

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **FARLOW CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Farlow, Cleobury Mortimer, Kidderminster

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123475

Headteacher: Mrs J Watt

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Murphy  
16173

Dates of inspection: 10 - 12 June 2002

Inspection number: 196837

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Farlow Nr Cleobury Mortimer Kidderminster Worcestershire
Postcode:	DY14 0RQ
Telephone number:	01746 718661
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr James Rodenhurst
Date of previous inspection:	1 July 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19173	Linda Murphy	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and Communication Technology Design and Technology Geography History Foundation Stage Equal Opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9348	Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents and carers?
14591	Richard Perkin	Team inspector	English Science Religious Education Art and Design Music Physical Education Special Educational Needs	How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>25</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Farlow CE Primary School is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. It is a very much smaller than average primary school situated in a remote rural area of Shropshire. Many pupils come from the local farming community and surrounding areas and almost all travel by bus to school because of its isolated position. Currently 37 pupils are on roll aged between four and eleven. It is only recently that most pupils have attended a nursery prior to admission to school. Children transfer to the school at the beginning of the term in which they are five and join a class that caters for reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. All pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. None are learning English as an additional language. The percentage identified as having special educational needs, 14 per cent, is below the national average; these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs. Eligibility for free school meals stands at almost six per cent, which is below the average nationally.

The attainment of the children when they enter the reception class is at a level expected of their age though their knowledge and understanding of the world about them is below average. There are more boys than girls and a gender imbalance exists in some of the year groups. There has been a complete change of staff since the last inspection. Two years ago a substantive headteacher was appointed and the school now has a permanent staff. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at times other than that normally expected is high.

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

This is an effective school in which pupils do well. The management is good and supports the very good educational direction set by the headteacher. Pupils are taught well. The cost of educating pupils in this school is high but in the light of the standards of education provided, the pupils' good behaviour and the above average level of attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, the value for money provided is good.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well. Standards are well above average in music.
- Pupils' attitudes, personal development and relationships are very good.
- The quality of teaching of the pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 is good.
- The rate of attendance is well above average.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good.

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

- Challenge in independent work for pupils in the reception class, Year 1 and Year 2.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn about and experience the cultural diversity of British life today.

*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 good progress since the last inspection in July 1997. The key issues identified at that time have been addressed well: sound policies and schemes of work are in use for the majority of subjects; procedures for assessing and recording the pupils' progress are good and the accommodation now provides indoor toilets. In addition standards in information and communication have improved. The care that the school provides and pupils' attitudes to their work are very good and better than they were. The underlying force to the improvements has been the appointment of a permanent staff and the very

good leadership provided by the headteacher. The school has a good capacity and commitment to improve.

## STANDARDS

It is usual to report on standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on the latest National Curriculum tests for which there is comparative data. However, as only a few pupils were tested, results are not published nor are comparisons made because small numbers make comparisons unreliable. The important point is that, by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well.

In the 2002 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, for which comparative data is not yet available, the unconfirmed data shows that all of the very small group of pupils who took the tests attained at least the expected levels in English, mathematics and science and a good proportion attained the level expected of pupils two years older in mathematics and science. These results reflect the inspection judgements which place pupils at above average in English, mathematics and science. The school is on target to meet the challenging targets it set this year.

Pupils' attainments by the end of Year 2 are broadly as expected for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science and they achieve soundly. Standards are above average in speaking and listening.

In information and communication technology, pupils achieve well across the school and reach standards that are above those typically expected of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in swimming and music is well above average. Pupils attain standards typical for their age in all other subjects, including religious education.

