

INSPECTION REPORT

SHIRWELL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Shirwell, Barnstaple

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113167

Headteacher: Mrs Theresa Winter

Reporting inspector: Mrs Rowena Onions
18354

Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th May 2002

Inspection number: 189905

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 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Lane
Shirwell
Barnstaple
Devon

Postcode: EX31 4JT

Telephone number: 01271 850295

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Linda Matthews

Date of previous inspection: October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18354	Rowena Onions	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Information and communication technology Music The Foundation Stage English as an additional language	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
9756	Ken Parsons	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
14997	Valerie Emery	Team inspector	English Design and technology Geography History Religious education Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs	Quality and range of opportunities for learning

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Shirwell Community Primary School is a school of well below average size, with 45 pupils on roll. The school caters for pupils from the age of four to 11 years, with a broadly equal number of boys and girls. At the time of the inspection, there were four children in the reception year and one nursery age child attending for two mornings per week. All these children had been in the school for only three weeks. The children enter the reception class with a range of attainment, but overall, this is about average. Ninety-five per cent of pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. There are two pupils on roll for whom English is an additional language. These pupils speak English fluently. The school is situated in Shirwell village. As well as drawing from the village and surrounding rural area, the school attracts a proportion of its pupils from outside its catchment area. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals is well below the national average, at less than three per cent. There are three pupils (seven per cent) currently identified on the school's special educational needs register. This is below the national average. Two pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need and the third is awaiting one. These three pupils all have complex physical or learning difficulties.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Shirwell Community Primary School is an effective and improving school. It provides a good education for its pupils. The quality of the teaching they receive is good and they achieve well in many subjects. Standards understandably vary between year groups, but are generally above average in English and mathematics. Pupils achieve well during their time in the school. The pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good. The school is able to provide this good quality education in a challenging situation, where there is a wide range of ages of pupils in each of its two classes, because it is very well led and reflects well on its own practice in order to further improve. Despite its high costs, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school provides an environment in which all adults work together as a team and each individual pupil is valued, supported and suitably challenged. Relationships throughout the school are excellent.
- Standards in English, mathematics, art and design and design and technology are above average overall. Pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The leadership and management by the headteacher and governors are very good.
- Pupils receive excellent moral and social education and as a result, their attitudes and behaviour are very good and they are a pleasure to meet.
- The provision for pupils with complex special educational needs is excellent.

What could be improved

- The way the school day and the teaching week are organised to make the best use of time and to provide a better balance of activities for the pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has shown very good improvement since the time of its last inspection in October 1996. Standards have risen in English, mathematics, science, art and design, history, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. The curriculum is now suitably organised to ensure that pupils progressively build their skills and knowledge in all subjects. The working week has been extended, but best use is still not made of all time in the working day. The quality of teaching has risen, as has the quality of leadership and management. The staff work very closely together to improve the school and keep the parents aware of the changes that are happening. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved. All statutory requirements are now met. The school's accommodation is substantially better than at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A*	E	D	E
mathematics	A*	E	B	C
science	A*	C	C	D

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

Care needs to be taken when looking at these results because as a small school, standards naturally fluctuate from year to year, being affected by the small number of pupils in each group.

The children in the current reception class had only been in school three weeks at the time of the inspection. They were settling well into school and making good gains in aspects of their personal development such as confidence and independence. In Years 2 and 6, pupils have achieved well in English and mathematics. In 2001, Year 2 pupils attained standards that were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the current Year 2 group, standards in mathematics are well above average and they are above average in reading and writing. Comparison with the assessments made of this group when they entered the school shows that they have made good progress. Despite some fluctuation, standards at the end of Year 6 have risen at a rate greater than most schools nationally. The school makes good use of assessment information to set suitably challenging targets for pupils, and teachers and pupils work hard to ensure that these are attained. In 2001, standards attained by Year 6 pupils were above average in mathematics, but below average in English. Inspection evidence shows that this year, pupils are attaining above average standards in English and average standards in mathematics. In both year groups, pupils have made good progress since Year 2. Standards in mathematics in Year 6, however, could be higher and the pupils could have made even better progress. They are adversely affected by the fact that they have received mathematics teaching on only four days a week. Standards in science are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Most pupils achieve in a satisfactory way, but a small number of potentially higher attaining pupils are not achieving as much as they could because there is insufficient time allocated to the teaching of science and too few demands are placed upon them. Standards in art and design and design and technology are above average throughout the school. Standards in other subjects are largely average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like school and participate very well in lessons and with the activities provided. Their enthusiastic attitudes have a very good effect on their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils generally behave very well in class and around the school. Pupils are well mannered, confident and friendly. Behaviour in the playground is particularly good.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils show a respect for adults, for each other and for themselves. They are good at organising themselves in lessons. There is a very striking sense of community in the school. Relationships throughout the school are very positive and contribute significantly to the way in which pupils learn.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance at the school is broadly in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. Teaching has a number of significant strengths. Teaching classes that contain a number of age groups presents teachers with considerable challenges. The teachers at Shirwell Community School have very successfully met these challenges. Each teacher has produced a different solution to teaching the wide age and ability range that suits their own teaching style and the needs of the classes. This means that pupils learn well because they are provided with a good level of challenge for their prior level of attainment. Very good use is made of skilled teaching assistants to ensure that each group gets the teaching they require to move them on at a good rate. Work is clearly planned to identify what each age or ability group will learn both over time and in individual lessons and this too ensures that all pupils learn well. The school uses national schemes of work, but has successfully adapted these to meet the particular needs of the pupils. The work is particularly successful in English and mathematics. Teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good and enables pupils to steadily build their ability to read and write and calculate accurately. Teaching in most lessons is good and in four in ten lessons, it is very good. Pupils are generally very well managed and discipline is good, which enables pupils to concentrate well and actively assist learning. The impact of this good and very good teaching in lessons is somewhat reduced by the way teachers arrange lessons during the day and over the week. Time is not as well used as it could be. Some lessons are too long and pupils do not concentrate as well at the end of these. Lessons are not well arranged with those of a similar type following each other and although they continue to try hard, this too reduces pupils' capacity to work. In addition, in the Years 3 to 6 class, pupils do not receive mathematics teaching every day and this reduces standards. Pupils with complex special educational needs are very well taught overall and this enables them to make very good progress both socially and educationally. Higher attaining pupils, including the pupil identified as gifted, receive good teaching and they make good progress. Teaching for children in the reception year shares many of the strengths identified in the teaching of other pupils. It is currently satisfactory overall, because the teaching programme is not yet settled and teaching assistants have not yet received the training they need to help them to work with these young children in the very good quality way that they do with the older pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is enriched by good use of visits and visitors. The curriculum in English and mathematics and for pupils' personal, social and health education is particularly effective. Links with the local community and other schools are very supportive of pupils' progress. There are, however, some aspects of the curriculum, in particular the use of time, that are in need of improvement.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are very well supported. The provision for pupils with complex difficulties is excellent. These pupils are full members of the school community and they are very successfully assisted to develop both educationally and personally.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The pupils with English as an additional language are fluent English speakers. Good support is, however, provided where necessary.

Provision for pupils' personal,	Very good. Pupils are presented with very strong positive models that
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including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	enable them to learn to become mature and responsible young people. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent and is underpinned by the very positive culture and atmosphere in the school. Provision for spiritual education is very good. Pupils are actively assisted to become thoughtful and increasingly insightful. The provision for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. The school provides a warm, secure environment in which pupils are valued as individuals. Assessment is well used in English and mathematics to set work to assist each pupil to learn well. There is, however, too little recording of assessments made in other subjects to ensure a smooth transition when pupils have a new teacher.

The school works well in partnership with the parents. Parents are supplied with good quality information. Parents provide very valuable support by; for example, supervising homework, hearing their child read regularly and providing help and supporting school activities. This has a very positive effect on pupils' attainment.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher very successfully combines the teaching of a class and leading the school. She has a clear vision for the school that involves striving towards high standards and making sure that each pupil is valued and nurtured. She ensures that this vision has an impact on all aspects of the school. She has developed a school team in which all adults work very well together to the benefit of the pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governors work very hard to ensure that the education provided by the school is as good as possible. They have a very good understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas for improvement. They are prepared to question and challenge as well as to provide very good support for the headteacher and staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Very good use is made of information about pupils' progress to identify aspects of the school that need improvement. There is some checking of teaching and planning, but teachers do not yet observe each other enough to make sure that good practice is shared.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school has made very good use of the funds available to it. All spending has been carefully considered and linked to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The principles of 'best value' are well established, governors and staff spend money carefully and compare the school's performance with that of similar schools. They consult with parents and take action where necessary. Very good use has been made of grants given to the school for specific purposes.

Although greatly improved, the school's accommodation is still lacking in some aspects. There is no playing field and the school hall is small. This restricts teaching and learning in physical education. The school library and facilities for information and communication technology are small and restricted by the need to use the space for group teaching. Lack of space and resources for independent learning for children in the reception year make the planning of a balanced curriculum difficult.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That children like the school.• The progress the children make.• That children behave well in school.• The quality of the teaching.• The approachability of the school and the information it provides.• That the school expects children to work hard.• The way the school helps children to become mature and responsible.• The way the school is led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The activities provided outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. Although small, given the number of staff in the school, the team find that the range of activities provided outside lessons is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children enter the school, they have a wide range of levels of attainment. The overall attainment of each year group differs from year to year, but is about average. The current reception group had only been in school for three weeks at the time of the inspection. They were settling in well and already making gains particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. It is too early in their school lives to make judgements about the standards they attain or about the standards they are likely to gain by the end of the school year, however, because all the children are very young and will have had only a term in school, these are likely to be below the goals identified for the end of the reception year in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
2. As is the case in all small schools, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 vary considerably from year to year, as they are heavily dependent upon the range of individual abilities within a given year group. In 2001, standards in Year 2 were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics both when compared nationally and with other schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. Comparison with the assessments made for these pupils when they entered the school shows that they achieved well. Because they are well taught, the current group of Year 2 pupils are also doing well in English and mathematics and they are attaining above average standards in reading and writing and well above average standards in mathematics. Pupils in the year group with special educational needs, including those with complex needs, have also done well and achieved well in comparison with their prior attainment. Higher attaining pupils have been well challenged in English and mathematics and they too have achieved well.
3. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in English and standards are above average overall. Daily practise of basic literacy skills means that the pupils at the end of Year 2 have become good readers and writers. They can use a range of strategies, including phonics and using the sense of what they are reading, to read new words. They are confident and interested readers as a result. Likewise they are able to use sounds to build new words, as well as calling on a vocabulary of known words as they write. The pupils can write in a number of ways; for example, stories, letters and instructions. They use their skills in practical situations; for example, in composing an e-mail to a playground designer in the course of their work in design and technology. Pupils speak very confidently and are very willing to discuss their work using a good range of vocabulary; for example, talking about the congruent circles and stars they used in their work in art and design. Similarly, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in mathematics and standards are generally above average. Numeracy skills have received good attention. By the end of Year 2, pupils are, as a result, quick and accurate in simple calculations. Their range of strategies stands them in good stead when solving simple problems such as in counting money and giving change. They have good knowledge of other aspects of mathematics, including shape and measures.
4. In Year 6 in 2001, standards in mathematics were above average. In English, they were somewhat lower, being below the national average. Comparison with this group's attainment at the end of Year 2, however, shows that they have made better than average progress in mathematics and average progress in English. Pupils' achievement overall was, therefore, good. Records show that the present Year 6 have also made good progress and achieved well since Year 2. Amongst the current Year 6 group, standards are above average in English and average in mathematics.
5. As with the younger pupils, daily work on literacy is paying dividends in the progress pupils are making in Years 3 to 6. Standards in reading, writing and in speaking and listening are above average overall. By Year 6, pupils read fluently and can discuss a range of types of books they have read. They read with understanding; for example, appreciating that the way someone in a

