

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WHATFIELD C OF E (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Whatfield, Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124718

Headteacher: Mrs Joan Wardle

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sue Vale  
22476

Dates of inspection: 10 - 12 June 2002

Inspection number: 194687

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the school inspections act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Rectory Road Whatfield Ipswich Suffolk
Postcode:	IP7 6QU
Telephone number:	01473 823309
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev David Warner
Date of previous inspection:	2 June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22476	Mrs Sue Vale	Registered inspector	English Foundation Subjects Foundation Stage	Standards Teaching Leadership and management Equal Opportunities Characteristics of the school
9370	Mrs Rosalind Wingrove	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21038	Mr Geoff Timms	Team inspector	Special educational Needs Mathematics Science Information and communication technology	Curriculum

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Whatfield Primary is a very small village school, one fifth of the size of the average primary school, set in a picturesque setting on the edge of the village of Whatfield. It is very closely linked and involved with the community and is the centre point for many community activities. Pupils attend the school from the neighbouring villages, as well as from Whatfield itself. Many of the children are related to each other and to people in the community, and there is little mobility in the area. There are currently 46 pupils on roll which is an increase in number since the last inspection. These 46 pupils are divided into 2 classes, one for the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 (infants) and one for pupils in Key Stage 2 (juniors). All pupils speak English as their first language. Families at the school represent a very wide range of social and economic backgrounds. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. Approximately one third of pupils attending Whatfield have been identified as having special educational needs. This is above the national average. However, no pupils have statements of special educational needs. Attainment on entry is below what is expected nationally.

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

Whatfield Primary School is a warm, caring, friendly school, which is providing an improving and more effective standard of education for its children, after a period of uncertainty. The overall very good teaching, the very good leadership and management from the newly appointed headteacher and the complete support of both parents and governors, allow the school to give an improving standard of education and satisfactory value for money.

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

- The newly appointed headteacher provides very good leadership and management, with a very good vision for the future.
- Teaching is good overall in Key Stage 1, consistently good in the Foundation Stage and very good in Key Stage 2
- There are very good relationships with parents, and the local community.
- There is a new shared commitment by all staff, governors and parents for the school to succeed.
- Standards of work in Art and Design and Design and Technology are good.

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

- Improve standards in writing for all purposes in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Improve standards in Science in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Improve standards in Information and Communication Technology in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Implement the school's plans to improve tracking of individual pupils' progress, set individual targets and extend the good marking used in English to other subjects.
- Take advantage of the newly settled staff from September to improve the management of pupils and build better learning habits for pupils in Key Stage 1.

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

There is strong evidence to suggest that the school has been underachieving in the past, due to the previous unsettled leadership and management and the many changes in teaching over the last two and a half years. However, the inspection team has confidence that the staff and governors, inspired by the vision and dynamism of the newly appointed headteacher, share a strong commitment to improve and have a good capacity for future improvement. In the short time in which the newly appointed headteacher has been in position, pupils' achievement in all subjects except writing, science, and information communication technology has improved and is now at least at a satisfactory level. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage and it is good overall in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2.

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

It is only very recently since the appointment of the new headteacher that things have started to improve since the last inspection in June 1997. Whereas most of the key issues from the previous report have now been addressed, in a very short space of time, there are still areas where the school has not managed to complete everything. For example, not all policies and schemes of work are yet in place. However, the school development plan shows that there are plans to ensure that this will happen. The particular key issues regarding the improvement of design technology have been fully addressed. Very good progress has been made by the school in a short period of time, in raising expectations of the amount of attention that older pupils give to recording what they have learned. This is a real improvement since the last inspection and is very evident that this has occurred since the arrival of the headteacher.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	C	C	C
Mathematics	E*	C	E	E*
Science	E*	C	E	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

In the National Curriculum tests in 2001 for pupils aged 11, overall standards in English were in line with those expected nationally. Standards in mathematics and science were well below the national average. Standards in English and science remain the same when compared with similar schools, but mathematics is in the bottom five per cent nationally. In the test results in Key Stage 1 standards in reading were well below what is expected for pupils of this age and standards in writing and mathematics were in the bottom five per cent when compared to national averages. These standards remain the same when compared to similar schools nationally.

Test results should be treated with a degree of caution, because of the small cohorts of pupils. For example, in Year 2001 the results are skewed because out of the 4 pupils taking the tests in Year 6, one pupil was absent on the day of the tests. Therefore automatically the results show a dramatic difference, with results being affected by twenty five per cent. Similarly, in Key Stage 1 when pupils reach the age of seven, the very small number of pupils sitting the tests results in a necessity to treat the results with some caution.

Inspectors judge that current standards of work in reading, speaking and listening and mathematics at age seven and eleven broadly meet national expectations. However, standards in writing, science and information communication technology are below what is expected for pupils of these ages.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils want to come to school and show interest in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Whilst behaviour in Key Stage 2 and the Foundation Stage is very good, there are some elements of classroom management that are unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils show a caring attitude to each other and show good manners.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality and consistency of the good teaching are great strengths. Over three quarters of the lessons observed were good or better, of these nearly half were very good or better. All lessons were at least satisfactory. In English and mathematics, teachers always ensure the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. They regularly mark pupils' work and pupils' presentation of work has recently improved. Teachers plan their work well. The school is very committed to supporting all pupils, but particularly those who have difficulties with their work or with their behaviour. The good quality of the teaching successfully promotes pupils' learning and helps them to acquire a good knowledge and understanding in other subjects. Pupils who have special educational needs are successfully motivated and make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning experiences for its pupils. The extra curricular activities on offer also support pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well by staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Spiritual, moral, and social provision for pupils is good. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. There are good procedures for monitoring behaviour.



The school works very well in partnership with parents. There are very close links between the school, the community and parents. The school is at the centre of life in the local community. Everyone shows a real shared commitment to take the school forward.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The very good leadership and management of the newly appointed headteacher and the good support which the school receives from the governing body ensure that pupils are beginning to receive a good standard of education.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The Governing Body fully supports the school and governors becoming more involved. Whilst they are very willing and keen to be as involved as possible, they now need to take a more pro-active stance in their support of Whatfield School. The close links between the Governing Body, school and the community support the governors' work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and the Governing Body are well aware of the areas within the school which need improvement and are united in their commitment to help the school succeed.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory.

The accommodation is attractive, situated in a rural, picturesque setting, and kept beautifully clean. It is also well maintained. The external grounds support the curriculum well. The internal accommodation, however, is very small for the number of children in the school. There is very limited storage space and the library and ICT facilities housed within already cramped classrooms are far from ideal. The use of the local village hall for assemblies, physical education and art and design technology lessons is the only way that the school can ensure that the pupils receive the full national curriculum; without its use the school would not meet statutory requirements. There is very good leadership and management from the newly appointed headteacher. She has a clear vision of how she wants the school to develop, and applies the principles of best value well.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• Their children make very good progress at school</li> <li>• Behaviour is good</li> <li>• Parents think that teaching is good</li> <li>• They feel well informed about their children's progress</li> <li>• They are very comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems</li> <li>• They believe that teachers have high expectations of the work their children should achieve</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents</li> <li>• They believe that the school is well led and well managed</li> <li>• The school helps their children mature and become responsible</li> <li>• There is a good range of activities outside lessons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small percentage of parents would like to see more homework</li> </ul>