Children in the reception year are on course to attain the early learning goals for their age in all aspects other than in knowledge and understanding of the world, where standards are likely to be below those typically expected. The children achieve soundly.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils have obvious enthusiasm for their work and are very keen to take part in all school activities. They are confident to share ideas and almost always try their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: pupils behave well in lessons and behaviour during indoor and outdoor play is harmonious.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: this is a very strong feature of the life of the school and makes a very good contribution to the standards pupils achieve. There is a very supportive atmosphere running throughout the school and pupils willingly help one another in their work and socially. Day-to-day, they cope very responsibly with the restrictions caused by the limited accommodation.
Attendance	Very good: above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and the resulting learning are good overall. A third of the teaching is very good or better and none is unsatisfactory. English and mathematics including literacy and numeracy are taught well and used effectively in other subjects so that pupils develop basic skills well. Information and communication technology is taught effectively and is used well in many other subjects. Pupils with



special educational needs are taught well by teachers and teaching assistants; consequently, they learn well. However, in sessions where the whole class are together, teaching assistants are not deployed to best effect. In the reception to Year 2 class, higher attainers are at times insufficiently challenged by the work they are set and pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently on tasks that involve them in making choices. Planning is good and lessons are invariably well prepared. Class management is very effective in the Year 3 to Year 6 class so that pupils work productively and at a good pace. Very effective teaching methods are used in this class, often using the pupils' experience profitably and involving them in first-hand activities; consequently, pupils work with very high levels of interest, concentration and independence. In the Year 3 to Year 6 class, teachers have very confident knowledge of their subjects, particularly music and science. The quality of marking in the Year 3 to Year 6 class is good so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant and meets statutory requirements; the curriculum for children in the reception year is of satisfactory quality while for pupils in Years 1 to 6 it is good. Effective strategies for numeracy and literacy ensure that pupils achieve well. Particularly rich relationships with neighbouring schools significantly enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and so make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: a wealth of opportunities is provided for pupils to work and play together in ways that significantly enhance their social development. While pupils encounter the beliefs, values and culture of other countries, they are not given enough opportunities to learn about and experience the cultural diversity of British life today.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well: the school takes very good care of the pupils and makes good provision for their welfare. Assessment arrangements are very well used to meet the needs of the pupils.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents make a significant impact on the work of the school by the large amount of money they raise, which makes a good contribution to the resources in the school. Reports for parents are unsatisfactory, as they do not enable a parent to know whether their child is making satisfactory progress or not. They are very positive and give no context to the information and no indication of levels of the National Curriculum other than at Year 2 and Year 6. Parents are able to make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning because of the number of research homework tasks that are set, but they do not get enough information about what is being taught, and how it is being taught, to be fully engaged as partners in learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: very good leadership by the headteacher provides clarity to the school's work. Key staff ably take on responsibilities well and all work as a strong team. Good management means that the school can concentrate on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well: statutory duties are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: the quality of teaching and the standards pupils attain are monitored and evaluated. Data is assessed effectively to guide curricular planning.
The strategic use of resources	Good: Financial resources are linked well to the school's priorities. The school gets the best value it can because it consults staff, governors and parents about particular matters and obtains resources at a competitive price. It uses them effectively to meet its aims. It compares its performance with that of other schools locally and nationally.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	Satisfactory: the school is well staffed and resources are sound. Accommodation is unsatisfactory given that the school has no hall or playing field.

## 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 enjoy school and behave well.</li> <li>• Children progress well because the teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard, behave well and do their best.</li> <li>• The way in which the school is led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• Information about how their child is getting on.</li> </ul>

