

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **SHERINGTON C OF E FIRST SCHOOL**

Sherington, Newport Pagnell

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110407

Interim Headteacher: Mrs Arlene Bourne

Reporting inspector: Margaret Dickinson  
12373

Dates of inspection: 5 – 7 March 2001

Inspection number: 10031

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane Sherington Bucks
Postcode:	MK16 9NF
Telephone number:	01908 610470
Fax number:	-
Appropriate authority:	Milton Keynes
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Stanton-Saringer
Date of previous inspection:	16 September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12373	Margaret Dickinson	Registered inspector	English Religious Education Art and design History Geography Music English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards: the school's results and achievements? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13336	Ian Adams	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20086	David Speakman	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Special Educational Needs Equal opportunities Mathematics Science Information and communications technology Design and technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sherington Church of England School is voluntary controlled school situated in the village of Sherington, just north of Newport Pagnell. It is very small in comparison with schools nationally, with two classes and 47 pupils on roll. There are similar numbers of boys and girls in the school but many more boys than girls in Year 3. The number of children currently in reception is smaller than is usually the case, which means that the number of pupils on roll is likely to fall over the next few years. Two children are from an ethnic minority background, which is above average. Around two per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below average. Two pupils speak English as an additional language but neither is in the early stages of learning the language. There is a below average number of pupils with special educational needs and none has a Statement of Special Educational Need. Most of the children come from homes that are owner occupied. On balance, the socio-economic backgrounds of pupils is above average. Children enter the school with above average skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development.

The Interim Headteacher is on a temporary, one-year contract pending the appointment of a permanent headteacher from next September.

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

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Test results have improved over the last two years. Pupils' attainment is above average by the end of the reception year and continues to be above average by the time they reach seven. In the current Year 3, standards in reading and mathematics are well above the expectations for this age. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The quality of teaching and the leadership and management are satisfactory. Taking children's standards when they enter the school into account, their achievement, and the quality of education they receive, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils do well in reading and mathematics because these basic skills are taught well;
- Standards of speaking and listening are better than is normally found because pupils have plenty of opportunity to share their ideas and opinions; these are valued by the teachers;
- Pupils sing well because they have plenty of opportunity to develop their singing skills and they benefit from the musical expertise of a learning support assistant;
- The school is very good at helping pupils to develop their moral and social awareness. Therefore, pupils have good attitudes and behave very well; their personal development is also very good;
- The school has established very good links with parents; they have very positive views about the school and many frequently come into school to help.

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

- Children in the reception class do not have enough opportunity to participate in creative and imaginative activities and the lack of an outside play area restricts the provision for their physical development;
- Standards in art could be higher;
- The information from the assessments the school carries out could be better used to check that pupils are making enough progress over time, to set targets and make sure that enough is being expected of them;
- The development plan could be better organised to set out clearly what the school needs to focus on in order to improve.

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

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

The school was last inspected in September 1996. There has been satisfactory improvement since then in relation to the key issues that were identified and other weaknesses within the report. The curriculum planning has developed well. The quality of teaching has improved. Pupils are working at higher standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science than they were at that time. Standards in religious education are now better but there has not been enough improvement in art, which remains a weakness. The school development plan is still in need of improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
reading	A	A	A*	A*	well above average    A above average        B average                 C below average         D well below average    E
writing	B	B	A*	A*	
mathematics	A	A	A*	A*	

In the 2000 national tests, pupils' performance was in the top 5 per cent of schools for reading, writing and mathematics, both when compared to schools nationally and to schools where pupils come from similar backgrounds. A very high proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 3 in mathematics, just under a half attained it in writing and almost three-quarters in reading. The teachers' assessments in science show that pupils' attainments were similarly very high. Whilst, over the last three years, pupils' test results have exceeded the national average in all three areas, their performance in 2000 was much higher than it had been previously. Nevertheless, the number of pupils entered each year is small and any comparisons must be treated cautiously: one or two performing better or worse than expected can significantly affect the overall picture.

Inspection findings show that, by the time they reach the end of the reception year, children exceed the nationally defined goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and personal and social development. They reach the recommended standards in creative and physical development. Their progress in these areas is restricted by limited opportunities to take part in creative and imaginative activities and the lack of an outdoor play area. Standards in Year 2 this year are not as high as in 2000 because the year group is not as able but pupils' attainment is above average in each subject. In Year 3, standards in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics are well above what is expected by Year 3; in writing standards are above the expectations. Standards are not as high as pupils' performance in the previous year's national tests would suggest. Two out of the eleven pupils who took the tests transferred to other schools at the end of Year 2. Also, inspectors look at a wider range of work than that assessed in the tests. One factor which affects standards in writing is that pupils do not have frequent enough opportunities to develop their fluency and expression through tackling extended pieces of writing across a range of subjects. In both Key Stage 1 and Year 3, achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is satisfactory, considering pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1. In other subjects, standards are appropriate and pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory. The only exceptions are singing, where standards are better than is normally found, and art, where standards fall below the expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 3. Progress in art is unsatisfactory because pupils do not develop their skills and understanding in a steady way.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils respond well to all aspects of school life. They enjoy school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. No instances of inappropriate behaviour were seen. Pupils are polite, friendly and kind to one another.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate very well to each other and to the adults who work with them. They are tolerant of other pupils who have difficulties and are very supportive of each other.
Attendance	Very good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-8 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	satisfactory	satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. All teaching during the inspection was at least satisfactory and 45 per cent was good. No teaching was very good. Throughout the school, teachers plan lessons well and have good relationships with their pupils. This means pupils are interested in their work and work at an appropriate pace. Teachers value pupils' contribution and this helps pupils to feel confident and to develop good levels of independence. Teachers have clear expectations that pupils will be attentive and concentrate but they could expect better standards of presentation in many cases. A number of older pupils do not take enough care in how they present their work. The teaching of English and mathematics, including the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are satisfactory. Tasks are appropriate and are adapted for pupils of differing abilities although, on occasions, more could be expected of the oldest, higher-attaining pupils in the school, in their writing. When teachers mark pupils' work, more guidance could be given to pupils on how they could improve.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is appropriately planned and covered. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been well implemented. There are some restrictions in the provision for children in the reception class. There is no structured programme for personal, social and health education. Teaching time in Year 3 is less than the recommended minimum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage and individual education plans are well organised, with specific targets.
Provision for pupils with	Satisfactory. Neither of the pupils is in the early stages of learning the

English as an additional language	language. Teachers work hard to ensure they are fully included in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and this has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school pays very good attention to promoting good behaviour and attendance. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare and safety are good. Information from the assessments teachers carry out could be better used to track pupils' progress more effectively.

The school works very effectively with parents and they in turn value all that the school does for their children. A good number frequently come into school to help. Children in the reception class have limited opportunities for creative and imaginative play and the lack of outdoor play facilities affects the school's provision for their physical development. There are very good links with the local and wider community. The school organises a good range of opportunities to support pupils' learning, such as visits to places nearby as well as inviting a range of visitors to come into school to enrich pupils' learning.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The Interim Headteacher has in a short time ensured that all staff work well as a team and has built up very good links with parents. She has sensibly not introduced too many changes but those that have been brought about are appropriate. Teachers have limited knowledge of the standards in their subjects beyond their own class but there are appropriate plans to develop this aspect of their role.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are developing their role in monitoring standards and the overall provision in the school. They are very supportive and the initiative to link governors with individual subjects is working well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school development plan is overly detailed and does not provide a clear and manageable tool for evaluating, monitoring and improving the work of the school. Assessments are not analysed sufficiently to track pupils' progress as they move through the school.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Funding is used well. There is a substantial budget surplus but this has been appropriately ear-marked to protect staffing levels as the smaller than usual reception class moves through the school.

