

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST MABYN (VA) CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

St Mabyn, Bodmin

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 112018

Headteacher: Mrs D Puttock

Reporting inspector: Mr D Boot  
OFSTED Inspector Number: 19132

Dates of inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 194874

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 aided

Age range of children: 4 - 11

Gender of children: mixed

School address: St. Mabyn  
Nr. Bodmin  
Cornwall

Postcode: PL30 3BQ

Telephone number: 01208 841307

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Appropriate authority: governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Joanne Hyde

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19132	David Boot	Registered inspector	mathematics; art; design and technology; physical education; equal opportunities.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and children's achievements; How well are children taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9306	Barbara Moore	Lay inspector	None	How well does the school care for its children? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4109	Jim Barley	Team inspector	English; music; information and communication technology; special educational needs.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?
19916	Debbie Kerr	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; science; history; geography.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mabyn's School is a voluntary aided Church of England school and so religious education and collective worship are inspected separately. The school is smaller than other primary schools with 85 children of statutory school age. There are 12 children who attend full-time in the reception year and a further 9 children who attend part-time and these children are all in the Foundation Stage.<sup>1</sup> The number in each year group is very small, some year groups having significantly different numbers of boys and girls. The school is over-subscribed because parents from outside its immediate area choose to send their children to it.

The school is located in the village of St Mabyn near to Wadebridge in Cornwall. The children come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds but this is above average overall with seven per cent eligible for free school meals, a figure below the national average. Attainment on entry varies due to the small numbers but this year it is average overall with some weakness in language. This is a change from the previous inspection when attainment on entry was judged to be above average. There are no children from ethnic minority groups and none speak English as an additional language. Nineteen per cent of the children have special educational needs, which is broadly average, and three per cent have statements of special educational needs which is above the national average.

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

This is a very effective school. Standards are above average in English, mathematics, art and music. Children make a particularly good start to their education in the Foundation Stage where teaching is of a high quality. Teaching remains good with some very good features as children move through the school. The headteacher provides very strong leadership through a very effective teamwork approach. The school has a very strong Christian ethos where children show very positive attitudes and do very well in their personal development. Despite the above average costs in this small school, it provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in English enable children to write with sensitivity by the time they leave the school;
- Standards in art and music; the school has recently achieved the 'Artsmark' quality award;
- Very good teaching in the Foundation Stage; good teaching throughout the rest of the school with very good features;
- The headteacher and governors are very effective in leading and managing the successful teamwork notable throughout the school;
- The curriculum is very much enhanced through visits, visitors and an outstanding extra-curricular activities programme;
- There is a very strong Christian ethos.

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

- The challenge provided to the higher attaining children, especially in mathematics and science;
- The consistency of marking children's work, especially in mathematics, to bring it all to the level of the best examples.

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

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

The school has made a good improvement since its last inspection in June 1997. Standards have mostly remained at average or above average levels and some have improved, for example, English at Year 2 and music at Year 6, but especially history throughout the school and geography at Year 6 which were then judged to be below average and are now average with some better features. Standards in physical education have remained above average in some respects but overall this has fallen to average levels because the school has difficulties with accommodation. Issues identified in the last inspection have mostly improved well. The school's planning now shows clearly how children should progress and assessment techniques have been improved. The school's

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<sup>1</sup> *The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends when they move into Year 1.*

improvement plan is very fully monitored to assess its success. Teaching is better than it was with no unsatisfactory teaching seen. Resources have been improved.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

The very small year groups mean that in 2002, for example, each child will count as almost seven per cent so interpretation of percentages and grades must be used cautiously. Results vary from year to year but the school's results are consistently high in English at the end of Year 6. At the end of Year 6, in 2001, test results were well above average in English, average in mathematics but below average in science with lower grades in comparison to similar schools. Standards at present are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Standards in art and music are above the level expected for eleven year olds and, in all other subjects they are in line.

Standards at the end of Year 2 in the 2001 tests were very high in reading with the school in the top five per cent of all schools and also of similar schools. Mathematics was above average and writing was average nationally but again lower against similar schools. Standards at present at the end of Year 2 are above average in English and mathematics and above the level expected for pupils of this age in art. They are at the level expected in all other subjects. No judgement was made in music because insufficient lessons were seen during the inspection.

Due to the small numbers, attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage varies but this year it is average overall with some weakness in language evident. Children will mostly attain the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Foundation Stage. The school sets suitably challenging yet realistic targets, which it achieved in 2001. Overall, children achieve well with particular strengths in the number who achieve the expected level for their age at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 – frequently the whole of the year group. Fewer children attain the higher levels in writing at the end of Year 2 and in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Despite not achieving so well in writing at the end of Year 2, children achieve well in this in Years 3 to 6 and are able to produce a wide range of writing showing considerable sensitivity by the end of Year 6. They read well throughout the school. They are accomplished also in both art and music.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; all children are enthusiastic learners;
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; the school is particularly good in ensuring the absence of oppressive behaviour and bullying;
Personal development and relationships	Very good; all children get on well with each other and with adults and this enhances their personal development;
Attendance	Satisfactory, the school does all it can to encourage children to attend.

Children in the Foundation Stage make a particularly good start due to the high quality teaching and care – the school is very successful in achieving this despite the difficulties it faces due to unsatisfactory accommodation. All the children are monitored very carefully to ensure they develop as they should.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Good

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

Teaching has improved well since the school's last inspection and it is a strength. During the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching and, indeed, most teaching was good or very good. Teachers are very skilled in managing children and their planning is thorough, especially in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 class, where it is exemplary. This is despite the difficulties presented by the accommodation and mixed age classes. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and the school makes very positive use of specialist teaching from its own staff and from visitors. In some subjects, teachers do not expect enough of higher attaining children and this is especially evident in the tasks provided for them on some worksheets. Sometimes work is marked with very helpful comments but this is inconsistent and is not good enough on occasions. However, children who have special educational needs are included in everything that goes on through the very positive contribution support staff make to their learning. The school takes great care to ensure that no one misses out in what is provided.

Teaching of English is at least good and it is mostly very good with due regard to essential literacy skills. This results in very effective learning so that children are very competent readers and capable of writing sensitively for a range of audiences. Teaching of mathematics is satisfactory with some good features. Suitable emphasis is given to mental skills so that, by the end of Year 6, children are confident in using them. A particularly positive feature of teaching English and mathematics is the way that teachers are now using information and communication technology to assist children's learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A very broad, suitably balanced and very relevant curriculum is provided. It is particularly well enriched by visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities.
Provision for children with special educational needs	These children are very well included in all that is available. They make good progress as a result of the support they receive.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good, overall. The school provides well for children's social and cultural development and very effectively for their spiritual and moral development through its very strong Christian ethos.
How well the school cares for its children	Children are very well cared for physically and emotionally. Their academic performance is carefully monitored.

Almost all parents are very pleased with the school. They are highly involved and the school is the hub of the community.

The school provides a very interesting curriculum which fully meets statutory requirements. It is considerably added to by the out of school clubs which are outstanding for such a small school. All children are known and valued by all the staff and this results in high quality care.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very strong and enthusiastic leadership by the headteacher results in a very effective teamwork approach.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are not only supportive but also very effective in their knowledge of the school and in shaping its direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A good range of appropriate strategies are used so that the school is very well placed to take decisions about its future development.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses all its resources very well. Money has been spent very wisely on a number of projects.

The number of teachers and support staff is good and the school is suitably resourced but, despite their best efforts, the accommodation remains inadequate.