The inspection judgement supports the parents' positive views and agrees with parents that this is a good school. Inspectors consider the extra-curricular activities to be good but agree with the parents who feel that the reporting on pupils' progress could be improved.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 Pupils' attainment on entry varies from year to year depending upon the composition of each group: that of the present reception group is about average.
- 2 The number of pupils in each year group is small and there is variation in size of the group from year to year. Results from such small groups are subject to significant variations and must be treated with some caution, as one pupil can easily account for a large percentage of the whole. Moreover, when one or two pupils leave or join the school in the middle of their primary education this can also affect results. Nonetheless the school has good systems to quickly assess pupils' attainment on entry to the school and to make sure that work is well matched to their needs.
- 3 The school's trend over the last five years is below the national trend. This is in part because the school has been dealing with under-achievement brought about by many changes in staff. The present staff have worked well to address the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and to bring about standards that are above average in half of the subjects of the National Curriculum. This relatively recent improvement since the last inspection has come about because the governing body have made substantive staff appointments and the headteacher has set a very clear educational direction for the school and ensured that the quality of teaching has improved.
- 4 Variation in the proportions of pupils with special educational needs has a greater effect on results when the year group is small. The school has analysed the results of the 2001 national tests, which were well below average for pupils in Year 6, and, when the pupils with special educational needs are excluded, then the results are favourable. The downward trend has been stopped this year through improvements in the curriculum and through the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, which are now impacting positively on standards. The school now serves its pupils well and they make good progress in lessons. Parents report that they are satisfied with the standards their children achieve.
- 5 The national test results of the pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were well above average and reflected a high attaining year group. These pupils continue to perform at a high level. In contrast, by the end of Year 2 in 2002 pupils' unconfirmed test results indicate average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve soundly in these aspects though their achievement in speaking and listening is good because teachers have good skills in questioning and expect clear, thoughtful and extended answers from the pupils. During group activities, the teaching assistants follow this lead and also promote spoken language well.
- 6 In information and communication technology, pupils achieve well across the school and reach standards that are above those typically expected of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. This is because there are plentiful resources which are regularly in use. The good quality teaching ensures that computers are used as a tool to pupils' learning in a wide range of subjects. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in swimming and music is well above average. Pupils have many opportunities to swim, starting in the reception class. Their skills are built up systematically so that by Year 6, pupils are working at advanced levels, for example, swimming a mile and life saving. The very good quality of teaching and a lively and engaging approach to music means that pupils make fast

progress. Parents think highly of the school's provision for music and mention in particular the extra instrumental lessons available.

- 7 Children achieve soundly in the reception class and acquire a satisfactory range of knowledge and skills which reflects their sound teaching and an appropriate curriculum for the children's age. Pupils' progress is satisfactory in their knowledge and understanding of the world about them but, because they enter school with a limited understanding of the world in its widest sense, they are unlikely to attain the level typically expected of their age by the end of their reception year in this aspect.
- 8 The attainment of boys and girls shows variation with boys achieving less well than girls but, given the small groups and their compilation, attainment by gender must be viewed with some caution. During the inspection there was no evidence of girls making better progress than boys. In Year 1 and Year 2 those capable of attaining highly are at times insufficiently challenged to work independently and when this is the case their progress is satisfactory rather than good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school because their needs are identified early and addressed through careful planning and good teaching. Provision for the gifted and talented pupils is made in English and mathematics where pupils have the opportunity to work with older pupils at a more advanced level than typically expected for their age and so achieve well.

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

- 9 The very good attitudes, values and personal development of pupils in the school have a positive impact on the standards that pupils attain. This aspect of the life of the school has remained a strength since the last inspection. These findings confirm the positive views expressed by parents at the parents' meeting and in their responses to the parents' questionnaire.
- 10 The pupils' attitudes to all aspects of school life are very good, they have obvious enthusiasm for their work and are very keen to take part in all school activities. In lessons, pupils quickly settle to the task, are eager to respond to questioning, confident to share ideas and almost always try their best. Pupils listen well to each other and respond very well to the good teaching they receive. All ages in the school, including the very youngest, are able to work well without direct supervision and collaborative working skills are well developed over the time pupils spend in the school. Children in the reception class develop good attitudes to their work and play. This is in part because they have good role models in the older pupils who live up to the expectations of the staff. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes and enjoy the full range of school activities.
- 11 Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour is good and there have been no exclusions since the last inspection. Pupils behave very well in lessons when they are engaged in challenging and interesting activities but attention can lapse during whole class sessions when a very wide range of age and ability are taught together. Pupils' play is harmonious and the ethos of the school is such that all ages play together naturally. There were no incidents of bullying seen during the inspection and pupils of all ages say that everyone is friendly with everyone else and that they look after each other in this school.
- 12 Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils' contributions in lessons and in the wider life of the school are valued and this ensures a high level of involvement. Pupils listen well to instructions and are pleased when given praise. Pupils relate very well to all adults they encounter during the school day. They give a friendly welcome to

visitors and are polite and courteous. There is a very supportive atmosphere running throughout the school and pupils willingly help one another in learning situations as well as in a social context. Mutual respect is evident between pupils of all abilities and ages in the school.