book acts is related to their character. They are able to discuss the relative merits of authors such as Roald Dahl and J K Rowling. Pupils use their reading skills in researching; for example, about the Egyptians, and are able to use both the library and the Internet to do this. By Year 6, pupils write fluently and with care. Presentation is good and this adds to the overall readability of what they do. Pupils spell with reasonable accuracy and are able to use a range of punctuation to make their work clear. They write poetry, plays and stories as well as letters, reports and instructions, knowing the differences in the requirements of such writing. Pupils in Year 6 are mostly good conversationalists. They listen and respond well and are careful to allow others the opportunity to speak. Discussions are articulate and to the point and the pupils are able to give information; for example, about their work in school, with clarity. In mathematics, there has been careful teaching of numeracy skills and this has given the pupils the range of skills and knowledge they need to compute at the required level. A lack of practise, however, has resulted in some of the pupils being less confident than they should be in their own capabilities and this results in a reluctance to tackle work that is not worded in a way that the pupils recognise. Others, however, compute rapidly and accurately and can use the four rules of number to effect in solving problems.

6. Throughout the school, lower and higher attaining pupils receive good support and both groups achieve well. The pupils with English as an additional language speak fluent English and do not require additional help, although the school is careful to ensure that they do not encounter extra difficulties in learning to use language in a written form. They achieve appropriately for their abilities. The school uses its analysis of data very well to help to set challenging individual targets for all pupils and assists pupils to achieve these. Trends in results are positive. In English and mathematics, despite the fluctuations, pupils are attaining better standards overall than they were at the time of the last inspection.
7. In science, standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are average and pupils achieve in a satisfactory way. This is the same as the picture at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils in both year groups attain the nationally expected level for their age group. A lack of time allocated to the subject inhibits the teaching of higher levels of science. This, combined with insufficiently high expectations for the small number of potentially higher attaining pupils, means that they do not achieve as well as they should. This is recognised in the current school improvement plan and work to improve this is identified.
8. Standards in most subjects have risen since the time of the last inspection, particularly amongst older pupils where standards were of particular concern. Standards in art and design and design and technology are now above average, reflecting the school's emphasis on these subjects. Standards in most other subjects are average and pupils achieve in a satisfactory way. Teaching and learning in lessons is good in most subjects, but overall standards are affected by the way the school timetable is planned. This particularly affects standards in geography, history and religious education. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about overall standards in music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils have very good attitudes towards their school. They are proud to be members of the Shirwell school community and are very willing to talk about their experiences of school life. They are pleasant and personable young people, whom it is a real pleasure to meet. They are very happy to come to school and are prepared and ready to work hard and participate in the life of the school. As one parent expressed it at the parents' evening, 'The school has a family atmosphere and this encourages pupils to give of their best'.
10. All parents who expressed a view agreed that behaviour in the school is good. Inspectors found the behaviour of pupils in the school to be very good, with all pupils conforming well to the school's expectations. Their sensible behaviour in most lessons means that teachers do not have to spend much time maintaining order, with a clear benefit to the quality of learning taking place. This is particularly important since pupils are taught in mixed year classes, as it enables the teacher to concentrate on one group of pupils whilst the remainder can be trusted to get on

with their work elsewhere in the room. Even the youngest pupils, in the reception class, behave well despite the short length of time they have been attending school. The seamless transfer from the pre-school group, who meet on the school premises, helps children to settle quickly. In one lesson, for example, reception children behaved very well making salt dough with a teaching assistant, enabling the teacher to concentrate on a literacy lesson with Years 1 and 2. Very occasionally, a small number of pupils in this class, who have extra difficulty in controlling their behaviour, misbehave and cause lessons to be somewhat slow. This does not occur with the regular teacher, but results from different pupil management by part-time staff. This is in part because procedures are not written down. Older pupils behave very well in lessons, allowing the teacher to answer questions and help pupils to develop their understanding. Even in the less interesting lessons, pupils do their best and most resist any temptation there may be to misbehave. Pupils' behaviour around the school is very good. The playground is an unthreatening place, with pupils playing happily together in the space available. There have not been any pupil exclusions in recent years - a good achievement. Neither parents nor pupils regard bullying as a problem and any incidents of bullying or serious teasing that occur are quite exceptional to the normal run of school life. Pupils respect each other's and the school's property. They look after their environment well and there is no litter. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to their work and their behaviour is good, because they are very well integrated into classes and participate in a fully inclusive curriculum. Adults and other pupils treat them with understanding and respect while maintaining appropriately high expectations of their behaviour. This promotes as high a level of independence as possible.

11. Relationships in the school are excellent. The teachers and other adults have created an environment where everybody is respected and accepted for whom they are. Everybody is a member of this school family and this involves getting on with all other members. A broad band of tolerance runs through the school. Small village schools by their very size can create a more personal ethos, but at the same time pupils have little choice as to who to work and play with for years on end. The quality of relationships at Shirwell School can only be achieved through the example set by the adults in the school. Teachers and all other staff know the pupils individually and treat them very well. Even individuals such as the school cook, who in larger schools would have little contact with pupils, play a positive role in maintaining strong relationships within the school community. Pupils get on very well. Relationships contribute to a productive mutual respect and partnership in learning. Teachers value the work of all pupils and the pupils are confident to ask for support and guidance when they need it, which has a positive effect on their attainment. Pupils' relationships with each other also reflect the strong values encouraged by the school in its written mission statement, which includes 'our school is a caring community based on friendship, respect and trust, where everybody is valued'. These aims do lie at the heart of the work of the school.
12. Pupils respect each other as individuals very well and their understanding of the impact of their actions on others is excellent. They share resources very well when working in pairs or in groups and co-operate well, respecting each other's point of view. In a Years 3 to 6 geography lesson on rivers, pupils behaved very maturely in pairs as they used books and the computer to research aspects of erosion. In a 'news' session at the start of the day, Years 1 and 2 pupils listened politely to each other's contributions, even when the news itself was less than riveting. They value each other irrespective of attainment levels, each pupil being accepted for their own ability to contribute. In a Years 1 and 2 assembly, they listened to each other, respecting each other's views and were not distracted by the noise of reception children on the patio. Inclusion is deep rooted in the fabric of the school, with all pupils being part of the school community. Low and high attaining pupils work constructively together and no pupil is excluded from pair or group work. Boys and girls usually work together unselfconsciously. Pupils in different years know each other well and older pupils play with younger ones. During playtimes, games can involve pupils from a wide range of year groups. The inclusion of all pupils, including those with complex needs, is a model of its kind. For example, at playtime, pupils play together in a totally unforced and natural way, making allowances, but without a jot of condescension, playing games as equals, albeit with different abilities. Pupils have the confidence to enable them to relate well to adults. In the hall; for example, pupils were very keen to point out their work displayed on the

walls and to explain how they had created it. They take pride in their work, encouraged by the way teachers value it. They are polite to each other and adults.

13. When given the opportunity, pupils take initiative and personal responsibility. In the playground, Year 6 play leaders help to make it a pleasant and productive place. One boy was organising an interesting variation on rounders played with a rugby ball, whilst two girls were teaching younger children to improve their skipping. Pupils help to collect up and put away the equipment sensibly. They carry out jobs such as handing out books willingly and this makes a significant contribution to the easy running of classes. Pupils' relationships, attitudes and behaviour are a strength of the school and make a significant contribution towards their attainment and progress. They have been improved from the good standards being achieved at the time of the last inspection.
14. The pupils' rates of attendance are broadly in line with the national average for a school of this type, as are their rates of unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive at school punctually, allowing an efficient start to the school day. A number of parents take their children out of school for holidays in term time. The rates of attendance have been maintained since the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching and learning are good overall and have improved since the time of the last inspection. There are a number of significant strengths within this, not least the consistency of the quality of teaching for pupils in Years 1 to 6. The very good organisation of each of the two classes allows pupils of a wide range of ages and attainments to learn well. Teachers make very good use of strategies, such as beginning lessons by teaching the whole class, then setting activities for a particular age/ability group to do independently, before continuing the lesson with the rest of the group. In a Years 3 to 6 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher talked to the whole class about strategies for multiplication and division, before sending the Year 4 group to work on activities associated with multiplication facts, supported by the teaching assistant. The teacher then talked to the Years 5 and 6 pupils about how multiplication relates to division, giving good examples of rounding in practical situations. These pupils were then set some examples to work on and finally the teacher returned to work with the Year 3 pupils, who were working on simple division. In this lesson, learning was very successful for all pupils because they were gaining skills at an appropriate level and speed for their prior attainment. The very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils allows this to be done successfully as they show great capacity to work well while the teacher works with others. Very good use is made of the skills of teaching assistants to provide pupils with support. A Year 5/6 ICT lesson, for example, was ably taken by a teaching assistant, while the teacher taught music to the Year 3/4 pupils. In this way, all pupils built their skills and knowledge well at an appropriate level. On other occasions, teaching assistants support 'independent' activities, knowing well how to assist learning.
16. Teachers' lesson planning is good and it is particularly strong in English and mathematics throughout the school and in all subjects for pupils in the Years 3 to 6 class. Planning clearly shows expectations for different groups of pupils and the way lessons will be structured to promote the target learning. The planning provides teaching assistants with a firm steer for their work, as well as assisting very good management of the class. In some lessons, pupils are told of what they are expected to learn and they benefit from this as they are able to direct their energies more precisely and, therefore, to learn better. This practice is not yet a feature of all lessons and is an aspect of teaching in need of improvement. A wide variety of types of activity is used and this keeps pupils interested in their work. Although written work is seen as important, pupils are given good opportunity to learn in a practical way, as in a Year 1/2 science lesson when pupils investigated the effects of different surfaces on the speed at which a car travels. This practical experience increased their understanding of forces. Pupils are given good opportunity to work in small groups and pairs; for example, in a Year 6 English lesson, when they worked as a group to prepare a simplified version of a myth to read to the younger pupils. There is a suitable amount of individual work and as a result, pupils learn to be self-reliant and to organise their own learning well. Although there are good examples of ICT being used to support learning in subjects such as geography and history, this is not yet planned into the programme

of work and opportunities for its use are, therefore, missed. Expectations of the pupils' effort, attainment and behaviour are high. Such are the relationships between teachers and pupils, that pupils want to live up to these and try hard so to do. They work hard and complete a good amount of work in most lessons.