Staffing and resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, due to the lack of a school hall and outdoor play facilities for the children in the reception class. The governors pay appropriate attention to whether they get best value from the funding they allocate but this is not formally recorded in minutes.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• Pupils are expected to work hard</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• Their children are making good progress</li> <li>• Behaviour is good</li> <li>• Children enjoy coming to school</li> <li>• Parents find that staff in the school are easy to approach if they have queries or concerns</li> </ul>	<p>Of those parents who responded to the questionnaire before the inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21 per cent of parents would like a greater range of activities outside lessons</li> <li>• 12 per cent do not feel they are well informed about how their children are getting on</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments on pupils' behaviour and personal development, which were very good. They found the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, with 45 per cent good. The leadership and management is satisfactory. Pupils are expected to work hard in most lessons but higher attaining pupils in Year 3 do not always make enough progress in writing. Inspectors found that the school's systems for keeping in touch with their child's progress were good and felt that the opportunities offered to pupils during the school day outweighed the need for after school activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the school with above average basic skills and make satisfactory progress during their first year. By the time they reach the end of the reception year, they exceed the nationally defined early learning goals in all areas apart from creative and physical development. They make good progress in developing their personal and social skills because clear emphasis is placed upon this aspect by the teacher and adult helpers. By the time they begin Year 1, the youngest children have acquired good work habits and levels of independence.
2. In the 2000 national tests, pupils in Year 2 did particularly well in reading, writing and mathematics. Their performance was very high and within the top five per cent when compared both to schools nationally and those where a similar proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The teacher's own assessment in science showed a similar picture of very high attainment. However, there were only 11 pupils in this year group, therefore these comparisons must be treated with great caution. The small number of pupils also means that reliable comparisons cannot be made between the performance of girls and boys. Over the last three years, pupils' performance has exceeded the national levels, although they have not been quite as high as the 2000 results. The average scores over this three-year period show that pupils are about two and half terms ahead of the expected standard in mathematics, two terms ahead in reading and about a term ahead in writing. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
3. The inspection findings confirm that standards have improved since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above the expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils' standards are appropriate and, given their above average attainment when they start school, their achievement over time is satisfactory. However, pupils in Years 2 and 3 could be making better progress in some aspects of writing. Standards are lower than the 2000 test results because the pupils in Year 2 are not as able as the previous year group. In the 2000 national tests, all pupils reached the expected levels for their age and a good proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 3, particularly in reading and mathematics. This year several pupils are unlikely to attain the expected levels and fewer are likely to reach the higher Level 3. Inspection findings show that, by Year 3, pupils' attainments in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics are well above the expectations for their age. Standards in writing and science are above the expectations. Pupils achieve satisfactorily during this year and work at appropriate levels, on balance. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in the same way that other pupils do. This is because teachers and learning support assistants make sure they are involved in lessons and are able to play a full part through, for example, answering questions, reading texts or demonstrating their work.
4. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are better than is normally found. Most pupils read their books with a good degree of fluency and when they come across words they find difficult, they made a good effort to work it out by, for example, sounding it out or looking at the pictures. Higher attaining pupils read well and enjoy talking about their favourite books. Pupils have a good grasp of spelling patterns and many exceed the expectations in both spelling and punctuation. They do not have enough opportunity to write more extended pieces of work in English and subjects such as history and religious education do not make enough of a contribution to developing pupils' skills in this respect. Handwriting skills are weaker because pupils do not yet acquire these skills in a consistent and steady way as they move through the school. Teachers do not place enough emphasis on this and pupils are sometimes allowed to get away with carelessly presented work, which affects their handwriting standards. This also applies to pupils in Year 3.
5. In Year 3, many pupils' speaking and listening skills exceed the expectations for their age. Pupils also read confidently and independently. They follow punctuation well and use inflection to bring the words 'alive'. Pupils have a good grasp of how to use non-fiction books and they understand the use of contents and index pages. In writing, there are few pupils working at the higher Level 3,

considering nearly half the pupils were assessed as reaching that level in their end of Key Stage 1 tests. Their knowledge of spelling and punctuation is good but they do not have enough opportunity to write more extended pieces of work in order to organise their ideas and develop more variety, interest and fluency in their writing. Other subjects of the curriculum make a satisfactory contribution to developing pupils' literacy skills. In history, pupils use reference books to find out information about the Vikings, for example, and they record their findings in science. However, there is more scope for examining how subjects such as history, geography and religious education can help pupils to develop their skills and confidence in writing more extended pieces of work.

6. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have acquired a good grasp of number. They can subtract two mentally from two-digit numbers and 10 from three-digit numbers. They use written methods to add numbers up to a hundred and multiply numbers together and they are beginning to develop an understanding of sharing numbers into equal parts. They are confident identifying shapes and have appropriate knowledge of their various properties. By Year 3, pupils use their knowledge of number and other aspects mathematics well and they are confident to apply their knowledge to different situations. Their ability to calculate mentally is well above what is expected by this age and many are confident applying their knowledge of number to their work on decimals. Pupils use the skills they gain in numeracy well in other subjects, such as science and geography. Pupils have a good basic knowledge of science. They observe changes and predict what might happen when they undertake investigations. They use scientific vocabulary well.
7. In other subjects, pupils meet the expected standard by the end of Years 2 and 3 in information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography, music, physical education and religious education. In all these subjects, their progress is satisfactory. Pupils sing particularly well and, in this aspect of music, many exceed the expectations for this age. Their standards in art and design are below what is expected by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 3. This is because the pupils have not had enough experience of art as they have moved through the school so have not acquired a secure foundation in skills and understanding. For this reason, their achievement in this subject is unsatisfactory.

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

8. Pupils have good attitudes towards the school and are enthusiastic. They enjoy coming to school and are keen to participate in the activities provided. They take pleasure in their own successes and are generous in their praise of others, such as when evaluating others' performance in physical education. Most are confident when replying to adults and they listen with attention to what their teachers and other pupils say. The great majority of pupils show an active interest in school life and are keen to participate in the range of activities provided by the school. They sing with gusto and enthusiasm in daily acts of collective worship, for example.
9. Behaviour is very good and this contributes to an industrious working atmosphere during lessons. Parents' views support this judgement. Very occasionally a small number of pupils can become restless and inattentive, but surrounding pupils ignore their attempts to distract. During playtimes and lunch times, behaviour is good and they are pleasant social occasions. The pupils know what is right and wrong and they are aware of the consequences of their actions. Pupils are polite and courteous when talking to adults. All show respect for property and help to tidy up when necessary. There is no evidence of racism, sexism or bullying, and pupils feel safe and secure at school. There have been no exclusions over recent years.
10. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are very good. Pupils work well together in lessons. They relate well to pupils who have special educational needs or who come from a different ethnic background. During the inspection, several pupils offered spontaneously and willingly to spend their playtime sharing a book with a pupil who had special educational needs. When required to do so, pupils co-operate and collaborate very well together, helping each other as a matter of course. Pupils with special educational needs generally have very good attitudes to learning and they work with concentration in small groups and with individual support.

11. Pupils respond well when asked to take responsibility. They enjoy helping to clear away after lunch or put away resources after lessons. When pupils are given opportunities to make their own choices, such as in design and technology and science lessons, they use their initiative and do not rely too heavily on adult help. Pupils show maturity, independence and self-discipline when working alone or within groups because staff expect them to act in this way. Pupils' standards of behaviour and quality of relationships and personal development are a strength of the school; this represents an improvement since the last inspection.
12. Attendance is very good. The attendance rate at the school, at 97.5 per cent, is very high in comparison with other schools nationally and the rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average.

