pupils the school is to take. Some weaknesses in the knowledge of the pupils' complex needs by new staff, however, led to a few pupils not being sufficiently included in two lessons during the inspection. However, even taking this into account, staff generally have a wealth of expertise. Teachers take very good account of pupils' targets stated in their individual education plans in lessons. These clearly address the most important things a pupil needs to learn, although, occasionally, targets could be 'smarter' (that is, have clearer objectives and better ways of evaluating the success of them). As a result of this very good attention, pupils make very good progress towards their targets.
14. The school's programme for improving teaching knowledge and staff training for all staff is generally very well focused on what staff need to do to better meet the needs of the pupils. The headteacher and governors have been careful to appoint staff who have the potential to work effectively with pupils with complex needs, but who can also utilise any mainstream curriculum knowledge if they have worked recently in such schools.

15. The knowledge that staff have of pupils with autism is a significant strength. Pupils, whether taught separately in the school's special classes or included in the main classes, are sensitively managed and the key things they need to learn are focused on very strongly in lessons. A significant factor in the success of teaching pupils with autism is the close attention given to pupils' communication skills. The promotion of the Picture Exchange Communication System practice is of very high quality. The contribution of the speech and language therapist (SALT) to lessons and pupils' plans is very good. Close collaborative working takes place and teaching assistants are instrumental in teaching programmes designed by the SALT. Class teachers provided sensory experiences and support their teaching with symbols, and sometimes signs, and through pictures, toys, models and real articles. Ideas from specialist ways of teaching pupils with autism are incorporated well into teaching. The social use of language programme (SULP) is also used well by teachers to help pupils use language, learn how to behave and to negotiate in a variety of social contexts. Signing could be used more consistently at times, however, to provide a total system of communication for pupils.
16. Teachers generally plan their lessons very effectively, provide very interesting experiences and think carefully about the approaches to be adopted, based on the best ways the pupils learn. The work matches the needs of the pupils well and pupils are managed very well, especially those with the most complex needs. The assessments they make about their pupils' learning and the evaluations of their lessons result in good adjustments being made to subsequent planning. However, the outcome for the class as a whole is only shown in lesson plans, although pupils have different experiences and opportunities to meet their particular needs. Teachers do, however, have clear in their own minds what they want the different pupils to learn but to sharpen teachers' planning and assessment further, the intended outcomes for the different groups of pupils should be listed.
17. Computers are increasingly being used to support pupils' learning, but the practice is not yet consistent across the school and there are missed opportunities to use this to support pupils' writing. Although a few good examples were seen, there is little use of computers to support pupils' additional special educational needs, especially in communication, language and literacy.

**The monitoring of pupils' progress and the use of data to analyse the school's performance is very strong.**

18. The school prides itself in knowing its pupils very well and collecting information about how they are doing. This is done very well and the headteacher takes a central role in analysing data in order to identify patterns and trends in pupils' learning and responding to any issues which arise. This has been undertaken year-on-year since 1999 and the school now has amassed a good database on which to identify trends and patterns and plan.
19. The school is not complacent and uses this data to seek ways to further improve. For instance, as a result of checking National Curriculum and P level data, the school identified that pupils did not make as much progress (although it was still viewed as good) in science, especially in investigation and experimentation, as they had in the past. This led to the school engaging an adviser to work with staff (and pupils) to look at how this element of science work could be made relevant for the pupils at Shepherds Down. This worked well and showed significant improvement in planning, especially relating to pupils' observational skills, interpretation of what they saw and in making predictions.
20. Analysis of the 2002 National Curriculum test results and pupils' P levels confirmed that the pupils met their potential but this also allowed the school to set challenging targets so they could do better. Inspection evidence suggests that these targets are likely to be exceeded. This was set at an average of one P level and took into account the massive potential disruption to pupils' learning that was likely to occur in 2002 – 2003. Analysis of P level data by individual year group takes place and shows that the school as a whole is maintaining good rates of progress and it is as a result of the headteacher and staff's commitment to ensure a smooth transition that this has occurred. When the school compared its progress with other similar pupils through the LEA database it also confirmed that the pupils at Shepherds Down make better than average progress. The school compares itself with other schools nationally through taking part in a survey by the University of Durham. This too has confirmed that pupils make good progress or better.

21. Information is shared with governors and they receive comprehensive information on pupils' performance. Subject co-ordinators use the information in their development planning so they too can address any issues at a subject level.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The role that subject co-ordinators play in leading and developing their subjects, especially in the monitoring of planning and teaching.**