Parents are very pleased with how the school cares for their children. They see it as the centre of their village and community and are very positive about every aspect of school life. The inspectorate team

agree with the positive views of parents. Relevant homework is given and supports pupils' learning to a satisfactory degree.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment in the school varies from year to year, as the pupils who make up the very small year groups have many different abilities. Test results should be treated with a degree of caution, because of the small cohorts of pupils. For example, in Year 2001 the results are skewed because out of the 4 pupils taking the tests in Year 6, one pupil was absent from the tests and therefore automatically the results show a dramatic difference with results being affected by twenty five per cent. It also needs to be noted that of the 6 pupils who sat the tests this year, two pupils arrived at the school literally the week before the tests took place, and during the week of the tests one pupil was absent from school. Again this is likely to have an adverse effect on the actual results.
2. The school's results in 2001 at the end of Key Stage 1, when pupils are aged seven, were well below the national average in writing and mathematics and below the national average in reading. By the time pupils leave school at the age of eleven, they attain standards in national tests which are in line with national expectations in English, but are below what is expected for pupils of this age in mathematics and science. However, the work of the six pupils in the current Year 6 is often of a standard below that expected for their age, in writing, science and information communication technology but of a satisfactory standard in mathematics. Nonetheless, these judgements represent good progress for these particular pupils, given the unsettled teaching which they have received over the past two and a half years.
3. The performance of potentially higher-attaining pupils has been particularly disappointing. In the most recent national tests in Year 2, the proportion of pupils exceeding the national target level and reaching the higher level was well below average in reading and mathematics. In writing, pupils achieving the higher level were just below national targets. In science, where the teachers assess their pupils' attainment, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level was below average and the proportion at the higher level was below average. In comparison with the assessments made by similar schools, standards in science in Year 2 were well below average overall. The underachievement in Year 2 shown in the national test results is confirmed by inspection evidence.
4. Both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils produce good standards of work in both art and design technology. Year 5 and Year 6 have worked hard to create dragons with moving mouths using air pressure. These are of a very good standard.
5. Very few pupils who enter the school have made a formal start on reading, writing or counting. They make a good start in reception, and make good progress in their counting and developing an understanding of the world around them. They particularly enjoy practical work such as investigating and making things creatively.
6. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress throughout their time in the infant's class. They learn to read well so that by the end of Key Stage 1, at the age of seven, they are in line with national expectations. However their skills in writing are still below those expected for pupils of this age. Their understanding of number develops, and the more able show a growing understanding of tens and units, to the extent that work seen during the time of the inspection shows that all pupils achieve at the level expected for

pupils of this age in mathematics. Progress made in science, however, is not as great as in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are starting to make good progress. The newly written Individual Education Plans are now significantly geared to these pupils achieving their full potential to the best of their ability.

7. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 at the age of eleven, they have mastered basic literacy, number and measuring skills. However, their attainment in writing and science is below that expected for pupils of this age. In mathematics pupils are achieving in lessons at approximately the level expected for pupils of this age. However, it is likely that the current Year 6's test results will not reflect fully what they are capable of achieving as now they are making very rapid progress in lessons because of consistently very good teaching. They produce good work in art and design and technology. They show a reasonable grasp of facts and knowledge and are happy to discuss what they have learnt. For example, in geography, pupils are familiar with the physical information about a country such as India. They have reasonable factual knowledge about places such as Chembakolli in India and are able to compare and contrast it well to their life in Whatfield. The performance of potentially higher-attaining pupils has however been disappointing. In the most recent national tests in Year 6, no pupils exceeded the national target levels. The school is well aware of this and already in a short space of time the headteacher has identified pupils who are gifted and talented and started working with gifted and talented pupils from other local schools in a small pyramid cluster.
8. Progress shown by pupils in Key Stage 2 is usually satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Recently, more value is being placed on recording pupils' work and over the last few months, as pupils take a greater pride in their work, so more rapid progress is being made in all areas of the curriculum, but particularly in mathematics and English. Unfortunately, progress in science and in writing, is still unsatisfactory and not as rapid as in other subjects.
9. It is not possible to give definitive judgements about standards and progress in the remaining subjects. This is because of the time restraints of the inspection and also a lack of recorded evidence of work in some subjects. However, it is possible to make comments about the quality of work that was seen. Standards of work seen in art and design technology are good. Standards in physical education, geography and history are satisfactory. There is no evidence on which to make a judgement about music.

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

10. The last report recorded that the pupils' attitudes to school were good. This is still the case and pupils show enthusiasm for learning. In Key Stage 1, some of the children take a while to settle down and are easily distracted, but the majority respond reasonably quickly to their teacher's instructions. They are learning to raise their hands to answer and not to call out. Co-operation in pairs and small groups is good. Pupils are keen to learn and are proud of what they achieve

11. In Key Stage 2, lessons move with a good pace and children respond well to the exciting curriculum. They are good listeners, to their teacher, to one another and when they work in pairs or groups. Older pupils, in particular, show a mature attitude. There is still room for improvement in the presentation of work as was indicated in the last inspection. When oral questions are posed which need a little thought beyond the obvious, many hands go up and good answers or suggestions are offered. A “passport” system, which is very popular with pupils and parents, includes rewards for good work, behaviour and responsible, helpful attitudes. Passports are presented in assemblies.
12. Parents confirm that their children are keen to come to school and eager to learn. They were pleased to tell inspectors about the many after school activities which this small school manages to provide with the help of parents and the local community. These activities are available to every child who is old enough to participate. Music has formed an important part of the extra curricular provision and governors were keen to illustrate ways in which many children have been introduced to singing or playing instruments by their participation in musical productions at school and in the village. This helps enormously to build the children’s self esteem and confidence.
13. Behaviour in classes is good for the majority of pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. The school has a newly written behaviour policy and poor behaviour or bullying are not tolerated. It is only necessary for teachers to have a quiet word with children who might be inclined to disrupt the learning of others. Behaviour in the whole-school assembly seen during the inspection was excellent. Children and adults listened in fascination to the story told at the beginning and to the representative from Macmillan Cancer Relief who came to receive a cheque for money raised by the pupils.
14. Pupils move around the school and into the village hall in a sensible way. They treat the school’s resources responsibly. The box of equipment such as skipping ropes, coloured streamers for acrobatics and small stilts for use at break and lunchtime, which is kept “in the boiler”, was carefully distributed and then tidied away by a mixed-age group of girls. Pupils know the rules, which are displayed in strategic places around the school, and the supervisors do not have to intervene very often. Pupils have very good relationships with the adults working in the school and form friendships with their peers irrespective of age or gender.
15. Through work in assemblies and in religious education lessons, pupils are taught to respect the feelings, values and cultural differences of other people.
16. Attendance levels have improved in the past year to 94.6 per cent, which is in line with the national average. There have been no unauthorised absences. Pupils are punctual and lessons begin on time.

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

17. Over the past two and a half years there has been an inconsistency in the quality and stability of the teaching which pupils have received. In a small school with just two classes, the absence of one teacher has had a significant impact upon the pupils within that Key Stage. Sadly, the previous headteacher suffered long bouts of illness over the last two and a half years and this has meant that a succession of supply teachers were needed to fill the long term vacancy. The consequences of this are that until very recently there has been a succession of teachers for pupils in Key Stage 2 and pupils have received a wide variety of teaching, with a lack of a consistent approach.