- 13 Pupils' personal development is very good. They have an increasing understanding of how their behaviour affects others. Pupils' respect for others is demonstrated in lessons where they collaborate well together and show respect and courtesy when listening to the views and ideas of others in their class. However, pupils have limited understanding of the diversity of lifestyles in this country because the opportunities to experience the multi-cultural aspects of Britain are few.
- 14 Pupils respond well to the opportunities they are given to use their initiative and take responsibility (for themselves). They have recently been involved in designing areas of the playground, resulting in provision of good quality. Day-to-day they cope very responsibly with the physical limitations caused by being part of such a small school. Pupils have to regularly move into various groups within the classroom and move or negotiate furniture, when a room is changed from classroom use to create space for a dance lesson, for example. However, because there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their initiative or take responsibility for aspects of their learning, they sometimes tend to rely on the teacher too much. For example, in science, they do choose for themselves how to record their findings.
- 15 The very good attendance at the school is above the national average. Pupils arrive at school on time and registration is completed efficiently in a polite and pleasant manner.

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

- 16 Teaching and learning are good overall, reflecting the opinion of the parents. A third of the teaching is very good or better and none is unsatisfactory. This marks an improvement since the last inspection because, while teaching overall remains good, there is a larger proportion of very good teaching. For the class containing reception children and Year 1 and 2 pupils, teaching and learning are sound and there is some good and very good teaching. For the class of pupils from Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning is good overall and sometimes excellent.
- 17 Pupils, even the youngest, are consistently encouraged to develop their skills in speaking and listening by talking purposefully in pairs and small groups and they are then given opportunities to express their views more formally in front of the whole class. Consequently, pupils speak confidently and are articulate in expressing their ideas about, for example, their preferences in books to an adult or to other pupils. Teachers effectively support pupils' learning in English and mathematics by ensuring that basic literacy and numeracy skills form an important part of learning in other subjects. For example, English homework sometimes includes learning the spellings of technical terms for science and learning in religious education involves writing a play-script of the Christmas story. Science sometimes necessitates pupils making use of their measuring skills to record their observations of, say, the length of plants accurately. Teachers fruitfully set tasks that involve pupils in using and developing their information and communication technology skills in other subjects such as mathematics, writing and art. This approach means that the school is well set to continue its upward trend in teaching.
- 18 For pupils in Year 3 to Year 6, the teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is good. Consequently, pupils achieve well in all aspects of

these subjects. For the Year 1 to Year 2 pupils, literacy and numeracy are soundly taught with a strength being in the introductions to lessons and in the concluding plenary. For example, in a daily lesson in mathematics the teacher had prepared the initial part of the lesson very well and made resources and used questions well for the different age groups in the class. As a result, pupils made good progress and were well prepared for their next tasks.