The headteacher has been particularly successful in developing the way the staff work as a team. All members make very valuable contributions and the school is rightly proud of its 'Investors in People' status. The principles of best value are well applied throughout.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children work hard;</li> <li>• Behaviour is good;</li> <li>• Children like school;</li> <li>• Teaching is good and children make good progress;</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed and helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<p>A very small number of parents want to see improvements in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of work children do at home;</li> <li>• How well they are kept informed;</li> <li>• Working more closely with parents.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents and disagrees with the areas they would like to see improved. However, there is scope to improve even further the progress made by higher attaining children in some lessons. The school has a policy for homework in line with national recommendations. The school works very closely with parents and the information to parents is good overall although it does not include targets for improvement in written reports.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In small schools annual National Curriculum test percentages should be interpreted cautiously as one child represents several percentage points and it is not unusual for year groups to differ greatly in percentage performance. In 2001, one-third of the children in Year 6 were identified as having some form of special educational needs. Consequently, the school did well in the number of children who attained at least the expected level at the end of Year 6 in English (83 per cent), mathematics (78 per cent) and science (94 per cent). It also did well in the number of children who attained above the expected level in English (50 per cent). However, it did not do so well in the number who attained above the expected level in mathematics and science (22 per cent). The school has recognised this and expects this group to do better in 2002, although inspection evidence points to this as an area that still requires further improvement. The school is in the group of schools deemed to be in the most favourable circumstances nationally and it did less well in comparison to these schools because the number of children who achieve above the expected level particularly affects this comparison.
2. In 2001, the school did very well indeed in the National Curriculum test results for Year 2 in reading. It was amongst the top five per cent of schools both nationally and for its similar group with all the children attaining at least the expected level and many of them attaining the higher level (55 per cent). The school's performance in writing was less favourable both nationally where it was average and in comparison with similar schools where it was below average with no children attaining above the expected level. Inspection evidence from Years 3 to 6 shows that these children are making good progress in the junior classes, already being able to write well. Performance in National Curriculum tests in mathematics was in line with the inspection evidence from this year's children where it is above average nationally, although in line with the average for similar schools.
3. Despite the effects of small year groups, the school has attained well above average results in reading, in Year 2, and in English, in Year 6, over a period of time. Results in other subjects have been more variable although they have rarely fallen to below average and have been above average often. The school knows its children well and sets itself challenging but realistic targets which it achieved in 2001 and expects to achieve in 2002.
4. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage varies. At the time of the last inspection it was judged to be above average but this year it is average overall with some weakness in language. Children make a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage and most of them are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals prescribed for them before they move into Year 1 and begin to work on the National Curriculum.
5. Attainment, as judged during the inspection at the end of Years 2 and 6, is above average in reading, writing, mathematics and art. By the end of Year 6, music is also above average but not enough was seen during the inspection in Year 2 to be able to make a judgement. Attainment in English, art and music is particularly notable and children have made good progress. Attainment is in line with the expectations for this age in all other subjects. Children have good literacy skills so that, for example, they read a range of books enthusiastically and are accurate in their use of spelling and punctuation. They also use numeracy skills well, for example, Year 2 children were able to use many different combinations of coins to pay for

things and Year 6 children used their skills in calculating the decimal equivalent of fractions. A particularly notable feature of children's achievement is the way that they are using literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, writing has been used with great sensitivity in religious education and with accuracy in science. Good numeracy skills helped Year 6 children to understand how to operate a spreadsheet in the computer suite.

6. Most children achieve well throughout the school. There is scope, however, to improve the achievement of higher attaining children in some lessons. Frequently, these children have not been given challenging enough work. In some cases they have been given worksheets which do not extend their learning sufficiently and there is also evidence that on too many occasions they have completed the same work as children of average ability.
7. The school identifies children with special educational needs very early after a parent or teacher has expressed a concern. Sometimes the concern is identified by the playgroup before the child starts school or through the tests carried out in the child's first term of school. The special educational needs co-ordinator discusses these children's needs with the class teacher and appropriate targets are set. As a result of such measures, children with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets and, indeed, many go on to achieve the expected levels in National Curriculum tests.

### **Children's attitudes, values and personal development**

8. Children's attitudes to school have improved since the previous inspection and are now very good. They enjoy coming to school and are very interested in their lessons. Their very positive attitudes are one reason why they learn at a good rate and achieve well.
9. Children in the Foundation Stage feel secure in the well-established routines that the staff provide. The warm and trusting relationships that the adults foster ensure that children are happy, confident and ready to learn. They behave very well and are developing good levels of independence. In Years 1 to 6 children respond with interest to the well-structured lessons. They listen carefully and are always willing to take part in the purposeful practical activities that teachers provide, contribute to class discussions and offer answers to questions. For example, in a Year 1 history lesson on Victorian artefacts, children showed high levels of interest and curiosity. They inspected their artefacts carefully, talked quietly with one another about the task, asking each other questions and making sensible suggestions as to how the objects might have been used. In school and class assemblies children demonstrate their very positive attitudes to school by contributing items of work, singing with enthusiasm and applauding each other's success and achievements. Children with special educational needs are equally positive about school and join in fully with activities.
10. Most children behave well in the classrooms and at play and lunch times. They are open, polite to adults and welcoming to visitors. They move around the small building in an orderly way, waiting patiently and quietly for other classes, for example, when going into the playgrounds at playtime. Lunchtimes are pleasant and social occasions. Children have good table manners and keep noise levels to an acceptable level when talking to their friends over their meal. They respond very positively to the school's very successful approach to managing behaviour. As a result there are very few instances of bullying or oppressive behaviour and there has been only one exclusion on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour during the past year.
11. Children respond very well to the school's strategies for promoting personal development. As a result of the very good provision for spiritual development, they are able to reflect on and

consider some of life's fundamental questions. The very strong Christian ethos of the school is often reflected in their work, and particularly in their writing, art and music. The quality of the writing done by Year 5 and 6 children in response to hearing the story of Pentecost was of outstanding quality. When they wrote about their feelings their writing reflected a wide range of feelings and emotions such as sadness, pride, celebration and a sense of being special. As a result of their religious education and personal and social education lessons, children understand that there are different systems of belief and respect the fact that people of different faiths have different but equally valid values. They listen thoughtfully to stories in assembly and make good use of opportunities within assemblies and class discussion times to reflect on what they have heard.

12. As a result of the very good provision for moral development, children have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. All staff have high and consistent expectations of behaviour and children quickly learn that their actions have an impact on others. They think through the consequences of their decisions and make choices about how they are going to behave. Children are happy to abide by the classroom rules because they negotiated them together. As a result, the vast majority choose to behave thoughtfully and considerately to each other and to the adults around the school. They open doors for others, for example, and stand back to allow visitors to go first. When individuals are tempted to behave irresponsibly in class, the rest ignore them and carry on with their work sensibly, demonstrating good levels of self-control. Older children's writing demonstrates that they are able to think through ethical and moral issues and take a responsible stance when debating them. This was particularly evident in the thought they had given writing about developing mountain areas as tourist attractions in connection with their work in geography.
13. As a result of the good provision for social development, children are learning to become responsible members of society. They feel part of the school and village community from the time they enter and enjoy whole school occasions such as assemblies. They relate well to each other and to the adults they meet around the school. They play in groups at play times and demonstrate good social skills at lunchtimes and at snack times in the Foundation Stage. The oldest children take their roles as members of the school council very seriously and hold regular meetings to look at ways of improving the school environment. When given the opportunity, children can be trusted to carry out tasks of responsibility in the classroom and around the school but these opportunities are often limited by the size of the classrooms and the organisation of the lessons.
14. As a result of the good provision for cultural development, children are developing a very good understanding of the influences on their own cultural heritage and are beginning to be aware of the cultural diversity around them. In subjects like history, geography and religious education, children appreciate the variety of ways in which their heritage has been shaped. The many visits they make to places of cultural interest broaden and enrich their understanding, particularly of their Cornish heritage of which they are very proud. In art and music, children enjoy studying the work of famous artists and appreciate music from around the world. Children studying world faiths in religious education appreciate the variety of ways of worshipping and celebrating, and this is demonstrated by the respect they show when discussing or questioning what others believe. In general, however, they do not have a strong awareness of cultural diversity and this is an area that the school is seeking to develop in order to prepare children for life in an increasingly culturally diverse society.
15. Attendance is in line with the national average with no unauthorised absence.

## HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?

16. Teaching has improved since the school's last inspection and it is now an important strength. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during this inspection and, overall, it was good. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is particularly strong and, during the inspection, three-fifths of the teaching was very good and the rest was judged to be good with very good features. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, one lesson was satisfactory, half of the lessons were good and the remainder were very good. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is also good on balance but with many very good features, such as the pace of many lessons and the use of specialist teaching and support staff. Half of the teaching in Years 3 to 6 was very good, almost a third was good and just two lessons were satisfactory. This quality teaching results in children learning and achieving well throughout the school, not only in the levels achieved in the National Curriculum but also in their personal development.
17. There are many positive features of the teaching. The teachers work closely together as a very effective team and this ensures that they all use their own skills and expertise to the maximum. In this way, the school is very successful in using 'specialist' teaching by exchanging classes within the staff for subjects such as art and by 'buying in' the services of experts, for example of an experienced and talented music teacher and of teachers for swimming. The children do well in both art and music as a result and the school is rightly proud of its achievement of the 'Artsmark' quality award. The children have used their abilities to entertain parents and to enhance the appearance of the school with good quality pictures and models.
18. Teachers manage their classes very well throughout the school. This is achieved partly through the skilled deployment of support staff. For example, the teacher in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 uses supporting adults to ensure children are learning rapidly despite the demands of a challenging spread of age and ability in the class. Her outstandingly comprehensive planning ensures that all groups of children are learning effectively with no time lost. Similarly, the school normally employs a member of staff to ensure that children are learning effectively in the computer suite whilst the rest of the class are doing other work. (At the time of the inspection a governor was standing temporarily in this role to good effect demonstrating the effective support given by governors to the school.) As a result, the teacher, in a Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, was able to give a great deal of attention to the younger or lower attaining children who were finding the work difficult whilst the higher attaining children were able to use their knowledge of fractions and decimals in a spreadsheet. All the children worked hard and concentrated well throughout the lesson.
19. Teachers understand the work they are teaching and approach it enthusiastically so that the children are well motivated. In a very good English lesson for Year 3 and 4 children, the teacher used technical language about poetry, which the children already understood, and this helped the lesson proceed efficiently and at a brisk pace so that the children developed their understanding of 'rhyme', 'rhythm' and 'alliteration'.
20. Teachers pay due attention to teaching basic skills in both literacy and numeracy and also in developing these skills in both English and mathematics lessons as well as using them in other subjects. In English lessons, teachers select texts carefully to interest the children and extend their learning. For example, the Years 3 and 4 children found the poems chosen for them interesting and the Year 5 and 6 teacher carefully identified and explained new words. Mathematics lessons follow the three-part structure recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy giving all children opportunities to learn and practise mental skills at the beginning. Homework is used well to consolidate learning and this is made relevant to the children where

possible, for example, where Year 5 and 6 children continued the theme of a lesson teaching them to write persuasively by finding out the views of their parents about being paid to do jobs at home. Although the information and communication technology suite is relatively new, teachers are already beginning to use it well to support work in other subjects. This is further enhanced by the use of other elements of information and communication technology such as the interactive whiteboard.

21. Children with special educational needs are very well supported throughout. They are given suitable work, closely related to what they need to learn, and much adult help. This is very well organised so that they can get on with their work independently if possible but use the support if they need it. This has been effective in supporting children with particular emotional and behavioural problems in taking a full part in the school.
22. Sometimes, teachers write very helpful comments on children's work to help them improve it. However, this is inconsistent and although children are given help orally there are times when marking of work is not good enough. This is the case in some children's mathematics books, for example, where the presentation of work has hindered the child's learning and has not been effectively addressed. Also, there are occasions when the potentially higher attaining children are not given sufficiently difficult and challenging work. Sometimes they are expected to do the same worksheets as the others even though they can do the work easily. This hinders their rate of learning.
23. Teachers use a good range of strategies for assessing the work children do in the important subjects of English, mathematics and science. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 science lesson, the teacher helped the children assess what they had learnt through a useful discussion with the whole class at the end of the lesson. Also, in a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, the teacher used individual whiteboards to help her assess what the children had learnt. The assessment procedures enable the school to adjust its planning and have addressed the issue raised in the last inspection with a good improvement.

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

24. The school has made a good improvement to its curriculum and the opportunities it offers to the children since its last inspection. The school provides for all its children a very broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which is enhanced by an excellent range of out of school activities. Provision for children with special educational needs is also very good, particularly in providing for those children who need special physical resources to take part fully in the teaching and learning. Generally good planning ensures that all children are well catered for although in some subjects not enough attention is given to the needs of the higher attaining children, especially mathematics and science.
25. The school has made a conscious decision to employ specialist teachers in areas where there is a deficiency and to use the skills of the staff for specialist teaching where possible. Consequently, specialist teachers are employed for music, gymnastics and dance.
26. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are good but there is too much dependence on commercial worksheets that do not always offer sufficient challenge to all ability groups. The school has adopted the recommendations of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and staff have all undertaken the required training. The school uses the frameworks

provided to ensure that children progress effectively in their learning in each class and as they move through the school. The school has also adopted most of the schemes of work that have been recommended to all schools by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority. These also ensure that children will learn appropriate knowledge and skills progressively. In art and music, the school has developed its own schemes to make the best use of its specialist staff and its emphasis on these subjects. It covers all that is required and achieves a good standard, as demonstrated in its 'Artsmark' award. The school has fully addressed the criticisms of its last inspection in this respect.

27. Staff in the Foundation Stage provide a rich and practical curriculum which covers all the areas of learning required by the national guidelines. Very careful planning ensures that learning in these areas links together wherever possible. Tasks planned for the children are interesting and imaginative and based on relevant practical activity.
28. Given the small number of staff, the provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. The school provides a wide range of out of school clubs, which include seasonal sporting clubs such as football and netball and musical clubs such as choir and recorders. In addition the school provides a wide range of visits and visitors to the school. Inclusion of all children in the full life of the school is central to the school's aims and beliefs and therefore every attempt is made to enable every child, irrespective of ability, beliefs or gender to participate fully in the life of the school.
29. Provision for the children's personal, social and health education is good. A new sex education programme has been introduced and drug awareness and sex education is taught during a life skills week. The school is at the very heart of the community and consequently it makes a significant contribution to life in the school. This is well illustrated by the fact that the school uses the local village hall for physical education and the church three times a week for acts of worship. In return, the school allows the community access to its computer suite and is also involved in many village activities such as Harvest festival or Christmas celebrations. The school enjoys good relationships with local businesses. Relationships with other schools are good.
30. The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social cultural development are very good overall with spiritual and moral development being particularly strong and in keeping with the school's Christian status.
31. Spiritual development is very good. The school assemblies held in the church make a very good contribution to the spiritual development particularly when children are involved in the acts of worship. The assemblies taken by a local Christian group during the inspection contributed considerably to the children's spiritual development by providing very thought provoking sketches which children were later given time to reflect on. There is clear evidence from the scrutiny of work that the children are given many opportunities to reflect on their own lives and on the lives of others. In the work done on Easter, the children were asked to write about the Crucifixion from different points of view and produced some very moving accounts of the events, which showed great depth of feeling and sensitivity. Residential visits are used effectively to promote the awe and wonder of the natural world.
32. Moral development is similarly very good. Children have a very clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong. This is emphasized in the school's aims and also in the class rules that are displayed in every classroom. The school also has 'Golden Rules' which underpin the central aims and beliefs of the school. Year 6 children in particular understand the

rules well and accept them without question. The very effective spiritual and moral development results in the very strong Christian ethos which is evident to all who visit the school.