18. The appointment of the new headteacher means that pupils in Key Stage 2 now receive a stable, consistent and very good standard of teaching. Unfortunately, during the time of the inspection, once again, there is a long-term vacancy due to illness within Key Stage 1. However, children are receiving a good quality of teaching overall, despite the fact that these younger pupils are now being taught by a succession of supply teachers. The headteacher ensures that there is a consistency of approach to the teaching and demands high expectations from both staff and pupils.
19. The overall quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 2 and good in Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. Over three quarters of all lessons are good or better; of these one third are of very good quality and one in ten were excellent. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is consistently very good or excellent. The very good teaching in such a short space of time is having a very positive effect on the pupils' learning.
20. In the most successful lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge which they share with pupils clearly and precisely. The teaching of English is mostly good and sometimes very good. All teachers implement the National Literacy Strategy successfully. Key skills are well taught and this is a major contribution to pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned with careful differentiation so that all the different year groups within each class have work relevant to them.
21. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive effect on the standard which pupils attain in mathematics. Again teaching is consistently good. The good teaching has a significant, positive impact on pupils' learning as they progress throughout the school. Teachers have a good understanding of the strategy and implement it confidently.
22. Pupils' learning is good and this is as the direct result of the quality of the teaching which they now receive. A good feature is how teachers reinforce subject vocabulary, for example, in English in Key Stage 2 the correct vocabulary is used such as suffix and prefix. Lessons are well planned so that pupils make good progress. A strength of the good lessons is the way teachers pull together what the pupils have learnt at the end of the lesson, by recapping what has been covered, so that pupils have their own learning reinforced.
23. The teaching of investigative skills in mathematics has improved a great deal recently and pupils now have more opportunities for first hand investigations, which promote their knowledge well. Whilst the teaching of science and information communication technology is at least satisfactory, it is only very recently that these subjects are being taught to the requirements of the national curriculum; hence pupils have a lot of ground to make up in their learning in these areas. The teaching of all other subjects is at least satisfactory and often good.
24. Homework is set regularly. There are many good examples of learning at home making a good contribution to the pupils' achievements, particularly in the Foundation Stage where parents are encouraged to work with their children supporting the work which the children are doing in school.
25. The school caters for pupils with special educational needs well and they are fully included in lessons. The teaching of pupils with special needs is good. Teachers know the pupils well and this helps in the provision of work. In one lesson in the infant class, a support teacher dealt effectively and patiently with one pupil with emotional and

behavioural difficulties and this enabled him to take a full part in the whole class part of a lesson.

26. Teaching assistants provide good quality support for pupils with special educational needs. For example, in Year 3, pupils work in a small group on appropriate work targeted at improvements recognised through the assessment of their prior attainment. The teachers and teaching assistants work and plan together very closely to provide tasks for those with special needs that will help them to make progress. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' progress. They are highly experienced in dealing with pupils with special educational needs and are very capable. They know pupils well and foster the trust that provides good conditions for learning.
27. Pupils acquire new knowledge and skills well. Their ideas and understanding develop well due to the consistently good teaching which they receive. They work hard and show interest in their work, sustaining concentration and starting to think and learn for themselves. This is more noticeable amongst the older pupils in the school. Whilst teachers make satisfactory use of information and communication technology, at present, due to cramped conditions and a lack of consistency, it is not as yet used to a sufficiently high enough standard.

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

28. The newly appointed headteacher has worked hard over recent months to begin addressing the evident weaknesses in the curriculum provision. She has ensured, through planning and the judicious use of support from the local authority that the National Curriculum is now taught appropriately and the weaknesses found at the previous inspection are being addressed. The curriculum planned and provided for the pupils is now satisfactory and appropriately broad and balanced. The needs of all pupils are being better met with growing support for the less able and more challenging work for the higher attainers. All statutory requirements are met and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are now being correctly implemented and are helping to raise standards. The use of some specialist teaching in music and religious education, and the very good use of the expertise of teaching assistants, helps enrich pupils' learning.
29. The planning is now based more securely on the newly introduced schemes of work and these are beginning to ensure that work is better matched to the needs of pupils. There is sufficient time available for all subjects. Policies are in place for all subjects and there is a good system for the regular review of these. More thought is now given to the planning and provision of work appropriate for the ages of pupils in one class, but this has some way still to go. Opportunities for older pupils to work at an appropriate level with younger ones do occur but are rare, while there is little evidence of younger, more able pupils working with older ones. The lesson planning does not take enough account of pupils' prior attainment, due to the underdeveloped nature of the assessment procedures.
30. The curriculum provided for the children in the Foundation Stage is sound. It is appropriately planned and based on the nationally agreed areas for learning. The planning is based around a unifying theme and appropriate emphasis is placed on children's personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy and their mathematical development. Although taught at times in a mixed age class, every effort is made to provide children with an appropriate curriculum and time in a learning environment based on first hand experiences.

31. Arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education are unsatisfactory at present but the school has recognised this and is reviewing the present policy. Good plans are in place for the introduction of a sensible approach to sex and drugs education. The school has an appropriate policy for ensuring racial equality.
32. The school has a clear commitment to equality of opportunity and all pupils are fully included in the teaching and learning. In particular, the teaching assistants provide very good support for less able pupils, helping them to take part in activities and make progress in their learning. All pupils' contributions, including those from pupils with special educational needs are valued and recognised. This has a positive impact on pupils' self esteem and the progress they make. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is improving and is now good. Teachers know the individual pupils and their families well. The individual education plans drawn up for them are appropriate and provide teachers with a good basis for planning activities and learning at the correct level.
33. The school works well with the local community, providing a good range of extra curricular activities for the size of the school. Teachers, teaching assistants and governors, and members of the local community, give freely of their own time in helping to organise and run clubs. For example, during the inspection the maypole dancing club had 17 pupils of all ages from Reception to Year 6. Other clubs include mini-games, rounders, gardening, board games and music. The effective use of visitors and visits promotes pupils' interest and extends their knowledge and understanding. Visits to local places of interest are common and have included a regular residential experience for older pupils involving outdoor activities and computer use. Recent visitors to the school have included local elderly persons to discuss their lives and lifeboat servicemen to discuss water safety. Recent shared events with the local community include the Golden Jubilee celebrations.
34. The school has good links with other schools and groups. They are part of a 'pyramid' cluster of schools that feed a local secondary, and good opportunities are taken to share expertise, such as taking part in a steel band event, ICT technician time, and events such as rugby tournaments, as well as sharing opportunities for staff training. There is growing provision for gifted and talented pupils through the cluster links. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils are shortly to take part in a science project with children from the other schools. Local advisory teachers have been used very effectively to improve the planning and delivery of the curriculum
35. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies and collective acts of worship offer good opportunities for pupils to reflect on others' achievements and their own abilities and behaviour. The lighting of a candle, makes clear the special nature of the act of worship, and provides a focus for children's thoughts and prayers. In one class, the younger pupils demonstrated some wonder at the emergence of a frog in their tadpole tank and a growing appreciation of the beauty of nature. In religious education lessons and geography pupils are learning about some of the beliefs of people living in India.
36. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is good. The relationships between adults and pupils are positive and have a clear impact on learning. Pupils understand what acceptable behaviour is. The headteacher and her staff provide effective role models and have high expectations about pupils' behaviour. However, younger pupils have not yet developed very good working habits and this is an area which more settled staffing will need to address if pupils' achievement is to be improved. In assemblies, opportunities are taken to praise good behaviour and to tell



stories relating to themes such as caring. Good achievement books have been introduced to enable pupils to keep a record of their rewards and successes in all aspects of their work and extra curricular activities, and as part of the ethos of celebration found in the school.