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

13. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least satisfactory and 45 per cent were good. None were very good or better. Teaching was satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and physical education. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on teaching in the remaining subjects. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. At that time there were some weaknesses in teachers' knowledge of the curriculum and they did not always expect enough of pupils. None of the teachers currently in the school was in post at the time of the last inspection.
14. The teaching of children in the reception year is satisfactory. They are encouraged by the teacher to become responsible and independent from an early stage and this is reflected in their positive attitudes and their ability to listen and concentrate. Children settle to work quickly and organise themselves well because there is a clear expectation that they will do this. Although the reception children are taught in a mixed-age class with Year 1 pupils, appropriate tasks are planned for them in literacy and numeracy and they are well prepared for transition to the Key Stage 1 curriculum. The teacher allocates specific periods when they receive direct teaching as a reception year group. When the children are supported by adult helpers or parents, the teachers ensure that adults are well prepared. There is, however, a lack of role-play and creative and imaginative play for these children and they spend a much larger proportion of time in more formal learning situations rather than participating in structured play activities.
15. In Key Stage 1 and Year 3, the teachers teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. Lessons are planned appropriately and resources carefully prepared. Teachers usually allocate appropriate tasks in literacy and numeracy lessons, according to the abilities of the pupils. This helps pupils to develop their skills in an appropriate and steady way. They adapt tasks for pupils with special educational needs and show how additional support will be given. However, in literacy lessons, they do not always indicate how the planned tasks will challenge higher attaining pupils and this means they are sometimes working well within their capabilities. However, this was done effectively in a numeracy lesson, which involved adding and subtracting 10 from 2 and 3 digit numbers. The teacher planned good extension work for higher attaining pupils or those who finished early. This meant that all pupils were interested and challenged and therefore worked at a good pace. In another lesson with the younger pupils, which involved looking at different ways of making 10, the planned activities built appropriately upon what the pupils had learned previously. In this way, it was clear that pupils were steadily building up their skills and knowledge. They learned in this lesson that the order of numbers does not matter when adding. In the majority of literacy lessons, teachers expect more of the higher attaining pupils and give them more demanding tasks. In one lesson, for example, higher attaining pupils in Year 3 were expected to look at fables in more depth and were challenged by some good questions. However, in another lesson, not enough was expected of these pupils and they made slower progress in writing when asked to continue an excerpt from a playscript.
16. Teachers relate well to their pupils. They use humour well and encourage and cajole them in a pleasant way, which helps to get the best out of them. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils will behave. They manage pupils effectively and, across the school, this results in positive attitudes and a distinct lack of misbehaviour. In most cases, teachers use questioning well to check

pupils' understanding and keep them involved in the lesson. In a good physical education lesson, the teacher used questions well to encourage the pupils to give their own opinions. This helped them to express their ideas and made them think carefully about specific learning points. The pupils benefit from the expertise of a learning support assistant who teaches singing. She transmits her enthusiasm for singing to the pupils and, as a result, they learn a number of demanding songs and perform them with good levels of confidence.

17. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their class teachers and support staff and make sound progress. Teachers make sure that these pupils and those who speak English as an additional language are fully included and have as much opportunity to offer answers to questions as the other pupils. In one or two lessons during the inspection, boys in Year 3 dominated the discussion and the girls in this class had little opportunity to contribute answers and ideas. The teachers do not always pick this up.
18. Analysis of pupils' written work shows that in some cases pupils could be working at a faster rate and that more attention could be paid to what pupils have already attained. For example, pupils in Year 3 who have been assessed as already exceeding the expectations for their age in the national tests do not always write at that level. Similarly, in science, higher attaining pupils in Year 3 are not always expected to work at a more challenging level than the average attaining pupils in Year 2, which means they are being held back. Marking in several subjects could be more helpful to pupils to show them how they could improve and set them short-term targets. Analysis of pupils' books across various subjects also indicates that more could be expected of the older pupils, in particular, in terms of how they present their work. Many do not take enough care in how they set out their work or their standards of handwriting. This was found to be a weakness at the last inspection and has not been fully addressed.

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

19. The quality and range of the curriculum is satisfactory for pupils of all ages. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection, when the curriculum was a key issue for improvement. An appropriate range of learning opportunities is provided which meets the needs of all pupils. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and all subjects of the National Curriculum, as well as religious education, are taught. Curriculum documentation is beginning to reflect the latest national guidance. The way time is allocated to different subjects is generally appropriate. However there is less time than average given to science and religious education. Some curriculum time is used to teach recorder to Years 2 and 3, which is not a requirement of the National Curriculum for music. Teaching time for pupils at Key Stage 1, exceeds the minimum recommendation but teaching time for pupils in Year 3 falls below the recommended hours.
20. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy and indications are that the teaching of literacy is having a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been implemented well. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects, except music, and many have been reviewed appropriately in the light of recent national guidance. There are some weaknesses in the provision for children in the reception class. There is insufficient opportunity for children to develop the full range social and physical skills through organised outdoor play. There is also a lack of opportunity for children to participate in creative and imaginative activities, such as role-play and this restricts children's progress in creative development.
21. Curriculum planning is appropriate to the mixed age classes, both of which contain pupils from different key stages. In order to avoid repetition, subjects such as science, design and technology, history, geography and art are organised on a two-year cycle, which is appropriate. However, in science, the work that is planned for higher attaining pupils in Year 3 does not differ enough from that expected of average attaining pupils in Year 2 and, as a result, the older pupils could be working in more depth.
22. The schools' provision for equal opportunities is satisfactory and this is promoted positively by all staff. Pupils of all ages and abilities have the opportunity to take part in the learning activities offered

by the school. However, in some lessons and assemblies, boys contribute much more than girls and the teachers do not always pick this up and redress the balance.

23. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils' needs are identified at an early stage and sound support is provided. Individual education plans contain specific targets for pupils to achieve; these are reviewed regularly. Teachers consider carefully how learning activities can be adapted, when necessary, to help pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
24. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. The curriculum is enhanced by a good number of visits; local places are frequently used to support pupils' learning in subjects such as history and geography. Visitors also come into school to enrich and extend pupils' experiences. Recent initiatives have included visitors from West Africa, musicians from Milton Keynes Music Service and theatre groups. The school also regularly organises themed weeks, such as African Week and the Japanese Week, currently being planned. These are highly valued by pupils and parents.
25. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Teachers include opportunities to promote pupils' personal development, through timetabled sessions but there is no planned outline programme for these. This was criticised at the last inspection and insufficient progress has been made since then to plan for this aspect of pupils' personal development in a more systematic way.
26. The school has established very good links with the community, which enrich pupils' learning. The school has successfully developed several initiatives, such as bringing in a professional storyteller and other artists to work with pupils. The school was awarded two laptop computers through its good links and this has enabled pupils to develop productive links with pupils in a Dover school. Other local support has helped to rejuvenate the wildlife and pond area. The Japanese Week next term is being well supported through local sponsorship. For a small school, the staff have worked hard to maintain the strong links with the local and wider community, which were also praised at the last inspection.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

27. Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. Pupils' social and moral development are very well promoted. The school creates occasions for pupils to work collaboratively. They are encouraged to choose each Monday morning where they will sit at lunch each day and stay there for the rest of the week so that, over time, they socialise with different children. Pupils are given many opportunities to help others within lessons, through undertaking simple responsibilities, such as giving out resources, and clearing away at the end of lessons. Older pupils are given tasks, which contribute to the smooth running of the school. They help to clear away after lunch and help to set up physical education lessons, when a classroom has to be adapted. They are encouraged to behave responsibly and help each other. Teachers and learning support assistants capitalise well upon any opportunities to reinforce a sense of right and wrong with pupils and assemblies are used effectively to support this aspect of pupils' development. Teachers use praise effectively to encourage pupils to be responsible and behave well.
28. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. They are encouraged to consider others and to think about aspects of life that are of spiritual value. For example, in assemblies, they are encouraged to think about the importance of love and care. Teachers encourage them to think about current issues and respond in an individual way. During the inspection, pupils were asked to think about the plight of farmers at present, and invited to remember them in their thoughts. A candle is lit at the beginning of assemblies but, due to its position at the rear of the assembly area, this does not provide a focus for the pupils' thoughts because many of them are unaware of it being lit, or its role in worship.
29. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' understanding of their own culture is promoted through subjects such as physical education, music and art. They learn to dance traditional country-dances and are made aware of the origins of these dances. The work of a range



of famous artists, such as Mondrian and Kandinsky, is displayed around the school and pupils learn about some of the main features of these artists' work in their art lessons. Pupils learn about Viking runes in history and aspects of other faiths in religious education. The school makes satisfactory provision for developing pupils' awareness of other cultures. Displays on the Chinese New Year and the story of 'The Willow Pattern Plate' enrich pupils' cultural knowledge. The school also organises theme weeks: most recently about African culture and a Japanese week is planned next term. Both pupils and parents value these.

30. The school has maintained its satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development. Provision for moral, social and cultural development have improved since the last inspection.

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

31. Good quality care is provided for all pupils, who feel happy and secure and enjoy coming in to this small village school. The support they receive contributes well to their overall attitudes, which in turn have a positive effect on their learning. The school has maintained the good levels of support for pupils and inspection findings are similar to those of the last inspection. There are well-established and effective procedures for play and lunchtime supervision. No threat to health and safety was reported or observed and health and safety procedures are good. Each term, those responsible for health and safety carry out safety checks. The arrangements for child protection are also good. The headteacher is the nominated member of staff and all necessary procedures are in place. Communications with outside agencies, such as the visiting nurse, are good.
32. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance and personal development are unsatisfactory on balance. Since the last inspection, subject records have been developed, which move with the pupil as they progress up through the school. The school uses the Abacus maths scheme of work, which has in-built assessment. However in practice, the information from assessment is not always used enough to influence what is planned for pupils to make sure this is at the correct level. Although a number of assessments are carried out, these are not compiled in a way that enables the headteacher to track individual pupils and check that they are making appropriate progress as they move through the school.
33. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are very good. Registration is completed efficiently and these are returned to the school office promptly. Absences are notified by a telephone call and followed-up by a written note. The school takes care to record lateness and registers are well maintained.
34. Good procedures are in place for assessing pupils with special educational needs and work is planned carefully to meet their needs. Individual education plans are well written and these contain appropriate and realistic targets so that pupils' specific learning needs are met and their learning is built on step by step. The plans are reviewed regularly and are shared with all staff, parents and pupils.

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

35. The school has a very good range of productive links with parents and carers that help support pupils' learning. Parents come into school to hear children read and work with groups of pupils. Parents also support the school during special events, such as Book Weeks. The Parent Teacher and Friends Association is active and successful in raising valuable sums of money for items such as musical instruments and bookshelves. The school values parents' support and encourages them to become involved in their children's learning. The school has continued to build upon the good links with parents identified at the time of the last inspection and this aspect is now a strength of the school.
36. Parents who responded to the questionnaire prior to the inspection express high satisfaction with most aspects of the school's work. Some parents report that they would like more information about how their child is getting on and a more interesting range of activities outside lessons, whilst others feel that there is insufficient homework in Year 3. The quality of information the school provides for

parents is good. Parents of children about the start school receive a home visit and there are very good links with the nearby pre-school group in the village. In the autumn term parents are invited to a meeting to discuss how their child is settling in.

37. The school provides good information for parents. There are regular and informative newsletters. Pupil's annual reports, although brief in some subjects, are satisfactory and they provide parents with the opportunity to comment at the end of the school year's work. Reports for reception pupils, however, do not provide sufficient information for parents as to how their child is progressing in the six main areas of work for children of this age. The open evenings and parents' consultation evenings are well attended and reflect the commitment of parents to supporting their children's learning.
38. The school has good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents receive early notification of their child's specific needs and are kept fully informed from the beginning.

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

39. The Interim Headteacher provides satisfactory leadership and management. She is on a temporary contract for one year, pending the appointment of a permanent headteacher from next September. She has sensibly not implemented too many major changes during this time. Nevertheless, in a relatively short period, some appropriate developments have taken place which have improved the school's provision. She has quickly earned the respect and trust of staff, governors and parents and has ensured the school has a calm and orderly atmosphere. There is a clear sense that everyone works effectively as a team. The Interim Headteacher has further improved the quality of how the curriculum is planned for the older pupils in the school and she has encouraged a more consistent approach in how teachers plan lessons, assess pupils' work and track their progress over time, using the pink record books. Parents appreciate the efforts she has made to communicate with them effectively and 94 per cent of parents state that the school is well led and managed.
40. The governing body carries out its responsibilities satisfactorily. Governors respond well to feedback from parents and take the necessary steps where weaknesses are identified. Governors are very supportive of the school and are keen to broaden their role in overseeing the work of the school in a more focused and systematic way. They have made some progress in this respect through monitoring curriculum policies, for example, and allocating each subject to a particular governor. Nevertheless, their monitoring role is still at a relatively early stage. Several new governors have joined the governing body since the last inspection and governors acknowledge there is still scope for developing their monitoring role further to give them a better understanding of what the school does well and what should be improved.
41. This is a small school and each of the three staff have several subjects to co-ordinate. Up to now, the teachers have focused mainly on their own class and the scope for overseeing their subjects across both classes and having an impact upon pupils' standards has been limited. For example, the teacher responsible for co-ordinating English has had little opportunity to develop initiatives across the school and no opportunity to monitor standards and pupils' achievement from Year 1 through to Year 3. It is only this year that he has been involved in setting targets for standards in English. However, this is an area that the Interim Headteacher is keen to develop and she has already started to set this in action. The Interim Headteacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator; she is conscientious and carries out her responsibilities well.
42. The school's aims are reflected satisfactorily. The school development plan is a lengthy document and is overly detailed considering the size of the school and the small number of staff. It does not show clearly what the particular priorities are at any one time and over what time-scale they will be worked on. It could be much simpler and be set out in a clearer and more manageable format to help guide the work of governors, the Interim Headteacher and other staff. This would also help governors to have a much clearer grasp of the school's priorities and assist them in their monitoring role.