33. Social development is good. Children learn to work together in residential visits and in school activities such as sports teams and in the choir. They participate in many fund raising activities for charity and some children have the opportunity to sit on the 'Pupils' Forum' where they discuss and make decisions about aspects of school life. Although the older children do have some responsibilities such as manning the tuck shop, there are restricted opportunities for them to take responsibility or to show initiative.
34. Cultural development is also good. The school emphasises the importance of developing children's own cultural roots and in this they are very successful. Children learn about their own local culture through music and dance and from participating in many local festivals and events. They visit the theatre and listen to and participate in musical events both in school and in the wider community. They also learn about other cultures and beliefs through history, geography and through stories from other cultures in literacy. They are now beginning to study other faiths in religious education. They are introduced to the diversity of the world when they enter the Foundation Stage where they are able to play with black dolls as well as with white ones. The school has had foreign students in school from France and Japan and has participated in musical events focused on the music and dance of other countries such as Africa.

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

35. Since the last inspection report the school has maintained and improved its support for ensuring children's welfare. This is now very good and is a strength of the school. Teachers understand their children well. They know the procedures to be followed to ensure that children are well protected. Effective procedures are in place to ensure that all the related matters of health, safety and security are carried out to a very high standard.
36. Procedures for the monitoring of children's academic performance and personal development are good. Parents appreciate the clear educational support and guidance the school gives their children and the way in which the school cares for them. Staff work hard to ensure that everyone in the school community is valued. In lessons, there is a consistent approach that ensures the good behaviour of children and the elimination of oppressive behaviour. This effective support makes a positive contribution to children's well being and enables them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered.
37. There are very good systems for assessment in the Foundation Stage. Teachers monitor children's progress informally on a daily basis and make periodic checks on what they have learnt in each area of learning. They keep detailed records of progress in language, literacy and number and this enables them to adapt their teaching of the basic skills to individual needs. Assessment systems in the infants and juniors are good. The school collects useful information from lessons which is discussed together frequently by the whole staff team. The school also carries out a good range of tests. These include regular tests of progress in reading along with nationally recommended tests of English and mathematics. The results of these tests are used well by the school to check on individual progress and to monitor the school's performance as a whole.



38. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good, particularly for the provision of special physical resources for those children with particular disabilities. Whenever necessary, outside agencies are called in and children are provided with written targets. Parents are fully consulted at every stage. Targets are monitored carefully and adjusted as a result of the monitoring. Action plans are written by the special educational needs co-ordinator and are shared with both teachers and learning support assistants so that all involved with these children are aware of their needs. This results in the good progress that they make.

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

39. The school has a very good relationship with the parents who have a very positive view of the school. This very good relationship is now a strength of the school. Of the returned questionnaires, all the parents felt the school expects their child to work hard and achieve their best, and 96 per cent said their child likes school. Parents also feel the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
40. The school has very good links with parents that help to consolidate and extend children's learning. Parents help in school and many support them by hearing their children read at home, recording their progress in reading diaries. Parents' involvement in the life of the school is greatly valued.
41. The quality of information for parents is good. Home/school agreements are in place. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents give a clear indication of the life of the school. Newsletters are clear and helpful and provide parents with an opportunity to share in what is going on. Parents' evenings are well supported and parents are provided with useful information about their children. Written reports are clear on what children can do but they do not provide targets for improvement which would be useful to both children and parents.
42. Parental contribution to children's learning at home and at school is very good. The funds raised by the Home School Association provide many extras to support children's learning.

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

43. The very strong leadership from the headteacher and teamwork from all the staff ensure that the school develops in the right directions. It is improving teaching, which is supporting standards where they are already high, and improving standards in subjects identified by the school for further development. For example, standards in reading at Year 2 and in English at Year 6 are consistently well above the national average in National Curriculum tests over several years and standards in history and geography have been raised since the last inspection.
44. The leadership and teamwork are also very successful in supporting the strong Christian ethos that the school demonstrates in all its work. This is underpinned by very good relationships and results in a school where the efforts of everyone are valued. This can be seen in the very extensive programme of extra-curricular activities which are open to all children and which is supported through the efforts of teachers, non-teaching staff and parents.
45. The school has worked hard to develop and support the knowledge and expertise of its entire staff. It has an appropriate performance management scheme in operation for its teaching staff in line with current requirements but it has gone beyond this to include all staff. As a result, the

school has recently acquired 'Investors in People' status. Teaching and learning are monitored by the headteacher and issues are developed sensibly by the staff as a whole. There is scope to develop this work further and teaching staff have begun this by undertaking training in observing each other's lessons so that eventually they will be able to help each other to improve lessons even further.

46. The school sets itself appropriate targets through a very thorough consultation system in which all staff and governors are involved. Previous success criteria are evaluated and the principles of obtaining best value (comparison, challenge, competition and consultation) are used effectively in moving the school forward. The school's developments are carefully documented in a thorough School Improvement Plan which successfully shows the school's shared commitment to succeed. This shows a good improvement from the last inspection when elements of this planning were criticised.
47. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties very thoroughly. It has very successful, formal and informal strategies for knowing how well the school is doing so that it is very well placed to make informed decisions. This is very well supported by close financial accounting and planning. The school is very successful in its efforts to raise sufficient finance to support its plans for improvement. For example, the interest free loan to establish the information and communication technology suite is already paying dividends in the achievement of the children who are using it confidently as one of a number of ways to support the quality of their learning.
48. The school has a good number of teaching and non-teaching staff with a suitable balance of expertise and experience. It adds to the value of this by supporting staff development very well, for example, the teachers all have several areas of responsibility and have had the opportunity to improve their knowledge through in-service training where possible. Resources are at least adequate and some are very good, for example, the very recent acquisition of an interactive whiteboard which is already being used to good effect in some lessons. When the school does not have resources of its own, it very successfully obtains them elsewhere. For example, the visiting music teacher brings an extensive collection of instruments with her and the pottery that the children have made has been fired in the kiln belonging to the family of one of the teachers.
49. Unfortunately, one area in which the school has little control and which affects much of what it does is the inadequate accommodation. The school makes the best use it can but its whole pattern of organisation is dictated by the accommodation rather than educational factors. Also, despite the use of the external facilities and trips to the local leisure centre, the school has to use the village hall for physical education. Although this provides a suitable space for some activities it is not adequate for large scale work by classes of especially older children.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. In order to improve the school even further the governors, headteacher and all the staff should

- Provide more challenge in the work of the higher attaining children, particularly in mathematics and science by;
  - giving them more difficult work;
  - teachers having higher expectations of what these children can do by referring to the higher levels in the National Curriculum;
  - ensuring that the tasks on worksheets provide suitable levels of challenge.

*(see particularly paragraphs 22, 80, 87 and 96)*

- Ensure that children's work is always marked to the standard already achieved in the best examples by;
  - monitoring the consistency of this.

*(see particularly paragraphs 22 and 87)*

The school should also consider the following minor issue

- Improve the quality of written reports to parents by;
  - including targets for development in English, mathematics and science.