37. The school's provision for pupils' social development is good. The school is improving the opportunities for pupils to demonstrate and take responsibility through a range of jobs. At lunchtimes, the recent introduction of family groupings is giving older pupils the chance to take responsibility for the younger ones and this is being accepted with growing maturity. The organisation of lessons, especially in the junior class, encourages pupils to collaborate and work together to solve problems successfully. The school has an important place at the heart of the local community and links with other local schools are helping to widen the pupils' horizons and prepare the older ones for the change to secondary school.
38. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. They have good opportunities to listen to and reflect on music in assemblies. For example, having heard music by Elgar pupils are asked to consider which part of the day is being described. In art and design lessons pupils of all ages study the work of other artists and use their knowledge in their own work. For example, older pupils have studied the use of cut outs by Matisse and produced a large frieze reflecting life in the school using the same methods. They have also used paint to create pictures in the style of Rousseau. Younger children have studied Monet and produced imaginative impressionist pictures in the same style. There is little evidence of this work being extended sufficiently to other cultures and times, although a small amount of pattern work included some Diwali hand decorations.
39. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in line with their peers, especially where they have extra support. This helps them to access the full curriculum and take a full part in whole class sessions. This level of progress is related to the recent tightening of target setting by the special needs coordinator which is resulting in more focused objectives being set in lessons.

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

40. This is a family school where many children have brothers and sisters or cousins, even in the same class. Consequently, the teachers and their assistants know all the children very well and take good care of them. They are given a good start to their education and encouraged to work hard. Newcomers are welcomed and made to feel part of the school very quickly. About half of the present pupils live outside the catchment area and come to the school as their parents' first choice.
41. There is a large, adjacent playing field shared with the Village Hall which enables the pupils to exercise and let off steam at break and lunchtime. The only unsatisfactory drawback of this arrangement is that the staff have to be meticulous in ensuring that there are no unsafe objects left in the field when school starts each day. Parents help with this.
42. The school has the benefit of the local village hall for physical education lessons, assemblies, art and design and technology lessons and for serving dinners. Without the use of the village hall the school would not be able to provide full access to the requirements of the national curriculum.
43. The governors have invited their past chairman, who has great experience in health and safety in the workplace, to undertake a risk assessment and to recommend what

should be done to provide a healthy and safe school. This work is going ahead now, as there is little evidence of past practice or advisory documents from the local authority being retained. The local authority is advising a small committee of governors; they will have a new policy document ready within the month. Security is high on their agenda. Already measures have been taken to lock away dangerous cleaning materials stored in the school and fire precautions and escape routes have been laid down. The variety of experienced teachers who come to the school also helps to identify possible danger areas.

44. The headteacher is responsible for child protection issues and she makes certain that everyone employed in the school is aware that they should be alert for signs of children with worries or emerging health problems.
45. Parents are very pleased with the way the school cares for its pupils and are confident that bad behaviour and bullying will not be tolerated. They confirm that their children are very happy to come to school and do not want to miss anything. There is little need for teachers to bring in the educational welfare officer to check on lengthy absences, although one or two pupils have had periods of ill health which have kept them away from school for a while. Parents whose children have special needs know that their children's progress will be carefully monitored and parents will be fully involved with planning their individual educational programmes. The older children take great care of the younger ones.
46. The school has a satisfactory policy for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' achievements but this has only recently been introduced. However, the small size of the school makes it easy for staff to know the individual pupils and their needs well. Those with special educational needs are identified early and the recent improvements in the writing of individual education plans means that assessments are better used in providing appropriately targeted work. For the other pupils, appropriate records are kept of their attainment in English and mathematics. These include test results and reading levels. A system is in place to assess progress of skills in ICT. A record of topics covered provides a basic level of assessing attainment in other subjects. However, the assessment of skills in science and the non-core subjects is not yet sufficiently detailed to enable teachers to plan work matched as closely to their prior attainment as they should be. This is developing and the subject coordinators are beginning to collect samples of work to illustrate levels in their subjects. In addition, the headteacher has plans to develop a computerised tracking system so that progress of individual pupils can be easily monitored. The staff have begun to provide targets for groups of pupils based on recognised weaknesses in their work. This is to be encouraged and the school will benefit from setting individual targets in more specific detail than is the case at present.

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

47. Every parent interviewed and those who attended the parents' meeting are very pleased with the school. They see it making a great leap forward under the leadership of the new headteacher. In two terms many innovations have been communicated to parents and governors through the weekly newsletter and at parents' meetings. Parents feel well informed about what is happening or being proposed. They have been able to give their views about the new ideas. Their children are enthusiastic about the rich curriculum and the number of extra curricular activities which this small school, with the help of the community, is managing to arrange. Communication to parents and governors in the past was unsatisfactory but a new, very well presented, brochure is available as well as weekly newsletters. The Annual Report of the governors is

inadequate but an improved format is planned, as are new end-of-year reports for the pupils that will include advice on how to improve and targets for each child. Parents help their children with their learning. Some are able to help in school.

48. Parents are always made to feel welcome and there is a great feeling of friendship between parents themselves and with the school's staff. A newly formed "Friends of Whatfield School" is already planning fundraising events to assist with providing resources for the pupils. The headteacher has an open door policy and teachers are always available to talk over any difficulties at the beginning or end of the school day. The school has an important role in the village and can rely upon good support from the local community.
49. Everyone recognises that the school has been through periods of great uncertainty with frequent changes of temporary staff, but there is a strong feeling of optimism about the next school year when a stable staff using a stimulating curriculum should enable children to make very good progress. There is a very strong shared commitment by parents and the community for the school to succeed.
50. The school involves parents of pupils with special needs from an early stage. Parents are very positive about the school's provision for children with special needs. They are consulted fully when pupils are entered on the special needs register and have regular meetings based on the targets set in the individual education plans.

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

51. The leadership of the school is very good. The new headteacher has very good leadership skills and a clear vision for the school. Management is also very good after a period of considerable uncertainty. In a very short space of time she is making a positive impact on school improvement and starting to raise standards. The school has an excellent shared commitment to making improvements. Extra support for lower attainers and booster groups, to enable pupils to achieve as well as they are capable are now in place.
52. Teaching support assistants are appropriately deployed. They are well motivated and qualified, and make a positive impact towards pupils' learning. The management guidance for pupils with behavioural difficulties is very good and has a positive effect on the successful learning and integration of these pupils. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used to good effect, such as by funding individual support for some pupils.
53. The governing body is fully committed to supporting the school. The governors are becoming more fully involved in all aspects of school life. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are beginning to have a closer partnership with the school. The chair and vice chair of governors have a very good understanding of the importance of good governance. Other governors are very enthusiastic and give good support to the school. They now need to become more proactive and act more as a critical friend to support the headteacher's vision for the future.
54. The governors have delegated roles and responsibilities successfully, and a reasonable committee structure has been defined. There are designated governors for literacy and numeracy who oversee developments in these subjects. The Chair of Governors, who is the local vicar, and other parental governors visit the school regularly to meet with the headteacher and staff. The governors are very proud of their school and are developing a good working relationship with the headteacher and staff. Whilst

the majority of statutory requirements are met, there are weaknesses in the Governors' Annual report to parents. The school provides a good ethos where pupils are made to feel valued.