17. Teachers and teaching assistants have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and give careful thought to the best methods of teaching. They teach enthusiastically and this enthusiasm is communicated to the pupils who learn well as a consequence. Enthusiasm for art and design and technology is very well communicated, for example, and is further emphasised by the very careful displays that are made to value and exhibit pupils' work. Basic skills are well taught. In Years 1 and 2 good emphasis is placed on the learning of basic skills and knowledge such as phonics and the building of a sight vocabulary for use in reading and writing. Throughout the school, teaching of spelling has had consideration of late and standards are rising as a result of the use of strategies, such as teaching pupils how to add a variety of endings to a known word correctly. Pupils also receive careful teaching of punctuation and handwriting. In mathematics, numeracy is well taught in lessons throughout the school. Good emphasis is given to talking about work, careful calculation and the importance of checking answers.
18. Teachers work very closely with the pupils and are alert to their successes and difficulties. They use this information well when they are planning work for subsequent lessons. These assessments are communicated to pupils in a number of ways; for example, through good quality verbal feedback as lessons progress. When these occur, pupils are given solid and clear advice as to how to improve what they are doing. In a mathematics lesson; for example, a Year 2 pupil was counting money. She was doing this correctly, but in a rather long-winded way. The teacher commented upon this and showed the pupil how to collect coins into ten pence piles and then count the piles. This very successfully moved forwards the pupils' thinking. Feedback is also provided in marking. Marking is well used, particularly in English, to indicate to a pupil how they could improve. Lessons usually end with a suitable opportunity for pupils to reflect upon what they have learned in the lesson and this consolidates their learning well. Homework is well organised, planned into the week's work and is productive in terms of pupils' learning.
19. The overall impact of some very good teaching in lessons is somewhat reduced by the way in which teachers choose to arrange their day. Mornings are relatively long, but are still largely given over to teaching English and mathematics. Some lessons are overlong and work that could be completed in a shorter time spreads to fit the time available. In addition, when lessons are overlong, pupils find concentration increasingly difficult and their rate of learning drops. In addition, these long sessions do not always reflect the type of learning being undertaken. In science; for example, long sessions have been well used for practical work, but have not promoted the best learning of scientific facts. During each day, some short periods of time are not best used, being given over to unplanned whole-class activities and in addition, timekeeping around playtimes is unreliable. The result of this is twofold. Firstly, pupils do not have sufficient variety in what they do and this results in some understandable reduction in concentration, particularly amongst the younger pupils and in a consequent reduction in speed of learning in some lessons. Secondly, time is squeezed and lessons in some subjects do not occur as often as they could. In subjects such as history, geography and religious education throughout the school and in science in Years 3 to 6 this means that good or very good teaching and learning in lessons results in average progress, attainment and achievement. Overall, teaching is good in most subjects except science where teaching is satisfactory because insufficient attention is given to stretching a few potentially higher attaining pupils. In all other subjects, these pupils are appropriately challenged and attain well.
20. This lack of balance in the day also affects children in their reception year. Teaching of these children is currently satisfactory. Teachers and teaching assistants manage the children gently, but firmly and their enthusiastic approach to the activity in hand mainly inspires interest in the children. Expectations of behaviour and concentration are high and the children try hard to meet these. On some occasions, these expectations are too high, however, and children are expected to work at an activity longer than is sensible and their enthusiasm naturally diminishes. The teacher and teaching assistants work well as a team in providing for the

children, but the teaching assistants have yet to receive training to help them to work with young children and they are not always sure of the best way to do this.

21. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Work is well matched to their specific needs as a result of clear targets in their individual education plans, which are reviewed regularly. Teachers work very closely with well-trained and skilled teaching assistants and brief them well. Where there is a need, pupils with English as an additional language are well taught. Care is given to ensure that their written grammar and vocabulary keeps pace with their spoken language.

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

22. The school provides a broad curriculum that is well thought out and planned well to give good attention to the individual needs of its pupils. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and there is very good attention to personal, social and health education. Additionally, the school seizes all opportunities to include outside help to enrich the curriculum. The effectiveness of this broad curriculum is diminished, because of decisions made about weekly organisation (identified in paragraph 18); for example, when and how often subjects are delivered. A slackness of lessons starting and playtime finishing puts additional pressure on the curriculum time available. This has an effect on standards because of the time available; for example, in history, geography and religious education where the teaching and learning are good in lessons, but standards are only satisfactory. The curriculum for children in the reception year is satisfactory. Opportunities for learning in all the advised areas of learning are provided and each aspect receives sufficient time overall. There is some thoughtful planning of how these aspects of learning are combined to add interest and relevance for the children. There is, however, some lack of balance evident, with insufficient regular opportunity for independent learning, learning outdoors and physical activity.
23. The curriculum now fulfils the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education, as the deficiencies noted in the delivery of information and communication technology have now been improved. There are good quality policies to support the curriculum in history, geography and science. Other policies are to be developed. In terms of a very small school, good provision is made for pupils to enrich the curriculum. Music is well catered for with saxophone, flute and recorder lessons and a football club is provided. Outside specialists are brought in to enrich education in dance and music. Drama and theatre groups, visiting artists and musicians, such as African drummers, are regularly sought to enhance the curriculum. Outside visits and visitors are used well. The school makes good use of the local environment, particularly to support geography. Such visits are concerned with looking at local woodlands or studying a local river to note such things as human use along the river, changes in height and width and speed of flow. A range of regular residential visits for older pupils are popular and valued additions to the curriculum.
24. Leadership and the very good school ethos ensures that there is very good awareness of equality of opportunity. The school mission of 'a caring community based on friendship, respect and trust, where everyone is valued and where every child will be helped to reach personal success', is carried out in full in the daily life of the school. The school makes excellent provision for pupils with complex special educational needs. Teachers plan well for these pupils and tasks are matched to targets in their individual education plans. Pupils of all ages, sexes, abilities and backgrounds are welcome and treated equally by all within the school. Planning and provision are good for pupils with English as an additional language. The school identifies very few pupils as having special educational needs, as the provision for all pupils provides well for lower attaining pupils. Whilst this is appropriate for those with mild learning difficulties, some pupils; for example, those with difficulty controlling their behaviour and those with speech difficulties, would benefit from identification and extra support.
25. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented well. In class 1, pupils work mainly in Years 1 and 2 groups with the teacher overseeing both groups, which have

different learning objectives. In class 2, lessons are clearly planned in good detail by the teacher. The teacher and teaching assistant lead these groups in turn. Both methods work well and it is because of the very good quality of the contribution of the teaching assistants that all pupils learn well in both classes. Pupils' writing and numeracy skills are used appropriately across the curriculum. For example, there was good evidence of writing linked to a World War II study in 'Should children be evacuated?'. The use of block graphs was noted when pupils collated information about types of rubbish in an environmental topic in geography. There is some good use made of ICT to support learning in other subjects; for example, the use of art programs to allow pupils to imitate the work of Kandinski in art. Opportunities for the use of ICT are, however, not yet consistently used and opportunities for its use are, therefore, sometimes missed. This aspect of ICT has been identified by the school as being in need of improvement.

26. The provision of personal, social and health education is very good and has a high profile within the school ethos. Health, sex and drugs education is well catered for within the science curriculum. Social and personal provision for pupils is the responsibility of all the very caring adults in the school. The school administrator plays a particularly valued role in this, providing a 'listening ear' for pupils when required. The school nurse too plays a valued part in promoting health education. The pupils' involvement in the community makes a very good contribution to their learning and their personal development. Good links with the church and regular visits from the vicar are well established parts of the school life. A questionnaire sent out by governors to the community resulted in a partially sighted friend talking to the pupils, leading to a fund-raising event for 'Action for the Blind'. Links with a local printer enabled all pupils' Christmas cards to be printed and sold to raise a valued sum of money. The school has very good links with the local playgroup, feeder secondary school and local small schools, where curriculum developments are shared as well as resources. For example, a very good link with Pilton Community College provides teaching and resources for design and technology, which contributes well to the high standards achieved in this subject.
27. The totally inclusive ethos promoted by this small school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which has improved since the last inspection. The school makes very good provision for spiritual development. Strong promotion of the school's values and beliefs, together with regular religious education, promotes very good awareness and understanding of pupils' own and others' beliefs. The promotion of respect for self and others is strong, together with empathy, concern and compassion. This particularly exemplifies itself in the full inclusion of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those with complex special educational needs. The teachers value pupils' questions and give time to the pupils' thoughts, ideas and concerns. Pupils are taught to respect differences and individuals and the school promotes a strong understanding of valuing efforts made by all individuals. A good example of this was a theme of collective worship relating to the recent Marathon race. Feelings of participants and onlookers were explored carefully in terms of 'Don't give up!'. This was thoughtfully linked to the athletes with physical difficulties who were taking part, asking pupils to reflect on their thoughts, feelings and emotions. This helped them to empathise with others and develop concern and compassion.
28. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is excellent. The very strong ethos of the school provides a very clear moral code as a basis for behaviour. All adults in the school provide excellent role models, both in their behaviour to each other and to the pupils. The quality of relationships is very high, promoting fairness, respect for persons, truth and high regard for each pupil's welfare. Very few rules are apparent in this small school and moral and social development is based on very good knowledge of the pupils and their needs and the promotion of personal qualities through taking responsibility. Responsibility for one's own actions is promoted well and pupils reflect on their actions when necessary. Responsibility for other people is promoted through day-to-day life in the school and in particular, responsibilities given to older pupils. For example, when swimming, older pupils care for the younger ones and help them with dressing. During some playtimes, play leaders organise playtime games for younger pupils, which is much appreciated.

29. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. The school provides a good range of opportunities to extend pupils' cultural awareness. Examples of this are visits from musical groups, artists and dance tutors. Visits out include a whole-school theatre visit to a performance of 'Charlotte's Web', followed by a theatre workshop. Pupils learn about other pupils' values and beliefs through religious education and geography, as well as from pupils and their families within the school. Opportunities to use the school's community are also used well. For example, parents report that cultural differences were explored well by talking about henna on the hands of a pupil during a religious festival.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school places particular emphasis on pupils' social and personal development. The strong ethos that permeates the school means that there is less need for written procedures than in a larger or less personal school. Shirwell School has a very strong sense of community and it is this strength that means the school does not just function through formal rules. All parents who expressed a view believe that the school is effective in helping their children to become mature and responsible individuals.
31. The school's procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The school provides a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can feel safe and valued. All staff make considerable efforts to address the welfare of individual pupils when they need it. The contribution of teachers is noted and appreciated by both parents and pupils. Responsibility for child protection lies with the headteacher who is experienced in this work and has in the past received suitable training. She liaises with the local social services department as necessary. Adults in the school are aware of their child protection responsibilities. Support from all staff enables pupils to feel safe and valued and to concentrate on their learning, thus helping them to progress to the best of their ability. The governors of the school are particularly active in ensuring that health and safety procedures are in place and followed. Routine health and safety procedures and testing are in place, although the risk assessments that are taking place need to be recorded more formally. No unsafe practice was seen in lessons during the inspection.
32. All teachers are concerned with the pastoral care of their pupils. Throughout the school, teachers know their pupils well and successfully meet their individual needs. They are effective in supporting them when they need it. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good, although as might be expected in such a small school, it is largely informal. The school seeks advice and support from external agencies when it needs it; for example, physiotherapy and speech therapy services. In some cases, the school reports that the difficulty in accessing specialist support; for example, occupational therapy, is impacting on standards achieved by the pupils concerned. The school has satisfactory procedures to monitor attendance and encourage pupils to come to school regularly. Teachers are able to identify problems with attendance as they emerge, although support for the school from parents means that these are not often needed.
33. There are good procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour. The school philosophy is not to rely on formal systems of rewards and sanctions. Indeed, the headteacher and governors believe that intrinsic reward, supported by praise, results in higher self-confidence and independence. They have specifically rejected the implementation of formal rewards. In this school, it works. There is a general unspoken consensus throughout the school that there is a natural way to behave and that pupils will conform to it. This expectation and ethos is strong and established right from the early years. It permeates the school. There are clear boundaries of what behaviour is acceptable. At the pre-inspection parents' evening, parents felt that the school deals with behaviour problems 'instantly and adamantly', although they also said that procedures are not usually noticed, because there are so few problems. Pupils know 'where the line is drawn'. Most staff, including teaching assistants and lunch-time supervisors, are constantly reinforcing the school's expectations. The standards of behaviour achieved owe much to their relationships with pupils and their personal effectiveness. Both the behaviour and bullying policies are rather vague documents, which would not inform, for example, a supply teacher coming to the school on how to operate. The lack of written procedures also means that

pupils who have more difficulty with controlling their behaviour are not always consistently managed; for example, when they are not taught by their class teacher, and as a consequence, learning is occasionally disrupted. The school's approach to eliminating oppressive behaviour is effective, based on establishing a climate for behaviour that emphasises the positive. The quality of the school's support for the welfare and guidance of pupils has been maintained since the last inspection.

34. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good overall. An extensive range of assessment procedures, enables the school to gather information in English and mathematics. There are no formal procedures for other subjects. Although teachers have very good informal knowledge of their pupils' attainments and progress in these subjects, the lack of formal recording is a weakness. Assessments in English and mathematics have improved since the last inspection, there now being a rigorous system of regular assessments, which are recorded to track individual pupils' progress carefully through the National Curriculum. To back this up, a very good system of termly targets is established, which helps pupils to know how they might improve in English, mathematics and personal development. The school monitors the results of its assessments to identify achievements of different groups; for example, girls and boys. Although there is only recorded information for English and mathematics, teachers' awareness of assessment information is very good in all subjects and is used very well to plan group and individual work for all pupils. The use of assessment information has been particularly helpful in helping to raise standards in English and mathematics. The recording of the assessments made in other subjects is currently unsatisfactory because there is insufficient information on paper to ensure a smooth transfer when pupils have a new teacher. Careful assessments are made of pupils with complex special educational needs and these have carefully thought out individual education plans. Some other pupils would benefit from identification and recording of concerns; for example, those with speech and behavioural difficulties, in order to receive extra support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. The vast majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire or attended the meeting with inspectors were very positive about all aspects of the school. In particular, parents believe that their children like school, that the teaching is good and that their children work hard and make good progress. They endorse the standards of behaviour achieved and think that the school helps children to become mature and responsible. A significant minority of parents do not believe that the school offers an interesting range of activities outside lessons – this is clearly an area where a small village school with so few staff cannot compete with larger primary schools and inspection evidence shows that the range of activities is sound. Overall, parents' views of the school are very good and the school enjoys the confidence of its local community. This includes parents of different groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs.
36. The overall quality of information for parents is good. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are both well produced and generally meet legal requirements. Both provide a flavour of the school, celebrating with parents its very real achievements. The prospectus makes very good use of photographs to illustrate aspects of school life. There are regular letters home to keep parents informed of the life of the school. The annual reports to parents on their child's progress are good documents, with useful information on curriculum coverage, what individual pupils can do and targets for the future. There is the opportunity to give parents a clearer picture of how their child is performing against national standards. The comments on a pupil's personal development reflect the individual well.
37. The contribution of parents to the school and their child's learning is good. Many parents have signed the home-school agreement, which is clear, direct and has a good tone. Most parents support their child's homework. There have been examples of parents assisting in class; for example, two mothers helped children to produce the patchwork of childhood memories now proudly displayed on a classroom wall. Parents help on school trips. The school parents, teachers and friends association is active in organising social and fund-raising events. The

parent governors make an appropriate contribution to the work of the school's governing body. The productive partnership with parents has been maintained since the last inspection of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The leadership and management of the school are very good. As well as teaching successfully on four days a week, the headteacher has effectively provided very clear leadership and direction for the school. All the work of the school reflects very well its stated aims. A collaborative style of working has been adopted with other teachers and this serves the school very well. Teachers and other staff work very effectively together to successfully develop aspects of the school that have been identified from ongoing self-evaluation as in need of improvement. This collaborative working has provided good subject leadership overall. All adults associated with the day-to-day life of the school are fully involved in the education provided. Small details, such as the cook taking morning break with other staff, mean that full awareness of the detail of school life is shared. In this instance, this means that the cook is able to respond very well when she comes into contact with pupils in school. The team ethos allows common underlying principles to be understood, while allowing each within the team to work in an individual way. The way teachers work, for example, in planning activities for pupils, is agreed in outline, but is then left to individual teachers to adapt to meet their own working style and the particular needs of their class. This practice is working well to the benefit of pupils and staff and results, for example, in the very effective way in which each class is managed within the challenging context of a two-class school.
39. The self-evaluation that the school undertakes is good. The work of the school is carefully checked. There is regular observation of teaching by the headteacher and planning is shared so that each teacher is aware of the work of the others. There is, however, currently too little observation of the teaching of the headteacher by other staff. This means that good practice is not as well shared as it might be. End of year assessments in English and mathematics are carefully recorded for each pupil and their progress checked. The information gained is used well both to set targets for improvement for the individual and to identify aspects of the curriculum needing improvement for a whole year group, class or the school; for example, in the improvement of spelling. The school improvement plan reflects well this self-evaluation and there are good, pertinent areas for further action identified. It has led the improvement of the school well. The action plans that are drawn up to show the work that will be done towards the identified targets are not, however, sufficiently detailed to allow ongoing work to be easily checked by the headteacher and governors. This also means that the school does not have, in advance, a clear idea of what will happen when some staff overload results.
40. The governors are an active, supportive group of people who work very hard to ensure that the education provided in the school is of good quality and continues to improve. The very strong feeling of 'team' extends to the governing body who are justly proud of their school and wish for its improvement. Governors very successfully ensure that all statutory obligations are met. They have developed a very good relationship with the headteacher that has a very good balance between challenge and support. The governors are generally knowledgeable about the school and are aware of the strengths and areas for improvement. The improvements planned are carefully checked by governors; for example, the Chair of Governors looks at teachers' planning to check that identified actions are translated into classroom practice.
41. Very good thought has been given to the inclusion of various groups of pupils. The achievements of pupils with English as an additional language is carefully checked and work on written language emphasised where appropriate. One able pupil has been identified and plans have been made to ensure that the needs of this pupil are met. Very good planning is in place for the inclusion of the nursery aged child with complex physical difficulties through a carefully structured induction programme before his full-time admittance to the school. The school has identified areas where they need extra help to support the pupils with complex difficulties and takes active steps to secure this advice. The leadership of the work in special educational needs is very good. The headteacher, as special educational needs co-ordinator, has ensured

that the good provision for special educational needs identified in the last inspection, has been sustained and pupils continue to make good progress. The very strong leadership by the headteacher in this aspect of school management has a direct impact on the way all staff value these pupils. This role model then directly influences the way pupils behave towards each other. The governor for special educational needs is highly involved and visits the school regularly. The governing body receives regular reports on the provision for special educational needs and is committed to providing high quality and well trained teaching assistants in the classroom.