*(see particularly paragraph 41 )*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	21

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	10	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	48	40	12	0	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's children*

<b>Children on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)	3	93
Number of full-time children known to be eligible for free school meals	0	7

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of children with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	0	17

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of children
Number of children with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### *Attendance*

**Authorised absence**

%
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**Unauthorised absence**

%
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School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered children in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	7	4

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (93)	100 (87)	100 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (87)	100 (93)	100 (93)
	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 children in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	6	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	4	5
	Girls	10	10	12
	Total	15	14	17
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (83)	78 (83)	94 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	4	5
	Girls	10	10	12
	Total	15	14	17
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (83)	78 (83)	94 (83)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### ***Ethnic background of children***

	No of children
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	84
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.8
Number of children per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	23

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

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	71

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***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	1	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	232473
Total expenditure	217785
Expenditure per pupil	2292
Balance brought forward from previous year	15748
Balance carried forward to next year	30436

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	120
Number of questionnaires returned	55

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	45	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	38	4	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	47	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	33	13	2	4
The teaching is good.	58	38	4	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	40	15	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	39	7	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	44	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	51	13	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	38	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	45	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	40	9	0	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**

51. Children start nursery part-time in the term after their fourth birthday and transfer to the reception group when they become five. At the time of the inspection, nine of the children in the Foundation Stage were deemed to be nursery children and twelve were in the reception group. These children are all taught in one class with 13 Year 1 children. The school's assessments show that when children start in the nursery, their experiences and knowledge vary. On the whole they are average for their age, but some children show delayed development in aspects of language development.
52. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good in each area of learning. The teacher, nursery nurse and classroom assistant work together as a highly effective team. They are careful to match the work and practical activities to the different ages and abilities of children in the nursery, reception and Year 1 groups. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good and they are given all the help they need to do well. In this way the school ensures that, right from the start, all children are included and have equal access to the curriculum and equal opportunities to make progress.
53. During their time in the nursery and reception class, children make good progress in everything they do. They are on course to reach the standards expected by the time they leave the reception class in all areas of learning, and higher standards than expected for children of this age in aspects of personal and social development.

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

54. Very good teaching ensures that, during their time in the Foundation Stage, children develop confidence and independence and make very good progress in this area of learning. From the nursery onwards they are expected to get what they need for a task and put equipment and toys away at the end of the session. As a result, children quickly get into the routines of registering their arrival in the morning by selecting their name card and placing it in the registration box. They select activities and tidy away enthusiastically and efficiently when asked. Some children show high levels of initiative in organising themselves in the classroom, as, for example, when children playing with the water tray realised they had spilt some on the floor and mopped it up sensibly before the teacher noticed it.
55. One of the strengths of the teaching in this area is that the staff promote children's personal development in everything they do. They provide very good role models for children. They are calm, well organised and approachable and treat children with respect and courtesy. This leads to warm and trusting relationships and helps the children to behave in a friendly manner to one another. Staff expect children to be considerate of one another at all times and are very clear about the rules of sharing and waiting their turn. Children respond well by being well-mannered, patient and helpful to one another. For example, children organising themselves in preparation for a cookery lesson helped each other with the fastenings on their cookery aprons and waited patiently until everyone was ready to start. Staff help children to understand the difference between right and wrong through stories and discussions and in the example they set of always listening to what children have to say. As a result, the children respect one another and feel secure in the purposeful learning environment that the staff have created.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

56. When they start reception class, most children have the language and literacy skills that are expected for their age, although a small number have below average speaking and listening skills. Good teaching ensures that by the end of the reception year, children have achieved many of the early skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing and attainment for some is above average.
57. Staff promote the development of language in everything children do. The teacher, nursery nurse and classroom assistant never miss an opportunity to engage children in conversation about their work or themselves and to widen children's vocabulary when reading stories for example. Wherever possible they link vocabulary to work in other areas of learning. For example, the assistant reading to a group of reception children linked the story to their visit to Lanhydrock House, reminding them of new words they had learnt and reinforcing the language being developed in their other work on homes and castles. Later, when discussing their paintings of castles, children were able to use the correct vocabulary to describe some of the features in their paintings.
58. Each day, children are given opportunities to read books, listen to stories and write. Children enjoy reading and looking at books. The youngest children select books independently and read quietly to themselves, using the clues in the pictures to repeat parts of the story they have remembered. They talk about their favourite stories and know the names of characters in the books they read in school. They are taught their letter sounds systematically and the teacher makes very good use of clues and actions to help children learn them. Children participate enthusiastically in the learning games and, by the end of the reception class, use their knowledge to help them read and write words they find difficult. It is the many opportunities for writing and the smooth transition from copying what the teacher has written to having a go at writing for themselves that enable the brightest children to write simple correctly punctuated sentences by the time they leave the reception class, and all children are confident to attempt their writing independently. This gives them a very good start for their work on the National Curriculum in Year 1.

## **Mathematical development**

59. Very good teaching in this area ensures that, by the end of the reception year, nearly all children have reached the early learning goals and some are working towards the first level of the National Curriculum.
60. One of the main reasons for this is that the staff use mathematics in everyday activities. This means that children practise their counting, adding and taking away many times each day and have no difficulty in working out how many are present in the morning or how many spaces they must move on the board game.
61. Staff ensure that children learn about number, pattern and shape through practical activities such as sorting objects into sets, counting and playing games. This helps children make good progress in understanding numbers and concepts such as adding and taking away. Staff also encourage them to record their mathematics; in the nursery they do this as pictures and then, as they get older, as number sentences with symbols for addition, subtraction and equals. Most children can work out sums to ten by the time they leave reception and brighter children use much bigger numbers and can easily work things out in their head.

62. Staff constantly reinforce children's understanding of mathematical language by asking questions such as '*is that full now?*' and, '*which side of the scales is heavier?*' Children respond by using the same language in their descriptions and quickly learn to use the right terms of measurement and position.

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

63. Teaching is very good and helps children develop many of the basic skills that help them make sense of the world. By the time they leave the reception classes most children's knowledge and understanding of the world is average for their age and for some it is better.
64. Staff make very good use of themes such as 'homes' to help children learn about their environment. For example, children in the reception class who were playing outside with large construction equipment learnt how bricks overlap each other when they are stacked to ensure that the building is strong. They understood through their experiments with different materials that houses built on sand were not as safe as houses built on rock because the sand lost its shape when it got very wet. Staff use visitors and visits well to give children first-hand experiences of the outside world. Staff also ensure that children learn about the existence of other countries and lifestyles through looking at pictures and through providing toys and games that reflect different cultures. For example, four nursery children playing a geography-based board game with the nursery nurse dressed up in costumes from Nigerian, Indian and Native American cultures. In this way, children recognised that there are different types of homes and lifestyles in other parts of the world. The teacher makes good use of visitors such as the local road safety officer to promote children's learning about keeping safe.

### **Physical development**

65. Very good teaching helps children gain a sense of co-ordination and balance in their play and movement and to master the skills of handling small tools such as paintbrushes, pencils and scissors in their work. By the end of the reception year children have achieved many of the early learning goals.
66. Staff ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to engage in physical activities, both indoors and when playing outside. As a result, children are robust and lively. Children in the nursery and reception enjoy climbing, jumping and playing on wheeled toys as they let off steam at playtime. Although they do not have a school hall, staff do their best to provide opportunities for dancing, games and gymnastics, and make good use of the equipment in the playing field and the local park when the weather allows. Nevertheless this is an area where better resources would improve children's development and control of movement.
67. Children are given good opportunities to practise skills such as cutting, gluing and holding paintbrushes, pens and pencils. Consequently, by the time they leave the reception class, most use scissors confidently and cut around difficult shapes. Because staff show nursery children how to hold a pencil and paintbrush and spend time guiding their practice and helping them with letter and number shapes, children are generally confident with writing tools when they start reception. They continue to make good progress so that by the end of the reception year, their handwriting is of good quality.

### **Creative development**

68. Teaching is very good so that by the time they leave the reception classes, children attain most of the skills expected for their age. They have opportunities to undertake a suitable range of art and design activities, such as painting, collage and pattern making, and to engage in imaginative play in which they take on different roles. They enjoy experimenting with materials and different media. For instance, children in a reception group had used straw, fabrics, paint and paper on their large collage pictures of the houses of the 'Three Little Pigs'.
69. Staff encourage children to paint, draw and be creative in making models and pictures. Children in the nursery learn to recognise colours as they experiment with paint. Older children are taught how to mix paint to get a wider range of colours. Children create imaginative pictures and the portraits they draw of themselves and other people contain greater detail as they get older. Their work is valued and there are attractive displays of children's paintings and models in classes and shared areas. Very good use is made of a specialist music teacher and reception children learn to hold percussion instruments properly and to beat out a simple rhythm. In the classroom, staff ensure that children have frequent opportunities to experiment with the sounds made by musical instruments and develop what they have learnt in the lessons.
70. The management of the Foundation Stage is very thorough and is underpinned by the meticulous planning of the co-ordinator. This has a direct influence on the quality of teaching and achievement of the children.