55. Staff and pupils are well motivated and committed to their school. The school strategy for staff appraisal and performance management is good. The quality of teaching and learning is effectively monitored by the headteacher and as a result this is becoming strong in a very short space of time. The school is very committed to staff development and ensures there is a good programme of training, which includes local courses. Teachers' performance management objectives are in place. All teachers' professional development is planned as part of the performance management cycle. This is closely aligned to targets on the school improvement plan, which are selected and prioritised to ensure continued school improvement through the raising of standards.
56. There is an appropriate number of teachers and support staff for the number of pupils on roll. The headteacher has recently identified pupils who are gifted and talented. They are now able to work with other identified gifted and talented pupils from other local schools
57. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed, by the headteacher who is also the special educational needs coordinator. There is a caring ethos which is shared by all those working with SEN children. Teaching assistants are well briefed and make a good contribution to the progress of the children they work with. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and is well managed. The new special needs coordinator is updating the recording and writing of individual education plans. These are much improved on the minimal record keeping that existed in the past and they contain appropriate detail about progress and targets. However, the new nature of this work means that it has yet to have a significant impact on classroom practice. For example, appropriate and good strategies are set and as the staff know the pupils and their families well they are able to provide a good level of support.
58. The accommodation is attractive, situated in a rural, picturesque setting, and kept beautifully clean and well maintained. The external grounds support the curriculum well. However, the internal accommodation is very small for the number of children in the school. There is very limited storage space and the library and information, communication and technology facilities housed within already cramped classrooms are far from ideal. The use of the local village hall for assemblies, physical education and art and design technology lessons is the only way that the school can ensure that the pupils receive the full national curriculum, without its use the school would not meet statutory requirements.
59. There is a suitable range of resources in all areas of the curriculum. The school's administration is good. The quality of financial planning is satisfactory. Specific grants and funds to raise standards are used efficiently and the funding for pupils with special educational needs is used appropriately.
60. The school provides an improving education for its pupils because of the commitment and hard work of the staff, in particular from the headteacher. The budget is used successfully to benefit pupils and provide them with a satisfactory range of opportunities. Although the unit cost per pupil is very high as would be expected in a small school, best value is applied well. Taking all this into account, and the fact that there are three main curriculum areas where standards need to be improved, the school gives satisfactory value for money.



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

### **Improve standards in writing by:**

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to experience extended writing across all subjects.
- Providing a consistent approach to the teaching of spellings in order to improve standards. (Paragraphs 2, 8, 77, 81, 82)

### **Improve standards in science by:**

- Improving the planning to provide sufficient match of work to pupils' prior attainment and coverage in sufficient depth.
- Providing enough opportunities for pupils to devise their own experiments and investigations.
- Improving the recording of pupils' work. (Paragraphs 2, 8, 98)

### **Improve standards in information and communication technology by:**

- Improving the planning of the use of computers in all subjects and in both key stages.
- Introducing the planned system for assessing and recording pupils' progress.
- Putting into practice the proposed staff training. (Paragraphs 2, 100, 103)

### **Implement the school's new plans to:**

- Improve tracking of individual plans
- Setting individual targets
- Extend the good marking used in English to other subjects. (Paragraphs 17, 29, 46)

### **Minor Issues**

- The Governors to improve their Governing Body Report to Parents so that it meets statutory requirements
- Take advantage of the newly settled staff from September to improve the management of pupils and build better learning habits for pupils in Key Stage 1.
- The use of the local village hall for assemblies, physical education and art and design technology lessons is the only way that the school can ensure that the pupils receive the full national curriculum. Without its use the school would not meet statutory requirements. (Paragraph 10)

## 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

10

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	8	3	0	0	0
Percentage	10	35	40	15	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR-Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

46

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### Special educational needs

YR-Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

0

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

14

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

5

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

%

School data

5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

%

School data

0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*



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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	4	2	6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	2	2
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	5	4	4
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83(89)	67(89)	67(89)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	2	2	3
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	4	4	5
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67(89)	67(89)	83(89)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89(88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	3	1	4

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	1	0	1
	Total	4	3	4
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100(83)	75(83)	100(100)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	1	0	1
	Total	4	3	4
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100(83)	75(100)	100(83)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	45
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

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

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

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	23

#### **Education support staff: YR-Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	160,163
Total expenditure	160,163
Expenditure per pupil	2,859
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,123
Balance carried forward to next year	3,123

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	43
Number of questionnaires returned	35

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	28	7	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	12	20	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	16	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	11	15	6	1	2
The teaching is good.	19	15	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	11	14	7	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	27	8	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	18	14	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	17	14	3	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	22	12	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	26	9	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	15	3	3	0

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

61. Attainment on entry to the school in the reception class is below average in comparison with that expected for three year olds. The very small number of children make satisfactory progress overall. By the time they enter Key Stage 1, the attainment of most children is average in their physical development, their knowledge and understanding of the world, their creative development and in their mathematical skills. Whilst children's attainment does improve in other areas of the curriculum, during their time in the Foundation Stage, it is still below in language and literacy, and for some pupils in their personal, social and emotional development. Overall, children achieve well. The provision for children with special educational needs is there but, as yet, there are no pupils in the Foundation Stage identified as having special educational needs.

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

62. The majority of children make good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Standards for most children by the end of the reception year are in line with what is expected for children of this age, but there are a few who are still very immature for their age. Development of this area of learning is given high priority, and this makes a good contribution to children's achievements across the curriculum. Activities are planned well and specifically targeted to support children's development. For example, when searching for different types of seeds outside in the field, children are encouraged to talk and to work together as much as possible, they are given many opportunities in carpet time to talk and collaborate together. Teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage, and there is very good teamwork between the teacher the nursery nurse and teaching assistants. Assessment of children's needs is satisfactory.

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

63. By the end of their time in the reception class the attainment of children in reading, speaking and listening, is in line with what is expected for children of this age and meets the early learning goals. The standards in their writing however are below what is expected for this age.
64. Reception children know how to sound out alphabetical sounds. They can put the puzzle of an alphabetical caterpillar together in the right order, with the help of an adult. They show obvious enjoyment when looking at books and are eager to share what they find on each page with any available adult. Whilst they listen well in most situations their concentration span can be limited despite them showing interest in what they are learning. This was seen in a creative lesson on weaving where, although the task was achievable for some, it was quite challenging and although they showed real interest in it some of the children's concentration waned.
65. Whilst there are pens and paper readily available so that children can engage in free writing, they have few opportunities to do so. Most of the pupils' recorded evidence of their work is in pictorial form and good progress can be seen in children's learning.

66. The quality of teaching in this area is good. Lessons are planned well to foster enjoyment and to encourage speaking and listening skills. It is unfortunate that there are not more opportunities for children to practise their pencil control and writing skills.

### **Mathematical development**

67. Children's mathematical abilities are very varied when they start in reception and most have had no formal methods of learning. However, good teaching ensures that the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of reception and will be ready to start the National Curriculum in Year 1 well prepared. The children are provided with a wide range of practical experiences such as counting activities and singing songs which involve counting. They print simple patterns, play counting games and play with sand; all of these activities help to build up their mathematical skills. Work in this area of the curriculum is well planned and children are encouraged to see mathematics all around them. A very positive help to the children's learning is the home/school books which involve parents in the work which their children are doing at school, such as, counting how many steps there are from the back door to the end of the garden. This extra work at home supports pupils' learning well.

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

68. Although most children in reception show curiosity in their surroundings, many need encouragement to explore, investigate and ask questions. The good curriculum offers them a wide range of experiences to expand their knowledge of the world around them and most children attain the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. The children are very interested in anything 'natural' which the teacher tells them about, for example, when making close observations of tadpoles and the way they are starting to turn into frogs. This is a very good way of supporting children's developing language through other areas of the curriculum.

### **Physical development**

69. Children at Whatfield are very fortunate to have a large field attached to the school which they are able to use. This is used regularly to support pupils' physical development. The youngest children are also included in the time when the visiting teacher comes from 'Top Sport' and they are able to play games with the big parachute. Because of the small numbers the youngest children are together with the older ones at playtime and they are used to playing together regularly. Good opportunities are provided for the children to develop their finer manipulative skills in reception, for example, in cutting and sticking paper. A very good challenging activity was given to the children, which was to attach different circles together to make a caterpillar in as many different ways as possible. Teaching is good throughout this area of the curriculum.