42. Good use is made of the funds allocated to the school. Financial planning and spending is appropriately linked to the school improvement plan, however, this process is made more difficult to manage because the action planning for detailed improvement does not happen in time to enable associated spending to be decided upon when the annual budget is set. There is careful monitoring of the effect of spending. The governors are aware; for example, of the less than good value for money that resulted from splitting the Years 3 to 6 class in the academic year 2000–2001 and have reverted to the former system. Governors are aware of, and apply well, the principles of 'best value'. They spend money carefully and compare the results of spending; for example, looking at the standards attained in other schools. They have sought the opinions of the local community and parents and have acted upon their findings; for example, arranging a curriculum evening about modern methods in mathematics to answer the parents' concerns that they were unable to assist with mathematics homework. Good use has been made of additional funding, such as that associated with the raising of standards in literacy, and standards have duly risen. Funding associated with the admission of pupils with complex needs has been very well spent and the good use of the adults funded by this has benefited all pupils.

43. The accommodation available for teaching has greatly improved since the time of last inspection. Two new classrooms have been built. They provide light spacious rooms that are well presented and provide a stimulating learning environment. The school caretaker is an important part of the school team ensuring that the school is a well-maintained learning environment. Facilities for outdoor physical education remain restricted by the lack of a school field and the small school hall makes the teaching of gymnastics difficult. The school facilities for administration are currently very limited, with the headteacher sharing a small office with the school administrator. Good plans are already drawn up to remedy this and a date for building work to commence is already set. There is very limited space to enable children in the reception year to work and play with minimal supervision. Overall, the school is well resourced, but there are deficiencies in resources to support teaching and learning for children in the reception year.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

44. In order to further improve the education provided by the school the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) provide a better balance of work over the week and during each day

throughout the school by:

- making sure all time during the day is efficiently used so that more time can be allocated to subjects including history, geography and religious education throughout the school and science in Years 3 to 6;
- planning lessons that are of appropriate length for the subject in hand and for the age of the pupils or children;
- ensuring that pupils are taught a good balance of subjects during each half day.

(See paragraphs 7, 8, 19, 22, 63, 66, 74, 80 and 92)

in Years 3 to 6 by:

- ensuring that pupils have a daily mathematics lesson.

(See paragraphs 5, 58 and 62)

in the reception year by:

- ensuring there is an overall scheme of work for each term there are reception year children in the school;
- giving children planned opportunities for independent learning;
- ensuring that children have a well-balanced day, including daily opportunities for physical and creative activities and learning outside.

(See paragraphs 20, 22 and 49)

Other issues that should be considered by the school:

1. Ensure that the recording of assessments is sufficient in all subjects to provide good enough information for teachers to enable them to plan suitable work for pupils, even when the pupils are new to them. (See paragraphs 34, 67, 77, 80, 83 and 92)
2. Ensure that standards in information and communication technology and in science continue to improve by continuing the work identified on the subject improvement plans. (See paragraphs 7, 25, 39, 67 and 83)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	8	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0	37	42	21	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0.2	45
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	2

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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)

A table of results for Key Stage 1 in 2001 is not included because there were only 4 pupils in the year group.

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

A table of results for Key Stage 2 in 2001 is not included because there were only 9 pupils in the year group.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	39
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, 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)	2.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	67

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2
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	£
Total income	153,294
Total expenditure	155,979
Expenditure per pupil	3,804
Balance brought forward from previous year	5,054
Balance carried forward to next year	2,369

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	41
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	23	3	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	62	38	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	57	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	48	10	3	0
The teaching is good.	72	28	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	34	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	17	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	34	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	28	7	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	83	3	13	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	34	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	38	34	10	0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. Since the four children in the reception year had only been in the school for three weeks at the time of the inspection it is not possible to make judgements about their attainment or achievement in all aspects of their development. There was one child of nursery age with complex needs in school at the time of the inspection. He had been in school for a total of six half days. Plans for the induction of this child were very good and were already providing a very good bridge between home and school.

Personal, social and emotional development

46. Teaching and learning in personal social and emotional development are good. The children have good attainments in this aspect of their learning and most are already meeting the goals set for children of this age. The teachers and teaching assistants ensure that the atmosphere of the class is very supportive and this gives the children a secure and friendly environment that has already allowed them to become confident and secure. This means that they are confident to ask and answer questions and to work with a variety of adults. The teacher plans activities designed to interest the children and they are, for the most part, interested in what they are doing. They showed; for example, great enthusiasm for most aspects of their day focused on a train journey. When they are given too little freedom in their activities, however, this interest lapses and they concentrate far less well. Children play happily in the playground. Adults have appropriately high expectations of the way the children will conduct themselves. They are already expected to be independent in finding their way about the classroom and school and to be independent in personal matters such as going to the toilet. They show themselves to be capable of dressing and undressing for physical education. The good induction programme and the close knit nature of the community means that the children are known as individuals before they come into school and this helps them to settle well. The induction programme for children with special educational needs is especially effective.

Communication, language and literacy

47. Communication language and literacy is frequently taught at the same time as older pupils undertake their literacy work. Overall, current teaching and learning is satisfactory, but has many good features. In this aspect of learning, there is a clear overview of the work to be undertaken during the term. The work for each week is conscientiously planned and structured and productive thought has been given to meeting the separate needs of these children while also including them within the overall life of the class. The teachers mainly adopt a strategy of giving these children some teaching input before leaving the teaching assistants to follow up this teaching. This is largely successful in providing the children with good amounts of contact with adults and this has a positive effect on their learning overall. The children have opportunity to read books; for example 'The Train Ride', and to develop the themes from the books in other work during the day. This provides well for them to interact with others and converse with them. The children are able to take part in conversations, but, as yet, they have too little experience to be able to negotiate and plan activities with each other. Suitable opportunities are planned for the children to learn about sounds and to practise writing skills. There are occasions, however, when the children are expected to sit for too long with an activity and this results in reduced learning and means that time for more independent activities is reduced. There are also occasions when the inexperience of the teaching assistants and the lack of detail in the planning mean that; for example, vocabulary is not extended in the way that it might be. Based on the very limited evidence available due to the short time they have been in school, the overall attainment, for this group of children is below average. This reflects the fact that all the children are very young for the age group. The children have not yet been in school sufficient time to have developed; for example, a sight vocabulary of known words or a range of known sounds to help them to read or write. Since the children will have the benefit of only one term in reception, it is

unlikely that they will be able to reach the goals set for the end of the reception year in communication language and literacy before they enter Year 1.

Mathematical development

48. Provision for mathematical development mirrors that in communication, language and literacy with many of the same strengths and weaknesses evident in teaching and learning. Opportunities for development of mathematical skills and knowledge; for example, those associated with counting, are well planned and there is good emphasis on the development of mathematical vocabulary. In the one lesson seen, teaching and learning were satisfactory. The lesson was given a very good start by the teacher who set up very well the activity that the children were to undertake. High expectations of learning were evident in a challenge whereby children were asked to add one or two bears sitting on a box to a number previously counted and put inside the box, now covered by the lid. Good thinking and learning resulted. This was initially well followed up, but the subsequent activities of counting and recognising numerals went on for too long and the children became bored and learned too little at the end of the session. In number, attainment is about average, the children can mostly count objects to five or more and higher attaining children can add two sets of objects together. Planning shows that the children will have suitable access to all areas of mathematical development; for example, shape and measurement, over the current term. In these aspects, the children have basic knowledge of shapes, knowing the names of a small number of shapes, but understandably have not yet had sufficient time to have acquired knowledge in aspects such as the understanding of direction or position.

Knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development

49. Because the children had been in the school for such a short time, there was insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about teaching and learning or attainment in these areas of learning. The teaching seen was, however, good in many ways. The teacher plans for the children to have good opportunity to develop in each of the areas of learning. On one of the days of the inspection, the children had a day organised around the taking of a train journey. During the day, they were busy with reading a book about a train journey, making sandwiches, using dough to make trains, constructing a railway and taking a pretend journey – and then eating the sandwiches! The children greatly enjoyed their day. The teaching programme is not yet, however, fully planned and some issues of balance are not yet resolved. There is, as yet, no overview of work for these children over the longer term and this is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for learning independently or with minimal supervision or for learning outdoors are not shown in planning and there were too few of these evident during the inspection. The children engaged in physical activity during the class physical education lesson and their learning in this session was good. They learned to move with increasing precision and to move in different ways on the floor and on benches. Planning does not, however, show how physical activity will be a daily part of the programme and the children did not have sufficient opportunities for this during the inspection.
50. The accommodation for teaching the reception children in the mixed age class presents considerable challenges. Classroom space for free choice activities is limited and the school does not yet have a secure outdoor area. This latter is planned and its start date is imminent. Best use is not currently made of the hall and playground because issues of supervision are not yet resolved. Although there are adequate resources for learning in the more formal aspects of the provision, there are inadequate resources for outdoor learning and free choice activities; for example, those for 'small world' imaginative play.

ENGLISH

51. Standards in English have risen since the last inspection. Since that time, a comprehensive training programme and regular monitoring have raised the quality of the teaching. The school has made good use of the National Literacy Strategy and adapted it very well to meet the wide spectrum of needs in each of the two classes. These improvements continue to have a strong

impact on the pupils' learning. Understandably, there are wide variations between year groups with small numbers of pupils. Over the years between 1998 and 2001, the overall trend in standards is upwards at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in the present Years 2 and 6 are above average and show that pupils achieve well. The present good teaching throughout the school, is a positive factor in the standards achieved. Pupils' competence in all skills is now developing systematically and uniformly across the school.