## **ENGLISH**

71. Standards in English in both the infants and the juniors are above average and the children have made good progress. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection where standards were judged to be average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6.
72. Results in National Curriculum tests have been well above the national average for several years at the end of Year 6 and, in 2001, the school was amongst the top five per cent nationally in reading at the end of Year 2. However, test results in writing at the end of Year 2 were only average as a result of no children achieving above the expected level. In comparison with similar schools, the results in reading at the end of Year 2 are still in the top five per cent but they are below average in writing and average in the subject as a whole at the end of Year 6.
73. By the age of seven, the majority of children are able to write in different forms such as poetry, diary or retelling well known stories in their own words. They are able to sequence their work and are beginning to show an awareness of how to make their writing more interesting by using appropriate adjectives and adverbs. This was seen in the Year 2 lesson where the children were encouraged to add more descriptive words to a sentence about a cat. They came up with words such as *ginger*, *tabby* and *cross* and achieved much more interesting sentences by the end of the lesson.
74. Writing, for the most part, is joined and legible and is correctly punctuated with capital letters, full stops and commas. Spelling of common words is generally accurate. Good links are made between English and other subjects, for instance, the story in the Year 2 class was about the Victorians, linking it to their work in history where the children have played roles as Victorian school children and visited a Victorian house nearby. Similarly the children have kept diaries about the growth of a sunflower in science.

75. The infant children are able to read a range of books fluently and are able to use a systematic approach to sounding new or unfamiliar words. They are able to talk about their books and show an enthusiasm for reading.
76. The children speak and listen well. They are willing to contribute to discussions and express themselves clearly. They listen well to stories and are able to express their opinions about the stories using excerpts from the story to support their opinions. By the time they leave the school at eleven the children have developed a wide range of English skills.
77. The children's writing is varied and interesting and they show an awareness of the audience for whom the piece is written. They have all developed a good, legible and fluid style and are able to use different scripts to make a particular point, for instance, using capital letters to indicate an important sentence or to give the impression of someone shouting. The children are able to use more formal styles of writing when giving instructions or when writing letters but are also able to write very expressively as well, for instance, in their poetry about wind and fire in connection with their work on Pentecost. Similarly, they can write very moving and powerful pieces, for example, when they wrote about the Crucifixion through the different eyes of Jesus or his mother Mary. This work showed tremendous sensitivity to the subject and was very spiritual in the feelings expressed. This work in religious education is typical of the very good use made of the skills learned in literacy being used in other subjects such as history when writing about Greek legends, in geography when writing about mountains. Spellings are generally accurate and a range of punctuation including inverted commas and apostrophes is used effectively.
78. They have become avid readers of a wide range of books and are able to express their opinions of the merits of different authors and to back these opinions with illustrations from different books. For instance, one Year 6 child was able to express thoughts on Tolkein's use of description and vocabulary to support his liking for the book. They read aloud with confidence and good expression, which demonstrates a good understanding of the text.
79. The children all speak with confidence. Their talk engages the interest of the listeners, be it their friends or adults. They speak clearly and articulate their opinions well, for instance, when discussing school rules, demonstrating both good understanding of the topic and strong opinions backed by a good rationale.
80. The quality of teaching is good in the infants and very good in the juniors, it is good overall. Lessons are well planned and generally follow the guidelines set out in the National Literacy Strategy. The teachers share the learning objectives with the children so that there is a clear understanding of what is expected and in the better lessons they return to the objectives at the end of the lesson to assess the learning. The pace of lessons is generally good and, as a result, children concentrate and remain interested. Occasionally, some pace of learning is lost when worksheets are used which do not offer enough challenge to the children and in particular to the higher attaining children. Evidence from scrutiny of work shows that there is little difference in the work of the higher attainers and those of lower ability which indicates that the higher attainers are not always being stretched as much as they could be. However, children with special educational needs are very well supported in lessons. They are given work which is carefully matched to what they need to learn and extra help when they need it from the non-teaching support staff who have a clear understanding of what the teacher is trying to achieve. As a result, they make good progress and very often attain standards which are average for their age.

81. All teachers have a good working knowledge of English and use this knowledge well to provide interesting work. They are particularly good at making work relevant to the children, thus engaging and sustaining their interest. This was well illustrated in the Year 5 and 6 class where the teacher introduced the notion of children being paid for doing household chores. She cleverly used some e-mail excerpts for and against the idea and then invited the children to express their own opinions, which they did with great enthusiasm. It was obviously a subject in which they had immediate interest and entered into the debate with gusto. The children are used to using information and communication technology in their lessons and are competent in using it in their writing.
82. The teachers are very positive in their praise of the children's efforts and this encourages them to try even harder in future. Teachers are constantly reminding children of the time factor to ensure that good progress is maintained at all time. Some very good questioning that elicits previous learning and clarifies children's thinking is used effectively by the teachers. The school is now using a common approach to writing, which gives the children a framework for their writing and enables them to adapt the frame to different situations and this strategy is already beginning to improve the writing.
83. The co-ordinator has only recently taken responsibility for the subject and has not yet had time to make an impact. However, she has a good understanding and knowledge of the subject and a clear idea of what must be done to improve it still further.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. Standards at the end of the infants and the juniors are both above average and this has been maintained since the last inspection.
85. The results of National Curriculum tests have varied due to the differences caused by small year groups. In 2001, the results at the end of Year 2 were above average also, although they were average when compared to similar schools. The results at the end of Year 6 in 2001 were average nationally but below the average for similar schools. This result reflects the characteristics of the particular year group where there were a third of the children identified as having special educational needs. It also reflects fewer children than might be anticipated reaching above the expected level.
86. Children throughout the school develop good strategies for working mentally. They are keen to demonstrate this during the oral, mental session at the beginning of the numeracy hour. Year 2 children were asked to suggest combinations of coins to make a total and they were eager to do so quickly and accurately. In the junior classes, the children were able to demonstrate their skills in mental arithmetic, for example, answering questions to recall their multiplication tables by quickly recording their answers and showing them to the teacher so that she could assess their success.
87. Children have covered a good range of work in their exercise books or on worksheets and the children with special educational needs have achieved well. They are well supported in lessons by receiving extra explanations from teachers and appropriate work which they are helped to do very carefully by the non-teaching staff who encourage them to do their best. However, the potentially higher attaining children have often covered the same work as those who are less capable and have therefore not achieved as well as they might. This was also seen in some lessons where opportunities to give these children more challenging work from higher levels in

the National Curriculum were lost. Lower attaining and average children have made good progress but the progress of the higher attaining children is sound. Sometimes, teachers write useful comments on children's work to help them improve it. However, this is inconsistent and although children are often given help orally there are times when the marking of work is not good enough; for example, where the presentation of work has hindered learning and has not been effectively addressed.