43. Since the last inspection, there has been satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues and good progress in developing curriculum policies and the way the curriculum is planned. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and other national guidance that the school has adopted have helped this. Standards have improved over the four years and are now consistently above average.
44. The school's use of financial resources is good. Educational priorities are well supported through careful financial management and funds for specific purposes are use appropriately. Financial matters are well managed throughout the year. The governing body considers whether it gets value for money although this is not done in a systematic way and is not recorded in the minutes of governors' meetings. Otherwise, the governing body does apply the principles of best value before committing its spending, through applying local education authority procedures. There is currently a carry forward which is greater than recommended limits. This has a justifiable purpose. Numbers currently in the reception year are lower than usual and the school will have reduction in income whilst these pupils are in school. The carry forward is there to preserve the current level of teaching staff.
45. The school secretary keeps the headteacher and governors well informed about the state of the budget at regular intervals throughout the year. She also monitors spending carefully on a day to day basis. The office is efficiently run and new technology is used well. For example, computers are used effectively to monitor finances and maintain pupils' records, as well as word processing.
46. The school's staffing is satisfactory. The governors have increased the hours allocated to the learning support staff over the last few years although there is a lack of learning support for the children in the reception year. The school relies a lot on additional support from parents, who come into school on a regular basis. Overall, the adequacy of accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school has spacious and attractive grounds, including a recently renovated pond and wildlife area. Good use is made of attractive displays and these support pupils' learning and show them that their work is appreciated and valued. Even so, the school has no hall for physical education lessons or assemblies and the lack of an outdoor play area for the reception children is a weakness. Library provision at the last inspection was unsatisfactory. This has been improved and is now satisfactory. The school is better resourced than it was at the last inspection and resources are now satisfactory.
47. Taking into account children's above average attainment on entry to the school, their satisfactory achievement and the quality of the leadership and teaching, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors and headteacher should:

- (1) Raise standards in art across the school by ensuring pupils have regular opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding within a structured curriculum plan;  
(Paragraphs: 7, 81-85)
- (2) Improve provision for children in the reception class by:
  - ensuring that they receive a planned and broad range of creative and imaginative opportunities in line with the foundation curriculum for children of this age;
  - providing an outdoor space for these children so that they can experience the full range of outdoor activities recommended for children of this age\*  
(Paragraphs: 20, 48, 58, 60)  
  
\*The school has already identified this aspect as an area for development.
- (3) Use the information from national tests and the school's own assessments to track and improve individual pupils' progress over time in each of the core subjects, to set targets, and ensure that all pupils are being expected to work to their potential;  
(Paragraphs: 18, 32, 76, 78)
- (4) Devise a clear, systematic school improvement plan which sets out a manageable number of priorities, within a given time-scale, and which is regularly monitored and evaluated by the headteacher and governors.  
(Paragraph: 42)

In addition to the four main areas for improvement, the following minor weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

1. Extend the range and frequency of opportunities for pupils to write more extended pieces of work in English lessons and other subjects;  
(Paragraphs: 4-5, 63, 69, 92)
2. Ensure pupils acquire secure handwriting skills in a steady way as they move through the school  
(Paragraphs: 4, 66)
3. Improve the standards of presentation of the older pupils  
(Paragraph: 18, 68)
4. Improve the school's facilities for physical education  
(Paragraph: 46, 103)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	45	55	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	47
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1
<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5
<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2
<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.4
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	6	5	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (89)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	-	-	-
	Girls	-	-	-
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. The numbers for boys and girls are omitted because these fall below 10.*

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	46
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 – Y3**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.4
Average class size	23.5

**Education support staff: YR – Y3**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	26

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	121,045
Total expenditure	118,334
Expenditure per pupil	2518
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,113
Balance carried forward to next year	18,824

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	50
Number of questionnaires returned	34

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	79	15	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	35	0	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	32	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	53	9	0	3
The teaching is good.	68	29	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	35	9	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	85	9	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	24	0	0	9
The school works closely with parents.	62	35	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	68	26	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	29	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	29	15	6	21



**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**

48. At the time of the inspection there were eleven children in the reception class. These children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils. Attainment on entry to school is above that expected of most four-year-olds in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. Their personal, social and emotional development is at the levels expected for their age. The children make satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and good progress in their personal and social development. They are set to exceed the early learning goals in each of these areas by the time they finish their reception year. They make sound progress in all the other areas of learning for children of this age. Their standards in creative and physical development are similar to what is expected. On balance, their progress in these two areas is satisfactory. However, there is insufficient provision for creative activity for their achievement to be good in this area of learning and there is limited accommodation and insufficient resources for outdoor play to enable good physical development. The lack of facilities for pupils' physical development was highlighted as a weakness at the last inspection. All children are prepared well to start work on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for pupils in Key Stage 1 and most of them are doing this before they finish their reception year. The overall picture on how well these children are attaining is similar to that of the last inspection, although their standards in mathematical development are better.
49. The teacher completes a baseline assessment and other school assessments, which provide a useful guide to children's attainment on entry to the school. Resources are generally satisfactory but there are no outdoor facilities for play, particularly the development of physical control through using large scale play equipment.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

50. Children's personal and social development is promoted well and this is one of the strengths in the Foundation Stage. The transition from the reception class to Key Stage 1 is smooth and children adjust to the changes well. Children settle in happily and learn class routines very quickly. They soon become efficient and effective in organising themselves; they tidy up the classroom willingly and take this role very seriously. They know exactly where all the resources are stored and take pride and pleasure in putting equipment away carefully. They know that there are times when they must sit quietly, such as in assemblies, or when listening to a story. They all behave very well during school assemblies and in lessons. All children dress themselves independently for physical education and all can manage their personal hygiene. Behaviour is consistently very good, whether children are taking part in vigorous physical activity, such as parachute games, or sitting quietly using computers or working in class. They share, take turns and play together happily and confidently. Children relate very positively to adults in the classroom and are keen to talk about what they are doing.
51. The teacher and helpers, who are patient and caring, promote the children's personal, social and emotional development well. They have high expectations of the children in terms of their independence and behaviour. The good teaching in this aspect ensures that the children learn to play and co-operate with other children well.

**Communication, language and literacy**

52. All children are likely to meet the nationally defined goals for children by the end of the reception year and the majority are exceeding the expectations. In relation to their attainment on entry, most children make satisfactory progress in acquiring speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Children listen attentively to stories and familiar rhymes, often responding with humour. They have a good vocabulary and can suggest several words that rhyme with another simple word. They are learning initial sounds through practical activities that help them distinguish between capital and small letters. All children are interested in books and enjoy sharing them with adults, holding the

book and turning the pages appropriately. Most can recognise some simple words they have practised. Higher attaining children can read a simple text and discuss a story with understanding. All children can produce a recognisable version of their own name and some use capital letters appropriately. A few higher attaining children can write simple sentences independently using letters grouped into words.

53. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in communication, language and literacy. The teacher makes use of literacy sessions to ensure children make progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing because he has a sound understanding of how young children learn. There are high expectations for the children and they are all kept busy; little time is wasted. There is also good use made of resources such as 'big books' to encourage and interest the children. The teacher uses good intonation and clear diction when reading aloud, which provides a good role model for the children's own reading. The teacher and helpers take available opportunities to encourage children to communicate. However, no role-play activity was seen during the inspection and children generally communicate in more formal situations rather than in structured play activity.

### **Mathematical development**

54. Standards in number work are good. Most children are attaining at a level higher than expected for their age. Children make satisfactory progress, taking into account their above average attainment on entry to the school. Almost all the children in the reception class recognise numbers up to 10 and higher attaining children count to fifty, confidently and correctly. They solve simple number questions posed orally by the teacher at the beginning of lessons, such as those using simple addition of numbers. Children use objects for sorting, sequencing and counting activities and join in rhymes, all of which reinforce their learning of sequences of numbers.
55. Teaching is satisfactory overall in numeracy lessons. Planning is generally appropriate, with transition to Key Stage 1 work at an appropriate time.

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

56. Most children have a good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. In relation to their prior attainment, all children make satisfactory progress. Children are encouraged to be curious through a range of appropriate activities. For instance the children enjoy growing plants and watching the changes that take place. Children in the reception classes are keen to talk about their homes and families. They investigate a good range of different materials and they have developed good observational skills. They look at different types of spoons with curiosity and investigate the different sounds made when two wooden spoons and two metal spoons are banged together. They make good observations; for example, one child commented on the similarity between the metal spoons and a mirror. Children know that switches cause something to happen and they know that many every day items need to have switches to work. They use a range of computer games and activities to support their learning.
57. Teaching is satisfactory. The teacher provides appropriate opportunities for the children to learn more about the world around them and skilfully encourages them to talk, draw and paint or model what they discover, using a range of materials.