22. The school's commitment to improvement is high and very rigorous monitoring of teaching and standards in the recent past, by the headteacher, has led to significant improvement in provision and especially teaching. Similarly, the school's own past records show that co-ordinators for the key areas of the school's work and subjects have thoroughly checked planning, teaching and pupils' work.
23. However, since the major building work has begun and staff changes have been made, the school's monitoring has become less rigorous and less formal and much attention has gone into the smooth re-location of staff and pupils around the building as different phases of building work have been undertaken. The headteacher's continued highly thorough analysis of pupils' progress, however, and the data relating to their attainment helps the school set very accurate targets to improve whole school performance. Key staff still check on planning and analyse pupils' work from time-to-time, although weaknesses are not always picked up quickly enough to resolve any issues, especially with some new staff recently appointed. For instance, planning is generally very thoroughly undertaken by staff, but some staff do not provide plans to the same high standard as the rest. Evaluations made after lessons help teachers improve their plans and assessments made on pupils help teachers re-visit work or modify their approach. However, this is not undertaken consistently by all staff. During the inspection, there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. This was due to some lack of awareness by temporary or new staff regarding the complex needs of a few pupils. Although there is a good programme of support to incoming staff, not enough has been done to check that the guidance they have been given has been followed, especially given the complex make-up of some classes.
24. The headteacher has devised a modified (and improved) management structure for the 'new' school in September 2003. This shows a clear view on improving the monitoring and evaluation of aspects of the school's work and role of subject leaders now that the school's roll and staffing complement will be stable.

### **Aspects of health, safety and the accommodation, some of which affect subject provision, and the amount of resources for ICT.**

25. The school's building work is now in its final stage and a significant improvement in the accommodation has already been achieved. Over the past 12 months the headteacher has worked considerably hard to manage the building project and ensure that the new facilities meet the needs of all pupils the school is to take in the future. However, there are still some serious accommodation deficiencies which affect the health and safety of pupils and their ability to learn. The following issues are outstanding:
- there is insufficient classroom space for children in Reception to access all areas of learning - teachers have to limit the activities that take place;
  - there is no separate outdoor play facility for pupils in Reception - it takes too long to gain access to wheeled toys and climbing apparatus in another part of the outdoor environment;
  - the soft play room has hard, exposed surfaces with little ventilation it becomes excessively hot and pupils could injure themselves;
  - classrooms are poorly ventilated and become excessively stuffy in hot weather - pupils get very hot and teachers have to be extra vigilant when doors are left open to let air circulate;
  - there are no facilities for pupils to shower after swimming in the hydrotherapy pool;

- the noise from traffic near the school is considerable - pupils on the school field find it difficult to hear each other and in the staffroom it is difficult for staff to hear each other when windows are open.
26. Other significant problems have already been rectified, such as the re-positioning of windows in classrooms so pupils do not injure themselves against these. Risk assessments are made for general activities the school undertakes. However, these need to extend further so that the school makes assessments on some individuals, taking account of their particular special educational needs and the activities and location these take place in.
27. The resources for ICT are limited. They have improved over recent years and are due to increase further over the next 12 months. The school has a strong commitment to improving facilities but a number of factors, including the recent building work, have mitigated immediate development. The resourcing of a computer suite is under way and the school recognises the need to purchase and use a greater range of software for the wider range of needs it will have in the future. At present, there is some use of software to support pupils' writing, self-expression and learning generally but this needs to extend much further. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop a programme of work so that pupils learn skills which they can build upon and make progress in ICT. All staff now follow this consistently and systematically and pupils now make satisfactory progress. Teachers think carefully about how ICT can be used in lessons, such as when planning science lessons. However, the pupils are capable of achieving more than they do at present. This is because there are only one or two computers in each classroom and they have limited access to practise their skills.

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

28. In order to improve the educational standards and rectify the weaknesses the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

**Increase the role the senior management team and co-ordinators play in the monitoring and development of the school's work and their subjects, especially the monitoring of teaching;**

*(Paragraphs: 22 - 24)*

**Improve the accommodation (in the areas listed below) where this affects pupils' health and safety and ability to learn, and increasing ICT resources in line with current plans so that pupils have regular access to use computers to support their learning and practise ICT skills in order to raise attainment further by:**

- increasing the indoor space for pupils in Reception;
- providing separate outdoor play facilities and resources for pupils in Reception;
- ensuring that the soft play room is safe, properly ventilated and is sufficiently cool in hot weather;
- ensuring that the classrooms are properly ventilated and are sufficiently cool in hot weather;
- ensuring pupils have facilities to shower after swimming;
- reducing the level of traffic noise, especially for pupils with limited attention; and
- ensuring that all risks, including those that relate to individual pupils, are assessed.

*(Paragraphs: 25 - 27)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	10	18	5	3	0	0
Percentage	3	27	49	13	8	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	112
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

\*The school considers that all pupils are learning English as a language additional to British Sign Language, although for most pupils this is not their home language.

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.3

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4

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

## Attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6

Too few pupils took the National Curriculum tests or award bearing examinations to report their results.

### 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
108	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	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
0	0	0

The table 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)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7
Average class size	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	29
Total aggregate hours worked per week	787

### Financial information

Financial year	2002-03
	£
Total income	1,144,834
Total expenditure	1,144,562
Expenditure per pupil	10,129
Balance brought forward from previous year	24,945
Balance carried forward to next year	25,217

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.5

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	112
Number of questionnaires returned	60

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	17	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	33	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	43	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	42	9	0	6
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	72	25	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	15	0	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.	72	27	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	87	12	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	74	25	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	15	7	6	7