88. Teaching seen during the inspection was sound overall in mathematics except where the teacher made an effort to ensure that higher attaining children were suitably challenged and here the teaching was good as a result. In this lesson, the majority of the children in Years 5 and 6 were learning about fractions and how to record these in a 'decimal' version. The higher attaining children had already mastered this and they used their knowledge to good effect in using a spreadsheet on the computers to change a series of fractions into decimals. This not only enabled them to consolidate their learning in mathematics but it also enabled them to use what they had learnt to help them learn how to use a spreadsheet as a tool in information and communication technology. Numeracy skills are also well developed in other subjects, for example, graphing the results of the children's pulse rates in science and learning about Pythagoras in history.
89. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy and the recommended three-part numeracy hour confidently. They are good at explaining and showing children how to do things. Children are keen to learn and listen well and they try hard when given work to do. This positive contribution helped the lesson in Years 3 and 4 because the teacher asked children for their ideas to help them remember the difference between 'acute' and 'obtuse' angles. They were very keen to give their ideas and came up with a very sensible suggestion that the acute angle looks like a capital 'A'. They remembered this and used it when they were asked to sort out different types of angles.
90. Teachers use a good range of resources effectively. These are always immediately to hand so that children can use them effectively to support their learning. The resources range from everyday items such as plastic coins and three-dimensional shapes to the interactive whiteboard used to demonstrate the use of the spreadsheet. The teachers have trained the children well into using methods where they all need to work quickly and accurately to show the teacher their results on individual whiteboards or 'number fans'. These are used well in the oral, mental sessions at the beginning of the numeracy hour but the teacher also used them well in the plenary session at the end of the lesson in Years 3 and 4 to help the children consolidate their learning and to help her assess what they had learnt.
91. The co-ordinator does a good job in managing the subject. She has put great effort into her own training so that she is in a position to be able to advise and support her colleagues. She has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and built up good resources to put it into practice. She has a clear view of the planning for the subject throughout the school although she has not yet had the opportunity to observe teaching in other classes. This is an important next stage to address the issue of improving learning for the higher attaining children.

## **SCIENCE**

92. Standards remain similar to those at the last inspection and are typical for seven and eleven year olds. This reflects the results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 which have varied around the national average. In 2001, National Curriculum test results were below the

national average and well below the average for similar schools because of the relatively low numbers who attained above the expected level. However, the 2001 year group had a high percentage of children with special educational needs and most of these children did well to achieve the expected level.

93. Teaching and learning is good for most children and they achieve well. Children with special educational needs receive the help they need, are fully included in lessons and so make good progress. One weakness not addressed fully since the last inspection is in the way teachers organise their lessons. Now, as then, teachers give the same work to all the children in the class. For most of the children and particularly the younger ones in the two-year classes, the work is hard enough and standards are often high. However, work in children's books shows that a small number of the older children and some of the younger ones who are quick learners do not have enough opportunities to do harder work and they cannot reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
94. A good improvement in teaching since the last inspection has been that there are now many more opportunities for children to learn through experimentation and investigation. This was demonstrated clearly in the work of children in Year 2 who were involved in studies of wildlife and habitats. These children had investigated in some depth the conditions necessary for healthy growth in plants. As a result of their experiments with seeds, they knew that plants require light, water and food from soil to grow. They understood that in order to ensure that the test was fair they had to keep some things the same, such as the quantity of soil and the type of seed. They could make sensible predictions about what might happen, monitor the results carefully and draw simple conclusions from their observations. They had studied local habitats such as the village playing field to find out about the variety of plants and insects living there. Their developing knowledge helped them in a lesson in which they studied the playground as a habitat. They immediately ran to the edges of the playground where small amounts of soil had accumulated because they realised this would be the most likely place to find anything growing. Children approach their practical work enthusiastically and behave sensibly when moving around the room and working in the playground.
95. Children in both classes in the juniors are taught to investigate for themselves. Work in children's books in Years 3 and 4 shows that they have frequent opportunities for practical work. In their work on friction, for example, they had devised an experiment to test which shoes had the strongest grip on a sloping surface. They had learnt how to use a Newton meter to measure force and understood the requirements for a fair test.
96. Children in Years 5 and 6 make slower progress in the development of scientific skills. The scheme of work that the school is using has not been in place for long enough for these children to have caught up with this aspect of science. Although children can carry out experiments sensibly, for example, when investigating materials which will muffle sound, the teacher has to structure the experiment very rigidly and give them a lot of support to help them carry it out and record their findings. Although they carry out practical work they do not have enough opportunities to plan experiments for themselves and record their findings in different ways and in depth. This puts higher attaining children at a disadvantage in Years 5 and 6, when they are expected to find their own ways of recording their findings as charts, graphs and tables. Teachers mark work carefully but often do not give enough guidance on how it can be improved.
97. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator monitors test results carefully to identify areas where the school can improve its provision. The scheme of work now in place gives equal



weight to all aspects of the science curriculum and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The school is developing the use of information and communication technology within the subject and this is already having a positive impact on standards of presentation of work, particularly when it is used to show results as graphs and tables. Teachers use science well to provide opportunities for children to learn to co-operate with one another in their investigational work and for them to discover for themselves the wonder of the natural world. This makes a very positive contribution to the high standards of children's personal and social development.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

98. Standards are above the expected levels at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 and the school has maintained this since its last inspection, all children including those with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school. The school is rightly proud of its recent acquisition of the 'Artsmark' quality award. Children cover a good range of work which is often related to other subjects or to events in which they are taking part. Art is used well to celebrate events in which the whole school has joined together and in this way it contributes significantly to the children's personal development. For example, the whole school has celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee and all the children have contributed a portrait of Her Majesty. This shows a good range of media that they have used and it also shows the good progress that they make in art and design as they move through the school in using line, colour, tone and proportion.
99. The Year 5 and 6 children have created a portrait of their village in the style of the 'Portrait of a Nation' by David Mach. They celebrated their community in a variety of media with particularly effective drawings and paintings of local buildings, for example, the general stores and post office opposite the school. The Year 3 and 4 children have illustrated their history with good quality collages of Tudor costumes.
100. Insufficient teaching was seen during the inspection to be able to give an overall judgement but the lesson seen in Year 2 was good. It showed a number of positive features which explain the good work that the children achieve. In particular, the teacher showed knowledge and confidence in the subject linked to an ability to explain well to the children how to use the media themselves. In this lesson, they were using pastels and did so confidently and carefully, applying what they knew and had been told in the lesson to developing and then improving their pictures. The work also linked previous work in art when the children had designed and made flower pots from clay which the teacher had 'fired' and the children had then decorated. They were drawing pictures of a plant which was in their pots and so developing observation skills useful in science as well as art. They used good quality resources and were proud of both their initial pottery and the subsequent pastel work.
101. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and is very knowledgeable herself. She has developed her own plans which cover the requirements of the National Curriculum and support other subjects. The subject is well resourced and the school makes good use of the artistic expertise of the co-ordinator by exchanging classes. This also enables the co-ordinator to monitor the subject successfully throughout the school. The school makes good use of information and communication technology to support art. For example, Year 2 children have used information and communication technology and mathematics to produce pictures on the computers which demonstrate symmetry. The after school art club also makes a significant contribution to the achievement of the children.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

102. It was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection but from an evaluation of work that children have completed previously, and from discussions with them, it is clear that they achieve soundly and attain standards in line with the expected levels throughout the school, as they did at the time of the last inspection.
103. From Year 1 through to Year 6, children have designed, made and evaluated a suitable range of products with good links to other subjects. Year 1 children have used knowledge of geometric

shapes, measuring and printing techniques to make pictures of houses and they have received good support and teaching in making the frames for these. Year 5 and 6 children had designed and made biscuits and model greenhouses. In both of these projects, knowledge from other subjects had been used, for example, an understanding of the properties of the ingredients and materials gained in science.