### **Physical development**

58. The provision for physical development is unsatisfactory. The school has no facilities for children to develop their physical skills through organised play activities with larger, outdoor apparatus. This limits their physical development and the progress they make, though satisfactory, is not as good as it could be. Children enjoy activities in physical education lessons, for example when they work with the rest of the class with a large parachute or take part in gymnastic lessons. Reception children move with confidence and are aware of others in the large space of the playground, or in the limited area of the classroom that is used for physical education lessons. They control their movements; for example, they skip, hop, walk and run around the hall with good awareness of

space and other children. Their movements are well co-ordinated when moving quickly or slowly with the parachute and they regulate their pace with regard to other children. The children are acquiring good control of writing and drawing implements. They use scissors carefully and confidently, for example, when making their puppets in design and technology. They maintain vigorous movement for prolonged periods of time.

59. The teaching, which promotes physical development, is satisfactory. The teacher participates enthusiastically and ensures that all children join in and benefit from lessons. He provides good opportunities for children to evaluate the work of other children and to comment positively on what they are doing.

### **Creative development**

60. Children are provided with a satisfactory range of opportunities to express their ideas and feelings through art, music and dance and children make satisfactory progress. However, many of the activities are more appropriate to Key Stage 1 pupils and there are insufficient opportunities to develop their creativity through structured play and role-play activities. They use paint and other media to produce representations of what they see. They have made and decorated attractive puppets that show children's growing creative ability. Nearly all draw a recognisable figure with reasonable pencil control. The children sing tunefully and with enthusiasm in the daily acts of collective worship. In art, music, and in their play, the children show an increasing ability to use their imagination and to listen and observe carefully.
61. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning. Children are appropriately supported and encouraged to be creative.

### **ENGLISH**

62. The 2000 national tests results were very high in reading and writing and the schools' results were in the top five per cent of schools when compared to the national picture and to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. When results are analysed over a three-year period, pupils' standards are about two terms ahead of what is expected by the age of seven in reading and about a term ahead in writing. The number of pupils entered each year is too small to make a reliable comparison between girls' and boys' performance. In 2000, for example, only eleven pupils took the tests. For this reason, all statistical comparisons must be treated with caution.
63. Inspection findings show, by seven, pupils' standards in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are above what is expected. Taking into account pupils' attainment when they begin Key Stage 1, their progress is satisfactory. In Year 3, reading standards are well above the expectation for this age and in writing they are above the expectation. Only a few pupils in Year 3 work at the higher Level 3 in writing, even though just under half the pupils were assessed at this level in the national tests at the end of Year 2. A few higher attaining pupils did leave the school at the end of Year 2 but the main reason for this is that pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their writing skills through tackling more extended writing tasks. Many pupils in Year 3 do read at this higher level. This represents an improvement in standards since the last inspection.
64. Pupils exceed the expectations for their age in speaking and listening. They are confident to express themselves and even the younger pupils sustain conversations well. Older pupils use good vocabulary and sentence structure when speaking. Many Year 3 pupils are very articulate.
65. Reading standards in Year 2 are not as high as they were in the national tests last year, because this particular year group is not as able as the previous year's. Nevertheless many pupils read most of the words in their books accurately. They make a good effort to work out words that they cannot read, by sounding out the letters or looking at the pictures for a clue. The higher attaining readers read confidently and fluently. In Year 3, pupils read accurately and enliven their reading by changing their voices when they come across exclamations or speech marks. Many become animated when talking about the books they read. Across the school, pupils enjoy reading. In Year 1, pupils join in with the words they can manage when the teacher shares a book with them. They are already

beginning to understand the distinction between fiction and non-fiction texts at this early stage. The more confident readers higher up the school talk happily about their reading habits and the books they particularly like. Many of them read regularly at home.

66. By Year 2 and by the time they reach Year 3, writing standards are above what is expected though there are strengths and weaknesses within this picture. Spelling and punctuation is particularly secure, considering the age of the pupils and they make good progress in this respect. Handwriting is weaker. Pupils are not acquiring the necessary skills in a steady way as they move through the school. Many do not form their letters correctly and few older pupils are developing a fluent and joined style. Year 2 pupils write for a range of different purposes. In their narrative writing, most can write a series of sentences that sustain a simple story line. A good number introduce more interesting vocabulary and some vary the way they start sentences. They use some of the conventions of story writing, such as beginning 'Once upon a time...' and finish their stories off with a suitable phrase that leads to a happy ending. Analysis of pupils' books shows that pupils in Years 2 and 3 have infrequent opportunities to write more extended pieces of work to develop their structure, flow and writing stamina.
67. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils and value their work; this encourages pupils to contribute to class discussions and work well. Lessons are generally planned well and tasks are appropriate although, in one lesson, the piece of writing chosen for the pupils in Year 2 and 3 was too hard. Pupils found it difficult to grasp and this meant several lost interest for a while. Another lesson with this class was good. The various tasks were very appropriate and they helped all pupils to understand the cultural background and some characteristics of fables. One of the best features was the teacher's carefully-chosen questions, such as 'What evidence have you got?' which prompted the pupils to look at the text carefully and pick out relevant phrases. A similar example occurred in Year 1, where the teacher encouraged pupils to respond to a book that he was sharing with them, by asking, 'How do you think he feels?' In this class, literacy lessons link effectively with what pupils are learning in other subjects. For example, the non-fiction book being used linked directly to pupils learning in history, being about toys from the past compared with toys today. Teachers indicate on their plans how pupils of lower ability will be supported but need to be more specific about how the planned tasks will cater effectively for both lower and higher attaining pupils.
68. Pupils have very good attitudes to English. They enjoy their lessons and many of them are eager to answer questions. The standard of presentation, however, remains a weakness to some extent. This was also criticised at the last inspection. Some pupils do not take enough care and one pupil, when asked about the blunt pencil she was using, replied, 'I don't care'. Pupils relate very well to one another when working independently or in pairs. There were no instances of unsatisfactory behaviour.
69. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy successfully. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory but more could be done to enable the co-ordinator to influence and monitor standards across the school. Until recently, he has had little opportunity to do this. The Interim Headteacher is keen to see this role develop but plans are at an early stage. The co-ordinator has devised some good record sheets, which will help track pupils' progress as they move through the school, once they are adopted by all teachers. Other subjects of the curriculum make a satisfactory contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. Pupils write in subjects such as history, geography and science. More could be done to provide opportunities for them to write more extended pieces through these subjects.

## **MATHEMATICS**

70. Standards in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 taken at the end of Key Stage 1 were very high when compared to the national average and to similar schools. The pupils' performance was in the top five per cent of schools nationally. All pupils gained the nationally expected Level 2, and ninety one per cent gained the higher Level 3. Standards in National Curriculum tests have been consistently well above average since 1997 and, since 1998, they have risen at a pace greater than the national trend. However, these results must be treated with great caution because of the low

number of pupils being entered each year, where any one pupil's performance can significantly affect the outcome of the overall results. Inspection evidence shows that the pupils currently in Year 3 are not working at the very high standards that their Year 2 tests would suggest; nevertheless, their standards are well above average for pupils of this age. Year 2 pupils are currently working at levels that are above those expected for pupils of this age. Their standards are not as high as the test results last year but they are generally a less able year group than the Year 2 pupils who took the tests in 2000. This overall picture represents an improvement on the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with the national average.

71. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In Year 1, pupils generally attain standards that are above average for pupils at this age. They understand place value in numbers, some up to a hundred. They count reliably in tens, starting to count at any unit digit. Pupils then develop their counting to be able to count in twos and fives, quickly, confidently and accurately to a hundred. Most pupils recognise odd and even numbers and can recite these sequences confidently. They recall a range of addition number facts accurately and quickly work out the answers to sums of three single digit numbers. They recognise and use symbols for addition and subtraction and know such terms as 'add on', 'take away', 'subtract' and 'difference between'. Most pupils readily recall the addition and subtraction number bonds.
72. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good knowledge of place value and they use this well to further develop their skills in number. By the age of seven, pupils add numbers up to a hundred accurately, multiply numbers together and are beginning to understand how to share numbers into a number of equal parts. They tell the time well and measure length and weight accurately using appropriate standard units. They have a good knowledge of shapes and group them according to the number of faces when classifying shapes with three dimensions.
73. In Year 3, pupils apply their knowledge and understanding of mathematics well, and achieve well above the standards expected for this age. Their skills in mental calculation are very good and pupils work out the answers to questions that are difficult for pupils of this age. They extend their understanding of number well so they apply their knowledge to work with numbers to two decimal places. They have a good knowledge of shapes and they identify the names and properties of a good range of polygons and solid shapes. Pupils use the skills they gain in numeracy well in other subjects, such as design and technology, science and geography.
74. Pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics. They are eager to participate in question and answer sessions. They respond well to interesting and challenging activities. Behaviour is good; pupils remain on task throughout lessons and are they attentive. They work well together in pairs and small groups, exchange ideas and support each other well, learning well through discussion. There are very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults.
75. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection it ranged from satisfactory to good. Teachers give clear instructions so pupils are aware of what they have to do. Lesson objectives are clearly stated in the teachers' planning and are shared with pupils so that they know what they are going to learn in the lesson. Teachers make good use of resources and classroom helpers. Where teaching is good, teachers ensure that pupils of differing abilities are given appropriate tasks. Lessons are planned well and activities are introduced in a structured way, which helps pupils to develop their skills and knowledge. Teachers' intervention is appropriate and pupils are generally allowed to work and solve their own problems but support is given when necessary. In these good lessons, teachers use questions well to probe and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they discuss and answer questions well. Pupils respond well and meet the challenge of the demanding activities. In all lessons, teachers manage pupils well, partly through the strategies they use and partly through the very good relationships that are evident.
76. The school has made the transition to the National Numeracy strategy well in terms of teaching, planning for different abilities of pupils and developing resources. The co-ordinator provides good leadership, both through the provision of a well-constructed policy to help teachers plan lessons and through monitoring teachers' planning. Teachers' assessments are used to monitor pupils'

performance and to guide future planning although there is no system in place for tracking pupils' progress over time as they move through the school. The school has satisfactory, well-organised resources to effectively support teaching.

## **SCIENCE**

77. Progress in learning about science is satisfactory and standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 3 are above national expectations. This inspection judgement shows there has been an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were in line with expectations. The teacher's assessments in the Year 2000 showed standards were higher than this; all pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 2 and a very high proportion gained the higher Level 3. The pupils currently in Year 2 are not as able a year group as the pupils who were in Year 2 last year and this is the main reason for the difference in attainment.
78. By the age of seven, the pupils have a good understanding of scientific processes and their skills of observation, prediction and measurement are well developed. Many have a good basic scientific knowledge and are able to use scientific terms. In Year 1 pupils achieved average standards in a lesson focusing on materials and their properties. They used different senses, such as smell, touch and vision, to identify and describe different properties. Standards in Year 2 are good. Pupils apply the knowledge and understanding gained in Year 1 and reception well. Their observation skills are good and they describe in good detail what happens to an ice cube as it melts. Pupils are beginning to develop the skills of testing, which is good for their age. They test and compare the strength of different magnets by counting how many paper clips, for example, a magnet will attract and hold. They use their observations well to make judgements. They record their results well, using simple charts, diagrams and scientific vocabulary. In Year 3, pupils continue to develop their testing and investigation skills well. They have developed reliable tests to test the strength of different paper towels and they explain in good detail how shadows are formed, demonstrating good knowledge of light at levels that are higher than expected for pupils at this age. Analysis of pupils' written work, however, shows that there is not enough distinction between what pupils of different ages and abilities are required to do when recording their work. In several cases, higher attaining pupils in Year 3 produced the same written work as average attaining pupils in Year 2.
79. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In lessons, pupils are appropriately challenged through questions and discussion. Teachers have good subject expertise and they usefully show pupils that science should be applied to everyday life, as well as developing scientific enquiry skills. Lessons are planned satisfactorily. Some pupils in the class for older pupils are, however insufficiently challenged by the pace and demands made upon them.
80. The subject has been satisfactorily managed by the curriculum co-ordinator, who teaches part time. Standards are monitored through assessment tasks and looking at work on display but there is no system for regularly monitoring pupils' work, in lessons as well as what they record in books. The environmental area and pond in the school grounds is a useful resource for supporting the science curriculum. Scientific equipment and reference books are satisfactory and adequately support learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

81. There was insufficient opportunity to observe art lessons during the inspection to make a judgement on the quality of teaching but evidence from analysis of pupils' work on display and in folders and sketchbooks shows that standards are below what is expected by Year 2 and by Year 3.
82. Pupils in Year 1 make collages of stories such as 'The Three Little Pigs' by using a range of materials, such as paper straws and lollipop sticks. They use paint to create backgrounds, with a stippling effect. This work shows appropriate control of brushes for children of this age and a few pupils take good care with this work. The pupils encounter 3-D work through making paper sculptures or sparkling sculptures, inspired by frost and snow. They complement their work by visiting Milton Keynes to see a range of sculptures in their own locality.

83. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 produce watercolour studies of leaves. One or two pupils have obviously looked at the leaves carefully and used colour-mixing and brush techniques well to create some tonal variety. In the one lesson observed during the inspection, based on the work of Matisse, pupils were at a very early stage in understanding line, shape and pattern, which was the main focus of the lesson. Their chalk drawings of fireworks are at a very basic level for pupils of this age and much of the work in their sketchbook is hurried.
84. The headteacher acknowledges that the oldest pupils have had limited experience of art and as a result they have not acquired the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding that is expected by this age. Whilst there is evidence of some painting and drawing, the range of work is limited and pupils need a much wider experience of using different media and materials, including opportunities to create work from their imagination as well as from direct observation.
85. The leadership in art is unsatisfactory and this has not been an area for development over recent years. The standards in art were falling below the expectations at the time of the last inspection and there has been unsatisfactory progress in improving them over the last four years.

### **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

86. Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress. This represents an improvement on standards at the time of the previous inspection when pupils had insufficient skills.
87. All pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress in both designing and making with a wide range of good quality materials and experiences. Younger pupils successfully design and make structures from art straws. They study playground equipment in the park and know that a triangle is a firm structure, capable of giving good support. They also know that other shapes, such as squares will collapse under pressure. They use resources well; for example, they strengthen their art straw structures by feeding pipe cleaners down the straws. They design through making simple drawings, they choose resources appropriately and their models resemble their initial intentions. Older pupils make finger puppets using felt, embroidery thread and a variety of objects, such as buttons and sequins to decorate the faces. Older pupils make pancakes using a basic mixture, with their own choice of toppings. They use wood, card, axles and wheels to make vehicles, which they have designed beforehand. Pupils consider how they could improve their work, through evaluating their efforts. They assess their products and make improvements as they proceed. This is a good feature and contributes to the quality of work.
88. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Planned tasks cover the requirements of the National Curriculum effectively. Pupils are given good opportunities to design and make and to use a good range of quality materials. Teachers enable pupils to experience a good range of ways of constructing and joining materials. Resources are of a satisfactory quality and range.