52. Standards in speaking and listening are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Throughout the school, pupils listen attentively to all adults and to each other. In Year 2, they understand and respond to a variety of everyday and other familiar instructions and many of them are able to discuss and communicate their own ideas. Their ability to respond in clear speech, using standard English, is above average. Most pupils use a wide vocabulary and speak in the main in properly constructed sentences. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good listening skills, partly because their teacher insists on a high standard of listening. Pupils are encouraged to speak clearly and there is an increase in their breadth of vocabulary as they move towards the top of the school. This is a result of targeted and challenging vocabulary being used by the teachers. Teachers regularly use good strategies for promoting speaking and listening; for example, working with a partner, as pupils did when they were writing poetry, or making notes together about a myth in order to retell it to younger pupils. This gives all pupils, particularly those who are less confident, time to plan and prepare for speaking in a more formal situation.
53. The pupils' standards in reading are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. All pupils are taught an appropriate variety of reading skills such as letter sounds and using pictures and context to help to make sense of the words. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils read a variety of books independently and have developed clear preferences. For example, one pupil very much enjoys books by Dick King Smith and spoke enthusiastically about the books she had read. Almost all pupils read fluently and accurately and are using some expression to engage the listeners' interest. Pupils also develop good information retrieval skills. By the end of Year 2, they have good knowledge of the ways to use an index and use a dictionary competently. Pupils are heard to read regularly and good detailed records are kept of what pupils have attained, enabling the teacher to monitor each pupil's progress carefully and to identify what needs to be taught next. This contributes well to the good progress pupils make. Additionally, parents make a strong contribution to the good standards by hearing their children read regularly. The good quality of the home-school books, which are a dialogue between the school and home, also give good support to pupils' development in reading. As pupils progress through the school, they develop wider preferences for a range of authors, such as Jacqueline Wilson, Roald Dahl and Lucy Daniels. Almost all enjoy reading and read at home for pleasure. The range of books often includes poetry, non-fiction and reference books and pupils sometimes use the Internet to find information. By the end of Year 6, almost all pupils are fluent, accurate and expressive readers who talk confidently about characters and understand inference and deduction. They show an understanding of various texts and identify crucial features to justify their views. Group reading is a regular feature of the teaching and pupils talk enthusiastically about this. The teacher works closely with the group and reading skills are taught systematically and well. Records of these sessions are kept diligently, recording each pupil's strengths. Very often, however, points to help the pupil improve and attain the next National Curriculum Level are not recorded. This means that the pupil has no written record of what to aim for next.
54. Standards in writing are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. The school identified writing and spelling as areas for development for the current year and has been successful in its attempts to raise standards. Regular times are set aside for spelling and handwriting practise and these have been effective. Appropriate attention is given to forming letters neatly and correctly at the lower end of the school. Good numbers are starting to join their writing by the end of Year 2. Additionally, basic grammatical structure is established and spelling of common words is usually accurate. Throughout the school, teachers' expectations are high and they consistently model good presentation themselves. Opportunities to write for a variety of purposes, throughout the school, are good. For example, younger pupils write poems and instructions and retell stories. As they become older, they write accounts of 'points of view',

supporting opinions or presenting an argument for or against, or simplify language from a difficult extract. Good amounts of work are achieved and work is generally well presented, dated and with titles included. Pupils are taught effectively how to plan their work. A good example of this was the planning for a discussion on 'Is it a good idea to evacuate children?'. Pupils are given good opportunity to use their English skills in other subjects; for example, they research from books and the Internet in subjects such as history and geography, write reports in science and label plans in design and technology. ICT is used to good purpose when pupils research, edit and present work, but more could be made of such work if it were more systematically included in initial planning.

55. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall throughout the school. There were examples of very good teaching in both classes during the inspection. This indicates that teaching has improved substantially since the last inspection. Teachers plan extremely carefully to cater for a wide range of age and ability. In both classes, very effective ways are employed to teach suitable content and skills to different age groups. In Years 1 and 2, for example, two different texts on a theme of 'Trains' were used to cater for different reading abilities and interests, enabling both year groups to learn well. The younger Year 1 pupils were reading known words and text with support, while encouraged to use picture cues to help them. They discovered the train rhythm of the text and joined in repeated lines. The Year 2 pupils explored their book in different ways, discussing intended audience, author and synopsis. They contributed their own comments and then settled quickly to answering questions to test their understanding. Equally effective, but different methods are used in the older class. The teacher plans in great detail for two groups – Years 5 and 6 and Years 3 and 4. Teaching and oversight of activities alternates between the teacher and teaching assistant with each group. Because of the very good quality of the planning and the very good support of the teaching assistant, this is very successful, resulting in good learning for both groups. Although teachers identify in their planning what the main focus for each group's learning will be, they do not always communicate this clearly enough to the pupils.
56. A wide range of teaching methods is used, which helps to involve all pupils in their learning. Examples include paired or group discussion, paired written work, whole-class model writing scribed by the teacher and oral feedback by pupils about their work. This good variety of methods holds pupils' interest well and motivates them, resulting in continuous good learning. Marking is carried out consistently and positively and gives good feedback about the quality of what is achieved. All lessons finish well, as it is a time when teachers review with the pupils what they have learned, asking key questions. Good opportunities are also made for pupils in different groups and activities to talk about what they have learned. Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need benefit from excellent provision. They have very good quality support and the curriculum is adapted and supported very well to meet their individual needs. Pupils have specially compiled books; for example, with pictures of themselves and family to interest them and help them to start to read independently. The teachers ask a good range of questions, often directed at particular pupils to match their attainment.
57. The development of the subject is good. All documentation is up to date and suitable action has been identified and implemented successfully to raise standards further. Excellent assessment systems have been established, which allow the school to track each pupil's progress very carefully through the school. This information is supported very well by termly targets. The information gained from assessments is used very well and contributes well to raising standards in English.

MATHEMATICS

58. Standards in mathematics, although they fluctuate from year to year, are generally above average. Because they are well taught, pupils throughout the school achieve well. The results of the end of Year 6 tests in 2001 showed that pupils attained above national average standards and did very well when these results were compared with those that they had attained at the end of Year 2. Inspection evidence is that current Year 6 pupils are attaining average standards. Detailed recording of the pupils' past attainment shows that they have made good progress and

achieved well over time. At present, however, pupils are only being taught mathematics on four days of the week. Their overall average standards show that they would have benefited from additional lessons. There are no pupils with identified special educational needs in the Years 3 to 6 class, higher attaining pupils have achieved well over time, but they too could have done even more if they had had more lessons. Last year, pupils in Year 2 attained well above average standards in mathematics. This remains the case in the current year. Assessment of the pupils' mathematical development on entry to the school showed that their attainments were a little above average, so these pupils too have achieved well. The overall quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is good. Pupils with special educational needs have been very well taught, have made very good progress and achieved very well.

59. Standards in mathematics have risen since the time of the last inspection. In Year 6 the improvement is greater than that seen nationally. The staff make and use well regular assessments of the pupils. Targets are set for individuals and areas for development in teaching are identified from these assessments. The targets set for the school reflect these assessments well and present a good level of challenge to pupils and teachers.
60. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. Skills and knowledge in mathematics are very carefully taught. In number, for example, there is regular practise of computation. Pupils are taught to understand what they are doing and to know a number of different ways of doing a calculation. As a result, they learn well. By the end of Year 2, pupils can add and subtract numbers up to 20 with ease and accuracy. They are comfortable dealing with larger numbers. They are able to count mentally in twos and tens and to use this knowledge when undertaking different calculations. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to use the four rules of number to compute, although they are less speedy and accurate when dividing because they have not had sufficient opportunity to practise this skill. They are able to extend their computation to decimals and the higher attaining pupils are able to work out a fraction of a number expressing this as a fraction, a decimal fraction or a percentage. Good attention is given to pupils' ability to use their mathematics. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were counting money. They showed themselves able to do this, applying strategies such as grouping one pence coins into twos to count them alongside two pence coins. In this lesson, there was an example of very good teaching when the teacher intervened to show the pupils how to group coins into ten pence units to assist the ease of counting. This practical aspect of mathematics is evident for the older pupils when they consider whether they should round an answer up or down, dependent on the situation described in the problem they are answering. There is very good emphasis on mathematical language; pupils are encouraged to talk about their work and explain their methods. Year 2 pupils could explain how they had chosen to count their money while Year 6 pupils could talk about the different methods they might use for dividing, with the higher attainers being able to give their relative merits. Good habits are established; for example, Year 6 pupils well understand the need to check answers for sense.
61. A broad curriculum is provided in mathematics. Pupils are taught about shape, space and measurement. Year 2 pupils can measure using units such as centimetres and metres. They do this with appropriate accuracy. Year 6 pupils use a wide range of units in weights and measures and can convert between; for example, metres and kilometres. They can draw lines and angles with appropriate accuracy. Year 2 pupils know the names of two and three-dimensional shapes and can describe them in terms of the number of sides and vertices they have. Year 6 pupils can describe shapes in terms of concepts like reflective or rotational symmetry. Pupils learn to present information in different ways; for example, in Year 2, by making a block graph of the number of pupils who have birthdays in each month, a pictogram of the colour of pupils' eyes and a Carroll diagram of the colour of boys' and girls' eyes. They can read information from these. By Year 6, pupils can select from these and other ways of presenting the data they have collected. Higher attaining pupils can discuss the relative merits of different types of presentation. Good opportunities for developing and consolidating mathematical concepts in other subjects; for example, applying simple formulae when making a spread sheet in information and communication technology (ICT) or measuring how far a toy car travels in science, further extend pupils' understanding. Although the links between ICT and mathematics

are sometimes made, there is not yet sufficient planning of how ICT can be systematically used to support learning in mathematics.

62. Mathematics lessons are very carefully planned. Teachers use their assessments of pupils to set work that accurately meets their needs. Expectations are generally high and most pupils do their best to live up to these, applying themselves well. A good deal of thought has been given to the best way to organise the teaching of mixed age group classes. The challenge of teaching four age groups is particularly effectively met in the Years 3 to 6 class where very good use is made of the very good teaching skills of the teaching assistant. The lack of time for consolidating and practising what they have been taught has, however, had some impact on standards. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 is affected by a lack of mathematical confidence on the part of some pupils. This has an effect on their willingness to attack new problems. It is particularly apparent in pupils who are relatively new to the school. Although the general atmosphere in the class is helpful in raising confidence, pupils have not benefited from a feeling of 'I can do this' that more practise could have given them.