104. The school has used the subject to contribute very successfully to children's personal development through their contribution to a 'whole school' project. The children all contributed a fabric design for an imposing tapestry celebrating the millennium in the school's central staircase. In this, as in all projects, children with special educational needs have been very well supported and fully included. The tapestry illustrates the involvement of the school in the local community and is a very fitting centrepiece for the school. The co-ordinator has made a sound contribution to the development of the subject despite having other responsibilities which have had a higher priority in the school. The school recognises that an area for further development is the contribution of information and communication technology in the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

105. In both subjects, seven- and 11-year-olds achieve standards that are typical for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards for 11-year-olds were lower than expected. The main reason for the improvement is because teachers have adopted new schemes of work for the subjects that ensure that they are taught systematically throughout the school and in appropriate depth. Teaching is now good and ensures that children learn at a good rate as they move from one year to the next. Standards are improving rapidly as a result and some features of children's work in these subjects are now good. Children with special needs are well supported in lessons and fully included in practical activities and visits.
106. Teachers have a good knowledge of the topics they teach in geography and history and the methods they use are effective. A very good feature of the teaching in both subjects is the use that teachers make of educational visits and visitors to the school. These provide valuable first-hand experiences that promote learning. For example, children in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 learned a tremendous amount about life in Victorian times as a result of a visit to their teacher's house that contains many original Victorian features. Similarly, artefacts borrowed from a local museum provided Year 1 children with first-hand evidence of a collection of Victorian toys and kitchen equipment, which they had been learning about in lessons. As a result, they were fascinated and eager to learn more from their own research. Children in both classes can speak with confidence about aspects of domestic life in the Victorian era. They appreciate how the introduction of electricity and plastics has improved home life in many ways but are still able to understand that not all change is necessarily for the better. For example, two Year 2 children felt that they would liked to have lived in those days because they would probably have had Mondays off school in order to help their Mums with the washing!
107. These practical activities result in high levels of interest and enthusiasm. Children in the juniors had undertaken a river study from first-hand experience by following the River Camel from its source to its mouth. They talked enthusiastically about what they had learnt and school photographs of the activities confirmed their assertions that learning this way is fun!
108. Teachers make good links between history, geography and other subjects, especially information and communication technology, in these practical activities and this helps children to make useful links in their learning. For example, younger children use old photographs and maps of the

village and compare them with present day maps and photographs. Children in Years 5 and 6 make very good use of information and communication technology to help them with their research, for example in their study of mountains in geography. These children had chosen a mountain or mountain range that interested them particularly and researched the Internet and reference material to compile a multimedia presentation for the rest of the class.

109. Teachers have responded well to a criticism in the previous inspection that subject skills were not taught systematically as children moved through the school. Care has been taken to ensure that important skills such as mapping skills in geography are taught each year and build on what children already know. For example, children in the infants can find familiar buildings and homes on a map of the village and children in Years 5 and 6 can interpret information on maps of different scales and use the information gained from contour lines to draw profiles of local hills.
110. There are two aspects of teaching in these subjects where there are still some weaknesses. Firstly, teachers do not always encourage children to record their work in enough detail and too often they use commercially produced worksheets that do not encourage children to think for themselves. Secondly, teachers do not regularly plan tasks that are hard enough to enable the most able children in the class to achieve as well as they should.
111. The subjects are well managed and resourced. Teachers work hard to make them relevant and the curriculum is enriched by the very good use of visits, visitors and loaned resources. The opportunities for children to find out from first-hand experience contribute very positively to their personal development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

112. Standards in the infants and in the juniors are in line with those expected nationally. Since the installation of the computer suite, children, including those with special educational needs, have made rapid progress.
113. By the time they leave the school at eleven most children have become very confident in a range of computer skills. They are able to use the full facilities of a word-processing program. They can use a spreadsheet to work out formulae for multiplication tables; they are able to use the Internet for research for subjects such as history and geography and are able to create databases from which they can generate graphs and tables.
114. The children are becoming skilled in the use of multimedia presentation such as the work on mountains. They are able to bring together text and information and communication technologies from various sources to make dynamic and interesting presentations. Although some work has been done on the area of control technology, this area and the element of sensing now needs further development.
115. It was not possible to see any lessons of information and communication technology except for a short group session supervised by a parent governor who is helping the school out until a new support assistant can be appointed. The group was managed very well and despite some technical problems, which were very quickly overcome, most children completed their task successfully.

116. Every subject now has an information and communication technology element and the use of the new suite is proving very effective in developing these links between subjects. Computer programs are being used in most other subjects either as a research tool when using the Internet or as an art tool for doing graphic work. The recently acquired interactive whiteboard is adding another dimension to the resources and has already proved successful for presentations.
117. The standards in the juniors are better than at the last inspection. The co-ordinator is keen and is committed to improving standards still further. With the improved resources that the school now possesses there is every indication that that commitment is now bearing fruit.
118. The school has recently set up a computer suite that is proving to be very effective in teaching the skills of information and communication technology and is making a major contribution to improving standards in the subject.

## MUSIC

119. Standards of music in the juniors are above expectations but not enough was seen to reach a secure judgement about standards overall in the infants although the work seen was also above the expected level. This maintains the standards for the juniors from the last inspection with all children making good progress.
120. One of the main reasons for the good standards is the use of a specialist teacher who takes every class for music. The teacher possesses very good subject knowledge and uses this to good effect to ensure that all children are suitably challenged and provided with appropriate activities for their age and interest, including those with special educational needs. For instance, for the youngest children, simple counting and repetitive songs such as “Six Little Ducks” are taught, which develop their sense of rhythm. For the older children, work on major and minor chords to accompany their singing is done. Each lesson follows a similar format so that children become familiar with the routine. Each lesson begins with a warm-up activity, which usually involves some form of rhythm work in which the children copy a pattern given by the teacher. The main activity follows with the children accompanying themselves on a range of tuned and untuned instruments, beginning with simple percussion instruments in the infants and moving up to the use of chords played on glockenspiels with the oldest children. The lessons are taken at a good pace and the teacher uses the lesson time well to ensure that maximum time is available for learning. The teacher is constantly exploiting the learning opportunities and introduces technical musical terms at every opportunity. Consequently, the youngest children can understand the term ‘ostinato’ while the oldest can talk confidently about major and minor chords.
121. Provision for the subject is greatly enhanced by a wide range of peripatetic teachers giving lessons in different instruments including guitar and flute. The school also has a very good choir who have performed very successfully both in school and in the many musical festivals in the area. They are often involved in joint musical activities with other schools. For instance, they were recently involved with other schools in the area in a day entitled “African Jigsaw”, which focused on the music traditions of Africa.
122. The co-ordinator for music works very closely with the specialist teacher to ensure that all aspects of the subject are well covered and that the different skills that they possess are used to the very best effect throughout the school. Good opportunities are also included for the children to explore music through information and communication technology.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. Standards seen during the inspection are in line with the expected levels at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6; this work was in the areas of athletics and games. Documentary evidence indicates that attainment in swimming is above average as is attainment in elements of gymnastics. In swimming, most children attain the national requirements for the end of Year 6 well before this and many have already considerably exceeded the requirements before they leave the school. In gymnastics, many children enter and achieve well in the British Gymnastics Proficiency Awards. The school also achieves well in competitions with local schools, for example, the Year 3 and 4 children have successfully competed in cross-country running. Children with special educational needs make similar progress and attain similar standards to other children.
124. Teaching is good overall. Lessons begin with appropriate warm-up activities although the impact of these is sometimes lost when children have to wait to take part in the main activity. Children are given good activities with clear instructions for what they have to try to achieve and how they can improve their performance. As a result, they make sound progress in improving what they are doing. For example, Year 2 children concentrated well in controlling a small ball when bouncing and catching it and some of the higher attaining children were able to control the ball whilst negotiating round a course of markers. Teachers take due care to ensure children's health and safety, for example, by providing additional adult support to ensure that children with potential emotional and behavioural difficulties can take part safely alongside others and by curtailing a lesson due to the weather despite the disappointment to the children.
125. In the school's last inspection, attainment was judged to be above national expectations but the school faces considerable difficulties in providing a full range of physical education due to its lack of a suitably sized and equipped hall. It does very well in providing what it can using the grounds, the village hall and the facilities of the local sports centre. The visits to the local sports centre and the use of qualified staff there makes a significant contribution to children's achievement in the subject. The co-ordinator makes an appropriate contribution to maintaining standards.