### **Creative development**

70. A good range of activities with well-focused adult support and encouragement means that children make good gains in learning and most reach the standards expected. Children start from a fairly basic level of skill when they enter the nursery and make good progress through a wide range of experiences in art, music and imaginative play. Children particularly enjoy joining in rhyming and counting songs.

71. The foundation stage provides a stimulating environment for children to work in and this aspect of learning is very well supported by all adults and the good teaching that children receive.

## ENGLISH

72. Results in the 2001 national tests show that standards attained by eleven year olds are in line with the national average and also in line with similar schools. This is similar to previous years' results. Standards attained by seven year olds in tests last year were well below national averages, and remain below when compared with similar schools. However it must be remembered that it is a very small number of pupils who sat the tests. At present there are 6 pupils in Year 6 two of whom started at the school the week before the national tests.
73. The findings of the inspection confirm that the attainment of eleven year olds in English is satisfactory overall in reading, speaking and listening but that standards in writing are below what is expected for pupils of this age. This drop in standards is because these pupils were most affected by the period of uncertainty which the school has been through.
74. Pupils' attainment in reading has remained similar since the last inspection, and is at the standard expected for pupils of this age. Standards in writing are unsatisfactory in both key stages and spelling is particularly weak. Many pupils of all ages have difficulty in spelling even the simplest of words. The weakness in spelling is also reflected in pupils' writing in other subjects, such as history and geography. Attainment in handwriting varies considerably. Whilst pupils' writing in their practice handwriting books, is of a good standard, this is not transferred into their every day writing. Presentation of work is inconsistent and often untidy.
75. Attainment of pupils aged seven in reading, speaking and listening is satisfactory. They are very eager and willing to talk about their work and what they are doing. This eagerness was seen in a good Year 2 science lesson where pupils expressed themselves with great excitement when searching for bugs and insects in the field at the back of the school. However, their progress is hindered by the unsettled nature of the class and they have not yet developed sufficiently mature working habits resulting in, for example, calling out or being off task in whole class sessions when the teacher is listening to another's answer. As with Key Stage 2, the standards of written work are unsatisfactory and many pupils have difficulties with spelling. Teaching support assistants work hard with pupils playing games with them to support their learning of phonics to help their spellings.
76. The school has correctly identified writing as a focus for school development and strategies to improve writing are starting to have a more positive effect. The school's recent approach to setting targets based on pupils' prior attainment particularly in Key Stage 2 is starting, in a very short space of time, to have a positive effect on raising standards of attainment.
77. On entry to the school, pupils have lower than expected speaking and listening skills. By the age of seven, pupils make good progress and are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills, throughout all subjects, not just in English. However, whilst they speak well, they are often too interested in getting over their own point of view instead of listening to what others have to say. Sometimes they are distracted by 'petty' disputes and therefore do not concentrate and listen as well as they could.

78. During Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities are starting to make good progress and the majority achieve reasonable standards. The oral part of the literacy hour is encouraged and put to particularly good effect to encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills. Poetry is used effectively as a tool to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills. A good example of this is the way pupils in Key Stage 2 when studying poetry by Michael Rosen put rhythmic instrumental patterns to the poetry as they read it out loud so that it emphasises the rhythms and sounds which the poetry makes. Pupils across the school usually work with concentration and question others' ideas respectfully and responsibly, for example, when there was a discussion in a Key Stage 2 geography lesson about why houses in the village of Chembakolli do not have windows, pupils were able to express their own opinions and views clearly. They are provided with a range of opportunities to talk in different contexts and purposes. Progress in listening is better in Key Stage 2, and satisfactory progress is made in speaking.
79. Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading and make good progress in developing their skills. By the time they are seven, the majority of pupils achieve standards in reading which are expected for pupils of this age. By the time they are eleven, the majority achieve standards that are at least in line with what is expected for pupils of this age. Pupils' achievement is good because teachers provide frequent opportunities for them to practise their skills in literacy lessons. Texts chosen for whole class reading lessons are very accurately matched to different age groups and abilities. Pupils with special educational needs cope with most texts through the good support provided by teaching assistants, and careful planning by teachers. Both fiction and non-fiction books are used in whole class and guided reading sessions. Pupils are able to use the library and many benefit from this. Less able pupils are supported very well by an assistant during a literacy session, which helps their reading progress.
80. Pupils are beginning to apply the skills they are developing in literacy across the curriculum when they write for a range of audiences and purposes. However, despite having regular spellings to learn and being tested on them in school, pupils do not then apply their knowledge to their writing and spellings are frequently inaccurately written. So far the additional literacy work and regular spelling tests have gone some way towards addressing this problem but it is too early to measure the full impact on standards. Recently introduced group targets have been stuck in the front of their exercise books and this is giving pupils a clearer idea of what they need to do to improve and what they are learning. The clear sharing of the learning objectives for the lessons helps this, and in Key Stage 2 objectives are set for each group. In the marking of English work, individual targets are clearly identified and show what each pupil needs to work on in order to improve.
81. Pupils' writing of sustained stories is unsatisfactory. Stories are limited in their use of expressive vocabulary, despite teachers input at the beginning of the lesson to encourage the pupils' development of their vocabulary. By Year 6 pupils write more complex and grammatical sentences and a good range of punctuation is used. However, their stories lack depth and imagination and frequently are very short and of a poor standard. Whilst pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development in English are good, the presentation of their work is frequently untidy and does not reflect their ability to write neatly. Nearly all pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and there is a lot of enthusiasm in lessons for reading as pupils and teachers explore texts together, however, this does not spill over into their writing skills.
82. The quality of teaching is good overall in Key Stage 1 and consistently very good in Key Stage 2. This is similar to the previous inspection despite the fact that teachers in both key stages have changed. Both teaching and learning are now consistently good; this is



a very recent improvement. The good relationships and the value and respect placed on pupils' contributions in lessons are major strengths. This inspires pupils to behave well and try hard, particularly in Year 6. The teacher in Key Stage 2 has high expectations and manages pupils very well. Time is used effectively in the literacy hour and very good use is made of an interesting range of resources, to capture pupils' attention. Support staff are well informed and make a valuable contribution to the teaching of literacy. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are planned well. Teachers explain carefully to pupils what they are expected to do, and the time at the end of the lesson is used well to go over what pupils have learnt during the session. Homework is set regularly and supports what the pupils are learning in school. The contribution English makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