SCIENCE

63. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils in Years 2 and 6 are currently attaining average standards. This is similar to the results at the end of 2001. In both these year groups, most pupils are currently achieving in a satisfactory way. In Years 2 and 6, pupils are almost all reaching the nationally expected level (Level 2 or Level 4) in each aspect of science, but very few pupils are attaining a higher level. There are a small number of pupils in these groups who are capable of attaining this higher level and these pupils are consequently not achieving well enough. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving well. Very good support is given to these pupils to ensure that they learn at a level and speed that is in line with their capabilities.
64. There is satisfactory teaching and learning in the subject. Pupils have been taught each aspect of science and this has been suitably planned to include a good balance of investigative and experimental activities. In Year 2, pupils investigated the difference made to the speed of running of a toy car by different surfaces. Good questioning enabled them to understand that they needed to keep a record of a number of factors; for example, the car and the height of the ramp used, in order to make the test 'fair'. They could not, however, later say why this was necessary to an investigation. Pupils are able to record their actions and observations, but too little practise in using a clear structure for recording their work inhibits the progress of the few potentially higher attaining pupils. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to undertake an investigation; for example, investigating the factors that affect the drying of washing. They can predict outcomes, but most do not yet use scientific reasons for their predictions because they have had insufficient opportunity to learn to do so. Having undertaken the investigation, most can record results using a variety of graphic and written forms to present their findings. A lack of experience prevents potentially higher attaining pupils from being sure of why one form of presentation is better than another.
65. Many aspects of the quality of teaching in science are good. Work is well planned to ensure that pupils of different ages in each class are suitably challenged. There is clear progression in the expectations and outcomes for pupils of different ages. By the end of Year 2, pupils know what plants and animals need to live and they can name the main external features of both the human body and a flowering plant. They recognise and name common materials, such as metal, plastic and wood and they describe accurately their various uses. They understand that 'pushes' and 'pulls' are examples of forces and have a basic understanding about electrical circuits. By the end of Year 6, pupils recognise that there is a great variety of living things and they explain why different organisms are found in different habitats. They can identify many of the internal organs of animals and they can, for instance, explain the role of the heart in the circulatory system. Pupils can describe the properties of a variety of materials and they are confident in describing the differences between solids, liquids and gases. Pupils know that materials can be made into mixtures and are able to describe the different ways in which these can be separated. They know that when objects move, there are a number of forces acting upon them and they can draw diagrams to illustrate this. Because it is some time since they have

studied this, they are unsure of the facts associated with the world in space; for example, being unsure of why day and night or the seasons occur.

66. In both classes, teachers manage lessons very well to ensure that each age group gets an equal share of the available teaching time. Completed work shows that teachers' subject knowledge is good and the conversations held with pupils show that the teachers successfully convey an enthusiasm for the subject. As a consequence, pupils are interested in their work and this has a positive impact on their learning. There is some reduction of the impact of this teaching and this is related to several factors. The timetabling of science does not always reflect the needs of the subject well. Long lessons are planned and, although these are sometimes required to allow pupils to complete an investigation, they are not always of a suitable length if the lesson is of a more factual nature. The time allocated to science overall is shorter than average for older pupils and this restricts the amount of teaching time and, therefore, the amount of work that can be completed. This means that pupils do not learn in sufficient depth to allow them to attain higher levels in science. In addition, in the Years 3 to 6 class, pupils do not have a book that is devoted to the recording of science. This means that they are unable to look back over the work they have previously completed to remind themselves of what they have learned. The effect of this was evident in the discussions held with Year 6 pupils about work they had completed in the last academic year. Although work is very well planned for pupils of below and average attainment, planning is not yet sufficiently good for pupils of potentially higher attainment and too few demands are made of these pupils. This affects their learning and the overall standards attained. ICT is well used on occasion to support learning in science, but this is not yet sufficiently systematically done to ensure that the most is made of this.
67. The management of science is satisfactory. The school has rightly identified the subject as in need of some improvements and the evaluation of the teaching of the subject has identified a number of the same issues as the inspection. Although teachers assess pupils' knowledge and understanding well and use this knowledge in setting activities that meet the needs of most pupils, there is not yet sufficient recording of the assessments made to ensure that a teacher new to the class would be able to plan work for the pupils. This too is an area that is recognised by the school as in need of improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

68. Standards in art and design are above average overall and have risen since the time of the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. The school allocates more than average time to the teaching of art and design and the impact of this is evident particularly amongst the younger pupils. Year 2 pupils have experienced a good range of artistic experiences. They have received very good teaching and these two elements have contributed to their ability to produce work of well above average standards. They can, for example, draw from life with accuracy and confidence. Their drawings of a Victorian stove and a hand sewing machine, for example, were not only recognisable, but also showed some awareness of the use of shading. Three-dimensional models of ducks showed their ability to design, with assistance, and to construct using a variety of tools. Good use is made of ICT in this design aspect of art and in extending the pupils' awareness of colour. The pupils had studied the work of Kandinski and reproduced his work using concentric pattern and colour. They had made some Kandinski influenced work on the computer and during the inspection were reproducing this work in paint.
69. No teaching of art and design was seen for older pupils, but planning, completed work and discussion with pupils show that they have been well taught and that their resultant learning is good. Year 6 pupils are aware of the need to think about work before starting and to plan and practise elements of work before beginning the final product. They have good knowledge of techniques; for example, colour mixing or the use of viewfinders to look at fine detail. Their drawings of vegetables done in preparation for a still life were of good quality, showing an attention to detail. Work on pattern involved pupils in looking at some art from different cultures, but this is an aspect of their knowledge in art and design that is not as well developed. ICT was well used in this particular unit of work to extend pupils' awareness of the use of repeat in

pattern. Pupils have just begun a unit of work about sculpture and already have some opinions about the type of work and the materials they wish to use. Their enjoyment of artwork is evident.

70. Work in art and design is well planned and teachers ensure that there is good balance to the work undertaken. A national scheme of work is used well to underpin this planning and to ensure that pupils build their skills and knowledge systematically. The scheme is, however, well adapted to suit the particular needs of this small school. Teachers hold very high expectations of pupils; for example, in a Years 1 and 2 lesson, they expect pupils to use a 'recipe' for the creation of a mixed colour so that they could mix more of the same colour if it was needed. Pupils respond well and in this lesson, they worked with care and attention to detail. The resultant paintings were of a very good standard. Artwork is well present in displays around the school, contributing to the learning environment and pupils' self-esteem.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

71. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is above the national expectation and pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Pupils develop their skills systematically and well. By the end of Year 2; for example, they have learned ways to combine both sheet and recyclable materials and use moving joints, as they did when making moving vehicles and moving pictures. They know how to make different types of walls and towers, building towers, measuring and finding out how to make the structures more stable. When looking at bridges, they find out how to make them strong. Additionally, they have good skills in cutting, shaping and assembling components. By the end of Year 6, they have a well developed idea of 'design brief' and draw detailed plans using labelled diagrams and measurements. Work is carried out with a good degree of precision from these detailed plans and evaluated against the original design at the end. For example, when making 'photo frames', pupils tested that it was the right size for the photo for which it was intended and the decoration matched the room in which it was to be displayed. Pupils have a good knowledge of a range of skills. The simple mechanisms that are being used in the current project for 'Pop-up Books' are a good example of this. Pupils have gained good knowledge by careful teaching and practise of rotating pop-ups, paper springs, sliders and lift-up flaps, which they will use in their books. Pupils work with accuracy with a range of materials. Building objects that contain a light, for example, required pupils to use an electrical circuit and its components in their designs.
72. The teaching of the subject is good throughout the school and because of this, pupils learn and achieve well. Skills are taught systematically and well and work is planned well to interest pupils and challenge them. Teachers' expectations are high and, consequently, both planning and products reflect these high expectations. Good links with the local secondary school give pupils good opportunities to use the facilities there, thus benefiting pupils from extra teaching and resources. This makes a good contribution to the high standards achieved. There is a high enthusiasm for design and technology in the school, both from the pupils and staff. Pupils work well with a good level of concentration. Developing skills such as paper springs and sliders for their pop-up books was such an example. Pupils worked very carefully whilst they practised these, discussing what they might make of the skill in their planned designs and sharing information.
73. The curriculum is well planned throughout the school to include suitable coverage of what is required. Although teachers know their pupils' attainments well, formal assessment systems have not yet been established. Although there are examples of pupils designing using a drawing program on the computer, the use of information and communication technology is not yet fully incorporated into the curriculum.

GEOGRAPHY

74. Standards in geography are at the expected levels throughout the school and pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Standards appear to have dropped since the last inspection, but time allocation has also dropped since the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. It is now in the lower quartile

when compared with schools nationally. This means that pupils have the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge and reach an average level, but, despite good teaching, this is insufficient to allow them to attain higher levels. By the end of Year 2, pupils have studied the local area and contrasted this with an area in Africa. They use secondary sources to look at rainforests, grasslands and deserts. They can compare their own homes and weather with those in Africa. They have contrasted the village of Shirwell with the town of Barnstaple and studied maps to identify their homes, school and route to school. Good use of the local environment ensures frequent trips out to identify physical and human features. They use sketches and photographs to identify attractive and unattractive features. Other places visited for holidays are learned about with the use of 'Where in the world has Traveller Tom been?'.

75. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident in discussing environmental issues, such as improving the environment by finding solutions. They have appropriate experience of fieldwork, such as the recent river study. Here they noted human use, changes in height and width of the river, water speed and river bank features. They can use maps to identify the shape and relief of the river. Through the use of 'What is in the news?' they identify locations around the world and learn about climate and physical conditions. Life in a village in India is compared with life in Shirwell. They are confident in asking and responding to geographical questions.
76. Teaching throughout the school is good and there is some very good teaching. Lessons are well researched and prepared. There are clear explanations of new concepts and good use of questioning to build on previous knowledge and relate new knowledge to previous experience. Examples of a good match of work to different ages and abilities were seen both in the scrutiny and in the lesson seen. Pupils are taught appropriate geographical terms. For example, 'non-permeable' in a lesson following up a river erosion field trip. Teaching helps pupils to develop good research skills by using books, photos and computers; for example, a group was asked to use a search engine to access the Internet to investigate facts about erosion. Pupils also used the good range of books available and are very co-operative about sharing resources and information with everyone. Pupils are very happy to ask and answer questions and to seek help from the teacher.
77. Although the teaching and learning are at least good throughout the school, the overall time given to geography is less than most schools nationally and enables pupils to reach only satisfactory standards. The teachers have very good individual knowledge of their pupils' attainments, but there is a weakness in the lack of formal recording of this knowledge. The use of information and communication technology is not fully incorporated into planning of geography.

HISTORY

78. At the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in history are at the expected level and achievement is satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Standards have been maintained at the end of Year 2 and have risen at the end of Year 6, since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a suitable idea of the passage of time and order of events through their early studies of themselves, their mothers, and grandparents, and by studying their life as babies and then toddlers. They have developed a sound idea; for example, of what homes were like a long time ago and what sea side holidays were like in the past. Key events studied of the 'Great Fire of London' are remembered appropriately. Learning about 'Remembrance Day' has helped pupils to recall what we are remembering and the origins of events in the past. The pupils have sound recall of the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling.
79. By the end of Year 6, pupils have appropriate factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history of Britain and some other countries. They can describe the characteristics of Ancient Egypt, for example, in terms of lifestyle and culture. Most pupils have wide ranging knowledge and understanding of the Second World War; for example, many appreciate the political background and empathise with the wide effect it had on people's lives. They have opinions about whether they think that children should be evacuated or not, which was part of their

studies. Pupils know how to draw sensible conclusions by looking at pictures and objects; for example, when looking at landscapes of the Nile, they make deductions about life in the past. Pupils recall going to Barnstaple museum to learn about army kit, air raids and blackouts from artefacts and books. They use the Internet to research for ideas and the digital camera to photograph artefacts. They write empathetically about, for example, different children's experiences of the war.