### **HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY**

89. No lessons were observed during the inspection and a judgement cannot be made on the quality of teaching in these subjects. Analysis of pupils' written work shows that standards are meeting the expectations for pupils' ages in history and geography by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 3. This reflects the findings of the last inspection.
90. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn about different places by taking a soft toy on holiday with them and sending a postcard back to the class. The other children learn some of the features of different places in the British Isles, as well as abroad, as pupils provide some information about their holiday destination. For example, they write sentences such as 'It was hot' and 'The houses were different'. They learn to recognise change in their own locality by looking at places in the village where, for example, old cottages have been knocked down and they look for signs that the village shop used to be a house at one time. In history, pupils learn that things such as toys change over time. They look at old and new teddy bears, for example, and observe how the old ones show signs of wear and tear.

91. In Year 1 pupils know how to record information on pictorial maps and label features such as a pond and a mill. Their map skills are developed further in Years 2 and 3. Here, pupils use co-ordinates to identifying features on maps. They mark seaside resorts on a map of the United Kingdom and explore some of the reasons why people like to go to the seaside on holiday. They use geographical language, such as 'marsh', 'mountains', and 'trees' when they draw imaginary maps for places that Barnaby Bear could have visited and devise symbols for each one. They learn facts about physical features, for example, that marsh areas often surround rivers or lakes. In history, older pupils know facts about some important figures, such as Louis Braille and Guy Fawkes. They explore why Guy Fawkes and King James acted as they did and learn about the main religious implications of the story. Pupils know about the some of the early invaders and settlers, such as Anglo Saxons and Vikings. They show on a map where they came from and learn about some of the key events and main people, such as Beowulf.
92. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The school makes appropriate use of the national guidance for these subjects. However, teachers could use both subjects much more effectively to help pupils develop their writing skills; through history, in particular, pupils could undertake much more extended writing.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

93. Standards in Information and Communication Technology are in line with national expectations for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 3. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils are beginning to use simple word processing programs to support their literacy skills. Some use computers to assemble text, use pictures and explore information. They are beginning to make appropriate choices and choose their options carefully. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils demonstrate their awareness of how information exists in many differing forms. Many pupils talk about their use of computers and explain how they use them to support their work in other subjects. In Year 1 pupils learn how to use the keyboard. Many can write a simple sentence using capital letters and spaces where necessary.
94. Almost all pupils in Year 3 know how to use a range of different programs. They comment on the advantages of using information and communication technology to present their work and talk freely about their use of different resources. All pupils have the opportunity to use control technology. They describe how to give instructions to a floor turtle and how to make it change direction. They are aware of the need to give instructions in a certain way to ensure success. Younger pupils write in their assessment books how much they enjoy getting email letters from their friends in a primary school in Dover, showing that pupils are familiar with the uses of information and communication technology in the modern world.
95. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching. Some good, new multi-media computer systems have been introduced into the school and good use is made of these, such as email links over the Internet. During the inspection teachers planned tasks where pupils used computers to find out information about the Vikings. A good range of CD-ROMs was available although many pupils were still in the early stages of being able to access the information from these.
96. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The school has identified areas of information and communication technology for further development and has appropriate plans to improve resources and develop teachers' expertise through a programme of staff training.

### **MUSIC**



97. Standards in singing are above the expectations for this age. The good standards identified at the last inspection have been maintained in this aspect of music. The pupils have regular opportunities to practise their singing skills and they know a good range of songs, some of which are quite ambitious for their age. They sing well in tune and with a good, strong tone. The oldest pupils in the school give a good lead to the singing in assemblies and set a good example to the younger pupils. Boys participate as readily as girls when singing and, altogether, there is a sense of pride and enjoyment when the pupils sing together as a whole school. In the remaining aspects of music, standards are appropriate for pupils' ages.
98. Pupils are confident playing untuned percussion instruments. They hold them correctly and play them with good control. When they are accompanying the hymns, they play instruments sensitively, and show they are aware of the meaning of the words. All pupils who played instruments in assembly were able to keep a steady beat. No creative music-making or use of tuned percussion was seen during the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make a judgement on pupils' competence in playing tuned percussion or in improvising and composing. Insufficient teaching was observed to make a reliable judgement on the overall quality of teaching.
99. The pupils benefit from the musical expertise of a learning support assistant, who plays the piano in assembly and teaches singing. She is enthusiastic and transmits her love of singing to the pupils, who benefit greatly. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 learn the recorder during curriculum time. This is not in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum for music. Several of them struggle with aspects of reading notation, do not 'tongue' the notes and hold their instruments incorrectly. This is not a good use of curriculum time. The school has a scheme of work for music but this has not yet been updated to reflect recent national guidance.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

100. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected for seven-year-olds and all pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Younger pupils learn to skip, march and jump with good levels of control. As pupils progress through the school, they begin to refine and improve their physical skills. They combine simple movements into sequences and develop control well in their performance. Their actions become more assured, as in dance, when they perform a traditional Irish country-dance with the correct sequences of movements. When carrying out whole-class activities with a parachute, they respond well to the teacher's instructions and co-operate well with one another. The school reports that most pupils are able to swim short distances by the time they leave school.
101. Pupils' response in lessons is good overall. They are very keen and eager to respond and participate and try hard to improve their own performance. They listen carefully to instructions and show high levels of interest. Pupils sustain concentration well and stay on task.
102. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are appropriately planned and pupils' skills are effectively developed and build upon their previous learning. Basic movement skills are taught well and teachers encourage pupils to participate, often through joining in and demonstrating themselves. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate the performance of the other pupils and this makes them look and think carefully. Pupils are confident to comment on what they think is good and what could be improved.
103. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum. The school also provides swimming for pupils in the pool during the summer term. This provision is over and above National Curriculum requirements and makes a positive contribution to standards and helps pupils to feel confident in the water. As at the last inspection, accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is no dedicated space for physical education and the larger of the two classrooms has to be cleared for lessons. It is still cramped and too small for the number of pupils and the nature of activity. The school does well to maintain standards in these circumstances.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

104. No lessons were observed in religious education during the inspection. It is not possible therefore to judge the quality of teaching and learning. Evidence from analysing pupils' written work shows that standards meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 2 and pupils in Year 3 are working at suitable levels. The school has made good progress in improving standards in religious education since the last inspection.
105. By Year 2, pupils know a number of Bible stories, such as the story of David and Goliath, Jesus in the Temple and some of the parables of Jesus. They are familiar with important celebrations in the Christian year such as Christmas and Harvest. They develop their knowledge of other faiths and cultures by comparing how people celebrate Harvest in other countries and learn how Jews celebrate Sukkot by decorating their festive huts with citrus fruits and palm leaves. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 learn the story of Diwali and how light is an important aspect within many religious practices. Some higher attaining pupils show in their own writing their awareness of how festivals such as Diwali signal a time of "new beginnings" for Hindus.
106. Older pupils learn about special religious places. They explore their own feelings by writing about their own special places and this provokes some sensitive responses. For example, one child wrote, 'I pray for my granny who is a farmer and for my grandad who died three years ago.' Several describe how churches, such as St Laud, are special and others their homes, because their families live there. They realise the importance of treasuring special things, such as their Christening shoes. In Year 1, pupils also look at celebrations from a personal viewpoint. They write about times when they celebrated important events with their families. Several write about their Christening or birthday and one pupil wrote a short moving account of how the birth of a baby was a very special event in the family.
107. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The planning, which is currently being reviewed, is appropriately balanced and based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus and recent national guidance. Two visitors from West Africa came into school to share aspects of their culture with the pupils, for example, through giving them Ghanaian names according to the day of the week on which they were born. This is good example of ways in which the school seeks to broaden pupils' experiences and give them a wider understanding of different cultures and beliefs.