## **MATHEMATICS**

83. At the time of the last inspection, standards were broadly satisfactory in Year 2 but below average in Year 6. Since then standards have risen and fallen, due to the small size of individual cohorts. The evidence of the inspection, and the early indications from this year's national tests, are that present standards are broadly in line with those expected in both key stages. This improvement is due to the successful introduction of the numeracy strategy and the improved quality of teaching, especially in Years 3 to 6.
84. The results of the tests in 2001 showed that attainment was well below average when compared to schools nationally. However, when compared with schools which have pupils from similar backgrounds results are very low and among the lowest five per cent nationally. This is also true when the value added between the same pupils taking the Year 2 and the Year 6 tests are analysed. Over time the girls have tended to perform at a lower level than the boys, but this distinction can be magnified by the small size of the cohorts and an imbalance between the genders. However, although there was no significant difference in attainment evident during the inspection, it is an area the school should review to ascertain the reasons in more detail for girls' underachievement.
85. The Year 2 pupils in 2001 also attained standards that were very low and no pupils reached the higher level. Over time the trend in standards shows a fall since 1997 and the gap between the school's and the national results has widened. However, the early indications are that the results in this year's tests have improved. The pupils with special educational needs in both key stages are very well supported by the good quality teaching assistants and they make progress at least in line with their peers.
86. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a sound ability to count to 20 and can count in twos using both odd and even numbers. Year 1 pupils are able to add two single digit numbers while Year 2 pupils can make up simple addition calculations for a given total. Higher attainers can work with numbers to 50. However, the lack of settled staffing in the school has meant that insufficient progress has been made and much of the pupils' work is at a similar level and does not demonstrate sufficient progress over the year. The pupils' familiarity with symbols used for recording calculations is at an early stage. Their progress is hindered by the unsettled nature of the class and they have not yet developed sufficiently mature working habits resulting in, for example, calling out or being off task in whole class sessions when the teacher is listening to another's answer. Year 2 pupils can tell simple time and show a sound understanding of early fractions work and can work accurately when completing simple money problems. Year 1 pupils know common two-dimensional shapes but some are unable to name common three-dimensional shapes.

87. In Years 3 to 6 sound mental skills are displayed as they divide or multiply using 5 and 10. During a very good lesson introducing the concept of perimeter, pupils display a sound understanding of the idea and do not confuse the concept with area or length. Year 5 and 6 pupils are able to take a given perimeter and work out what the different lengths of the sides might be. Further very good challenging work for the older pupils introduces the idea of area and the use of square metres. The younger pupils with special educational needs are well supported by a teaching assistant and develop their understanding of units of length by carrying out practical work with the appropriate units. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows a satisfactory standard overall. Work on equivalent fractions and the conversion of tenths to decimals illustrates that standards are at a low level among some older pupils. The work has in the past been pitched too much at the middle age and ability groups and work has not always been targeted appropriately. This has improved as is shown by the work in books since Christmas. Older pupils are now using negative numbers and working on digital time, while younger ones inaccurately estimate weights and then test their predictions.
88. Pupils' attitudes vary but are good overall. The younger ones are unsettled and immature at times but when given appropriate tasks they settle well. Older pupils have responded to better planned, more focused and challenging teaching well and this is having a positive impact on their learning. They are productive, work hard and show pride in their achievements.
89. Overall, the quality of teaching in the school in mathematics is good. It is strongest in Years 3 to 6. Although standards are still too low, very good teaching means that the standards being achieved in Key Stage 2 are now more in line with those expected. The lessons are effectively based on the National Numeracy Strategy and contain an appropriate mix of whole class, individual and group teaching. Recently introduced group targets have been stuck in the front of their exercise books and this is giving pupils a clearer idea of what they need to do to improve and what they are learning. The clear sharing of the learning objectives for the lessons helps this, and in the junior class objectives are set for each group.
90. Numeracy skills are used in other subjects. For example, simple bar graphs have been used to present information about pupils' pets. In a link with a topic on pirates, coordinates were used to create treasure maps. Older pupils used computers to work on angles when creating patterns. In art and design, they have studied recurring patterns in nature, such as in spiders' webs or flowers. The use of computers is at an early stage in its development and the planned training for staff should create many more opportunities for computer use to be planned as part of the numeracy lessons. Homework is set and supports what the pupils are doing in school.

## **SCIENCE**

91. The attainment of the Year 6 pupils varies greatly from year to year due to the small cohorts. The standards of the present Year 6 are below those expected nationally and this is a similar picture to that found during the last inspection. However, the present teaching and learning evident in the junior class is of very good quality, with work being better matched to pupils' prior attainment. Standards are rising rapidly. It was only possible to observe one lesson in the infant class, but the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the most recent work is of a broadly satisfactory level, standards are rising and the teaching, especially in aspects of the subject to do with life and the natural world are good. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making

satisfactory progress but more needs to be done to enable them to achieve the levels of which they are capable.

92. The results of the tests in 2001 showed that although all of the pupils in Year 6 reached the expected level, none reached the higher levels and this is well below average when compared with schools nationally, and also well below average when compared with schools which have pupils from similar backgrounds. In addition, the results show a well below average improvement since the same pupils were in Year 2. This is largely due to the unsettled staffing in Key Stage 2 over that period. Over time, the girls regularly underachieve in science by almost a year and the boys by over half a year when compared to other schools nationally. During the inspection there was no evidence of any significant difference between boys and girls but it is an aspect of the tests that the school should monitor more closely. However, results have improved since 1997 except for a very poor result in 1999. They are now closer to the national picture. The early indications are that this year's results will not be significantly different to those found last year.
93. In Year 2 the results of the teacher assessments in 2001 show that attainment was well below average and again no pupils reached the higher levels. This poor level of attainment was consistent for all aspects of the science curriculum. Scrutiny of the present work shows that pupils are able to investigate an area of the school grounds and distinguish between the natural materials they find, such as twigs, leaves and feathers. They know the basic parts of a plant such as leaf, flower, root or stem. Displays show that they have learned about the life cycle of frogs and chickens and can sequence the stages accurately. Other work shows that pupils have learned about a range of materials and have taken part in some experiments to show how they change, such as ice melting. They have had the opportunity to study forces and use magnets. The recording of work is often untidy and not very accurate.
94. The work evident in Years 3 to 6 is largely from the time the present headteacher took over. Earlier work is inconsistent and contains some very poorly presented findings. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the purpose of roots and this leads to the study of capillary action. Year 3 and 4 pupils are able to describe the effect of different forces. They are at an early stage of labelling the parts of flowers, in line with Year 1 and 2, much of this work is the same as that of Years 5 and 6 pupils and not enough attention has been given to extension work for these older pupils. This is now being addressed by the present headteacher, as was evident in the lesson on capillary action, where appropriate extension activities were provided. Year 5 and 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of the function of the skeleton. They know how food chains work; how they start with plants, and how they differ in different habitats. They have a sound understanding of fair testing but too often the work lacks depth and progression of scientific skills.
95. The pupils in Key Stage 2 demonstrated how interested and excited they can be when presented with challenging, well thought out and resourced lessons. They demonstrated real excitement when studying the celery that had been left in food dye and they discovered the way the colour was carried up the stem of the plant. Younger pupils showed some real wonder at the emergence of a frog in their tadpole tank after the holiday. They were very interested and excited by this event. All pupils, especially the older higher attainers, need more opportunities to devise their own ways of testing hypotheses by creating experiments and investigations.
96. The quality of the teaching is very good in Key Stage 2. The one lesson observed in the infant class was of a good standard. However, the very good teaching is recent and the

evidence of earlier work shows that the unsettled staffing in recent years has had a negative impact on learning. The planning has not taken sufficient notice of the different age groups in classes and their needs. The work is planned too much as an activity for all and the older and higher attaining pupils have not had sufficiently challenging activities to enable them to make the progress they should. However, a new scheme of work is being developed for introduction in September and this will give teachers a better basis for the planning of effective lessons based on pupils' prior attainment. At present the assessment is at a very basic level and the tracking of individual pupils' progress is not used to set targets for improvement.