80. No teaching was seen owing to the nature of the timetable. However, from scrutiny of work and pupil discussion, the teaching is good throughout the school and the pupils make good progress in their work. Work is planned very well to develop historical skills systematically and to interest and challenge pupils. Good links are made with literacy. The amount of curriculum time given to history is lower than most schools. This accounts for the good teaching and good learning leading to only average attainment. As in geography, pupils have the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge and to reach an average level, but, despite good teaching, this is insufficient to allow them to attain higher levels. Teachers have good knowledge of individual pupils' previous attainment and plan work well for them to develop their knowledge and understanding and historical skills. A weakness is that there is no formal method of recording this knowledge. Planning does not take full account of the use of information and communication technology.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

81. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) for pupils at the end of Year 2 are satisfactory overall. Before the current academic year, these pupils had very little access to the school's computers because they were located in an area being used as a classroom. In the last year, the pupils have achieved well to attain average standards. Pupils can all load and use the range of facilities available on an art and graphics program and they used these to create very effective patterns and drawings. They can talk about the difficulties they have encountered in doing this; for example, the way colour spreads on a colour 'fill' if lines are not completely joined. Pupils have used the computer to write and are able to talk about the way they would make their work look better by changing the size or the style of their writing. Pupils talk confidently about their experiences when using computers and have a good awareness of the variety of uses for computers in their lives. They do not yet have sufficient knowledge of the data handling and control technology because these topics are planned for later in the current term.
82. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory. As with the younger pupils, much of the work has been undertaken in the last year and pupils have achieved well in this period. Year 6 pupils have suitable knowledge of the use of the computer to write and present work. They can use 'cut and paste' and the 'spell checker' for editing purposes and can add pictures and borders to their work for effect. They have experience of using the computer for accessing information, for instance, through the Internet and can do this effectively. They are aware that there are different ways in which the information they want can be obtained and that the way that a question is phrased can alter the usefulness of the information obtained. Pupils can use a simple spreadsheet, for example, to cost a party and know how this could be used if the number of guests changed. They are just gaining knowledge of the use of the computer in monitoring; for example, temperature or speed by the use of sensors. Pupils are well aware of the usefulness of computers, but are also aware that they are not always the best way of tackling work.
83. The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is good, but is relatively recently established and has not yet had time to have raised standards to an above average level. In both classes, work in ICT is well planned by the teacher and is appropriately different for the pupils in different age groups. The teaching of the pupils is largely undertaken by a well trained and knowledgeable teaching assistant. Although following the plans written by the teacher, this assistant uses good skills in questioning pupils to ensure that they undertake work thoughtfully and this promotes good learning. Pupils are well managed and there is a mutual respect shown in the sessions, particularly those with the older pupils. This successfully encourages pupils to try hard and concentrate well. Pupils' natural interest in ICT is well harnessed and contributes positively to learning. ICT is sometimes used to support work in other subjects; for example, in researching

in geography or in playing a decision-making game to support learning about Ancient Egypt. There is suitable use of calculators in mathematics and tape recorders in English and music, but there is not sufficient planning of this to ensure that the potential of ICT is fully exploited. The school is aware of this and the development of cross-curricular use of ICT is identified on the subject development plan. As is the case in a number of subjects, teachers and teaching assistants make useful ongoing assessments of pupils and these are well used in setting work. There is, however, too little written down about groups of pupils to give a suitable level of information to a new teacher. The overall provision and standards in ICT have improved substantially since the time of the last inspection when statutory requirements were not met.

MUSIC

84. Standards in music at the end of Year 2 are average. Pupils achieve in a satisfactory way. They know and can sing a number of songs with reasonable control over pitch and dynamics. They know how to play correctly a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. They can combine the sounds of these instruments to create a composition to a planned effect. They can; for example, combine the sound of a glockenspiel with maracas, a drum and stones collected in a basket to create the effect of walking across the beach of a desert island. With help, they can transfer their efforts into written form, using symbols to indicate how the sounds will be combined. The pupils have an understanding that the instrument they choose depends on the type of sound they want; for example, choosing the maracas for a continuous sound and the drum for a sporadic one. Pupils have experience of listening to music and can talk about how the music can reflect different moods. Teaching and learning in music for these younger pupils is satisfactory and has enabled pupils to gain suitable skills and knowledge in the subject. Lessons are well planned and organised and there is a good mix of different types of music making planned. Lessons are, however, not always as effective as they might be because pupils are sometimes restless and the teacher is not sufficiently insistent on pupils listening well to each other. This slows lessons and learning is also slowed.
85. Because no lessons were seen in music for Year 6 pupils, there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching and learning, the standards attained or the achievement of these pupils. Evidence from talking to pupils, observing a lesson with Years 3 and 4 pupils and discussions with pupils shows that, despite good teaching at the present time, Year 6 pupils have gaps in their knowledge associated with the quality of teaching they received up to the current academic year. In the lesson seen, pupils were learning well. The lesson was very well planned and organised. Pupils worked very well together to compose their music and greatly enjoyed the experience. Year 6 pupils talk with satisfactory knowledge about their work in composition, in singing and have an acceptable musical vocabulary with which to describe the music they have made or heard. Because there was no opportunity to hear pupils sing or play or to see the quality of the compositions, evaluations of overall achievement in these areas are not possible. Pupils have very limited knowledge of composers, being unable to recall any names or types of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

86. No judgements were made about standards of physical education in the last inspection, mainly because of the limited accommodation and outside space provided then within the school. Good improvements have been made to the accommodation and pupils now have regular access to the hall. The teaching of the subject is good and standards meet the national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6, representing satisfactory achievement overall. Although teaching is good and there is good learning in lessons, the good access to the hall is relatively recent and has not yet had time to impact on standards. Provision for swimming is good as all pupils swim together for six weeks each year. This good provision helps to ensure that all pupils swim at least the 25 metres required by the National Curriculum and many pupils swim well in excess of this by the end of Year 6. This good provision is important in respect of the safety of pupils in relation to their proximity to rivers and the sea.
87. This is a very small school and provision for physical education and games clubs puts an

enormous pressure on the two teachers. The caretaker has kindly volunteered to train as a football coach and makes a very good contribution to the curriculum and to standards achieved by the pupils, by taking a popular football club. Additionally, the school has greatly benefited from extra games' resources, which are allocated to the school with the training.

88. By the end of Year 2, pupils link actions into short movement phrases and clearly articulate what they are doing. They have suitable awareness of taking their weight onto different parts of the body, travel by rolling, balancing or climbing and incorporate stretches and curls into their movements. In dance, they learn to incorporate dynamic qualities such as 'heavy', 'light' and 'strong' and perform short dances. Games' skills have been acquired systematically by the end of Year 2. Pupils learn how to throw underarm, whilst higher attaining pupils throw overarm. They have learned different ways of hitting, striking and kicking, as well as fielding. Using these skills, they have gained the concept of being part of a small team and how to score within that situation. The pupils in Class 2 develop their gymnastics further in terms of their sequence work containing a greater variety of movements, incorporating; for example, direction, speed, levels and rotation. Games' skills are further developed and the range of games widened; for example, pupils were learning tennis skills in terms of different ways of hitting the ball. Although no dance lessons were seen, planning indicates a good emphasis on dance with a good level of challenging planning. The school uses outside help well to further raise standards, by bringing in dance expertise.
89. The quality of the teaching is good. Lesson planning is good and the lessons always follow an appropriate format to include a warm-up and cool down activity. Pupils' demonstration of movements is used profitably to improve standards. Activities are carefully chosen to challenge pupils; for example, time limits were used in a fitness activity to raise the challenge even further. Class teachers organise and resource lessons well. Involvement in carrying apparatus safely for younger pupils is limited by the heaviness of some of the apparatus; for example, the benches. All pupils are kept fully active and involved and time and equipment are used well. Class teachers have a high awareness of safety aspects, particularly when in the hall where space is limited. Teaching assistants are used particularly well at these times to ensure the safety of the pupils who have complex special educational needs. This enables the pupils to join in fully and supports their learning well, ensuring that they achieve as well as the other pupils. Behaviour is very good during lessons and pupils show caring attitudes towards one another, taking turns and sharing apparatus very well. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work, stay on task and practise to improve their work.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

90. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Years 2 and 6. This means that standards have shown good improvement at the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory throughout the school.
91. Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of Old and New Testament stories, such as the Creation story and the stories Jesus told. They have gained a broad understanding of Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter and have learned the importance of food in such festivals. They have started to learn about other religions and compare and contrast; for example, homes and lives of Christian and Muslim families or Christian and Jewish Harvest Festival celebrations. As pupils develop their knowledge through the school, they use previous knowledge and reflect on their own theories. Their own version of the Creation story is an example of this. Additionally, they learn about the creation stories of other cultures. By the end of Year 6, they have learned to discuss, compare and contrast a satisfactory range of religious themes and have sound knowledge of Christian and other faiths. They classify different religious buildings, for example, and know the names of importance, such as 'font', 'altar' and 'pulpit'. They discuss the meaning of 'temptation', in relation to Adam and Eve, and relate this to situations in their own lives. Consequences of decisions are discussed and reflected upon. Pupils continue to compare and contrast different religious beliefs such as beliefs shared by Jews and Christians.

92. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection, but it is possible to make judgements from a scrutiny of pupils' work and by talking to the pupils. Teaching is good overall. A good range of methods are used, including whole-class discussion and debate, which keep pupils interested. Challenging concepts are tackled well and pupils are asked to think deeply about their own feelings within a religious context. There are regular links with literacy. The reason that the teaching and learning are good and the standards are only satisfactory is attributable to the amount of time that is spent on religious education, which is low when compared to schools nationally. Planning for religious education is based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Although largely Christian in focus, the provision has due regard for aspects of other major religions. Although teachers' knowledge of pupils' attainments is good, there is a weakness as there are no written records.