97. The resources are satisfactory and teachers work hard to ensure they provide suitable resources for the planned activities. The pupils use them safely and sensible. The use of computers is not well developed and there are missed opportunities to present findings using data handling packages.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

98. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any direct teaching of computer skills. Judgements made from teachers' planning, pupils' work and discussion with pupils and teachers indicate that the subject is at a very early stage of development and that standards at the ages of seven and eleven are below those expected for pupils of their ages and have not been maintained at the satisfactory level found during the last inspection. However, the older pupils have very good skills in aspects of the subject that they have been recently taught and this shows that the provision has improved and the teaching and learning are now good. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress in the junior class but progress in the infants is still too slow.
99. The school has, since the last OFSTED inspection, invested in more up to date resources and now has access to the Internet and a range of CD ROM and other software. However, there are still more resources needed if the full National Curriculum is to be regularly and fully taught. For example, the school does not have the facility for monitoring and controlling external events, such as software for measuring temperature, or for controlling moving models. In addition, the staff require training in the use of the computers and software now available. This is planned in the near future and should enable the quality of provision to improve to a satisfactory level and provide more opportunities for pupils to extend their skills and improve standards further.

100. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have some very basic word processing skills and have some opportunities to use simple software to support mathematical or literacy development. In the junior class pupils have recently begun to use a program which enables them to instruct a screen turtle to draw lines following their commands. Although at an early stage, pupils have produced some effective and complex patterns using repeat commands and changing the angles in their patterns. They know a number of commands for this work, including the shortened forms and can clear the screen and print their work.
101. In one very good recent project, the pupils in Key Stage 2 were taught to use a program to create a very effective presentation based on their research into the Second World War in history lessons. This research has included topics such as fashion and evacuation. The pupils show a real pride in their work and enjoy the success it has given them. This work has resulted in them developing a good level of knowledge and understanding about the use of the software and about the history topic. They are able to merge text and pictures and create some good effects with text by changing fonts and colours. The Internet was used effectively as a resource for much of the work. They have used animations and sound as part of the work and the mature level of the finished product indicates how well pupils will be able to achieve when the resources and staff training have been addressed.
102. Very good use of opportunities to work with a technician from the local cluster of secondary and primary schools has assisted in this work and this has had a very positive impact on standards. The headteacher has a system for assessing and planning pupils' work based on skills which she plans to introduce shortly. Teachers need to ensure that they consider the use of information communication technology in all subjects to ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to develop their skills. A digital camera is used by staff to record aspects of school life but pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to do this themselves. A project in the use of information and communication technology in literacy is planned for with able pupils from other local schools and this is a good development that will help raise the profile of the subject and illustrate how computers can be used across the curriculum. Unfortunately, the cramped conditions in the corner of the Key Stage 2 classroom, in which the computers are kept, despite teachers' best efforts to find space for them, has an adverse effect on standards as not all pupils in the school are able to benefit from their use.

### **The Foundation subjects**

103. Because of the small number of inspecting days, the emphasis on inspecting the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information communication technology, and the constraints of the timetable in a small school, it was only possible to see a small number of lessons in the remaining foundation subjects. Religious education was not inspected, as it is to be part of a separate denominational inspection. Physical education was observed in Key Stage 1 and an extra curricular activity club on May Pole dancing to which nearly half the school attends was also observed. One art and design, and one geography lesson were seen. No music lessons were observed. While it is possible to comment on standards in the lessons and work seen, the small sample of work and lessons do not provide a secure evidence base on which to make judgements about overall standards. However, what is clear is that pupils make reasonable progress in geography, history, and physical education. They make good progress in art and design and design technology.

104. Standards of work in art and design and design and technology are good, across both key stages. Pupils produce work in the style of other artists; for example, younger pupils produce good standards of painting in the style of Monet, using his painting of 'the water lilies' as inspiration. Older pupils work in the style of Rousseau and Matisse. The standards they achieve are above what is expected for pupils of this age. In one lesson in Key Stage 2 there was some very good work being achieved by the pupils in the use of Batik. They produce good designs, plan out their work well and then execute their ideas to a high degree of skill. They are justifiably proud of their work, as are the support staff helping them who immediately display their work for the rest of the school to see. This gives pupils a purpose for their lessons and allows them to see there is relevance in what they are doing as well as learning new skills.
105. Most pupils use materials and skills successfully, especially when working in two-dimensional media. Three – dimensional work is carried out successfully in art, often undertaken jointly with design and technology projects. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 make very good three-dimensional models of dragon heads, and with their new knowledge of pneumatics, are able to make the dragon's jaws open and shut. Likewise, pupils in Years 3 and 4 make delightful creepy spiders in art to which they then add a cotton reel mechanism in order to make them move. These are of a high standard of work and creativity and are a good improvement on previous standards seen in the last inspection. The youngest children in the school in the Foundation Stage produce good three-dimensional works in their topic on weaving. They select different strips of material they have sorted into light, dark and mixed colours and then weave them into baskets. One group made a huge woven pattern which they fixed to the fence in the garden to 'brighten it up!'
106. There is little recorded evidence of pupils' work in history and geography at either key stage but there are displays in Key Stage 2 showing some of the work which they have covered. Discussion with teachers and scrutiny of their planning indicate that pupils make appropriate progress in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 satisfactory progress is made in history through the study of World War 2. Good use is made of local residents who were invited into school to talk about their experiences of life during the war, and reasonable comparisons were made by pupils comparing watching television now to when it was first introduced into Britain. In geography pupils in Key Stage 2 study in depth about life in a village in India. This captures their imagination and they are very willing and happy to talk about what they have learnt and are able to compare and contrast it to their life in a village in England. An excellent lesson involved all pupils finding out research about village life in Chembakolli. Older pupils researched information from books, pictures and a CD Rom about farming. Younger pupils learn in greater depth about 'A day in the life of Chembakolli.' Another group of pupils, with the very good support of the teaching assistant, started to make models of the village houses. Pupils were keen, interested and able to develop their thought processes through their own and their friends' discoveries.
107. Unfortunately it is not possible to comment on standards in music as no lessons were seen during the inspection, due to the long-term absence of the music teacher. However, singing in assembly was of a reasonable standard.
108. In physical education only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1. The standards were as expected for pupils of this age and all pupils made reasonable progress in developing their competence in dribbling skills. One observed extra curricular activity was thoroughly enjoyed by pupils when a peripatetic teacher from 'Top Sport' comes and plays parachute games with them. This widens the opportunities which they have to experience different physical activities. Discussion with both parents and pupils

indicates the great love which the school has for its weekly Friday afternoon swimming sessions and pupils achieve well. Because the school is so small in numbers it is difficult for the pupils to participate in competitive sport. However, a number of other local small schools are starting to meet to give pupils an opportunity to play against each other.

109. The quality of teaching in the foundation subjects is good overall in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. Pupils' management in Key Stage 2 is particularly effective and ensures that all pupils are fully included in the lesson and that their concentration remains constant. Good differentiation is necessary when teaching such a wide age range and wide ability level within one lesson and this is a strength of the planning, ensuring again that all levels of ability and needs are catered for. All teachers show a good subject knowledge of the foundation subjects. Teaching assistants are well deployed and play an important part in ensuring that pupils achieve to the best of their ability. Clear explanations are given of the learning objective in each lesson so that pupils know what is expected of them, and there are good sessions at the end of lessons where pupils have the opportunity to reflect on what they have learnt.
110. Pupils' response in most of these lessons is good. Older pupils, in particular, behave well and are very interested and eager to learn. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are not so well motivated and are often distracted by more petty squabbles. This affects the amount of progress they make because it detracts from their learning.
111. Since the last inspection little progress has been made until very recently in developing schemes of work for the foundation subjects. However, in a very short space of time the headteacher has rectified this and schemes of work are now in place for all subjects. This, along with good planning, puts the school in a good position to move forward in the start of the new academic year when a more stable staffing situation is in place.