- 19 The teaching of science is good across the school because a very practical method is used which captures pupils' interest and curiosity. The very good use of resources engages pupils delightfully in their tasks. For example, in Year 1 and Year 2, pupils raised questions about their work and the teacher provided opportunities for paired discussions and, through direct teaching, effectively built up pupils' understanding of the parts of a flower. In Year 1 to Year 2 the teaching of geography is good. Effective use of very good quality resources impacts particularly well on the rate of pupils' learning and their developing interest in the subject. The teaching of music is very good in Year 3 to Year 6, benefiting from the teachers' very well developed expertise in the subject; consequently, pupils achieve very well in response and thoroughly enjoy their learning.
- 20 The teaching of children in the reception year is sound. A strength is in the planning, which makes effective links between the early learning goals for children in the reception class and the early stages of the National Curriculum. A relative weakness is in the opportunities provided for children to exercise choice and become involved in structured play.
- 21 Pupils with special educational needs are taught well by teachers and teaching assistants; consequently, they learn well in lessons and make good progress. Their needs are clearly identified through careful and regular assessments and appropriate targets are set for them, mainly in aspects of English and mathematics. The targets and the strategies to be used are recorded in good quality individual education plans that provide the basis for lesson planning.
- 22 Teachers plan carefully and consistently and prepare their lessons thoroughly. They often take good account of the needs of different groups of pupils. However, there are times when the work planned for higher attainers is not challenging enough and does not give them enough scope for independent work or for making choices in their learning. In science, for example, the more able pupils in Year 2 do not have the opportunity to decide how they are going to record their investigation or to choose precisely what they are going to investigate. Consequently, they do not reach the level in national assessments above that expected for their age.
- 23 Teachers mark pupils' work in ways that, at best, ensures that the pupil knows how well he or she has done and how the work might be improved. Marking is particularly good in the Year 3 to Year 6 class.
- 24 Well briefed teaching assistants provide valuable help when working with groups or individuals, often lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs. However, in sessions where the whole class is together, teaching assistants are not used to best effect and often simply observe the session with no set purpose. Opportunities to involve them in supporting the learning of individuals or in monitoring, say, pupils' speaking and listening skills at these times are missed.
- 25 A strength of the teaching lies in the way that teachers often involve the pupils in first-hand activities such as handling and sorting plants into their categories or using mud and twigs to build a sculpture during an educational visit. Very stimulating and

sometimes very challenging teaching methods are used, particularly in Year 3 to Year 6, often using the pupils' experience profitably; consequently, in these lessons, pupils work with very high levels of interest, concentration and independence. For example, in an excellent music lesson, the approach taken was that of a music workshop. Very high levels of expertise enabled the highest expectations to be set and pupils responded with energy and gusto to the challenge. The session was very well planned and organised so that no time was lost. After a testing warm-up singing in three parts, pupils moved on to listening to an instrumental section in the middle of *The Yellow Submarine* before composing their own group section. Before the end of the lesson, each group was able to interweave their piece into a finished performance and then, as the icing on the cake, to join their piece with the others in a final performance of high quality. Throughout, pupils were using appropriate technical language and showing well above expected knowledge and skills – all this in response to the teacher's infectious enthusiasm, sense of humour and excellent relationships. Excellent class management led to excellent behaviour and extremely high levels of learning and creative effort.

- 26 The very good teaching seen was often characterised by very secure class management based on very constructive relationships. A very good science lesson, for example, in Year 3 to Year 6, involved pupils in activities in identifying and sorting plants. Pupils' interest was raised by the teacher's knowledgeable introduction, those capable were challenged to produce their own means of identifying the plants and the groups worked hard at their tasks, discussing both the plants and their difficulties in identifying them animatedly and with high levels of interest. At no point in the lesson did the rate of effort slacken as the teacher prompted and circulated to very good effect. Pupils' learning was promoted very effectively.
- 27 Some good teaching was characterised by the effective use of the whole class sessions at the beginning and end of the literacy hour. The teacher caught the attention of the wide age range effectively by reading the story with lively expression before taking the pupils through the points she wanted them to learn. After they had completed their group activities, the teacher skilfully used the concluding plenary to check their learning and celebrate what they had achieved.
- 28 Some lessons which were satisfactory overall included group activities that were not always pitched just at the right level for all groups and ages so that higher attainers were given tasks that they could complete too easily.

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

- 29 The school's curriculum has good range and quality and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the local agreed syllabus for religious education. The provision has been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are established and the school is adapting them well to meet the needs of the pupils. Consequently, achievement in English and mathematics is good and pupils in Year 6 are on target to attain standards that are above average by the time they leave the school. Learning in English and mathematics is enhanced by the satisfactory homework arrangements and other subjects occasionally benefit from research tasks for the older pupils. Science is given a good focus and there is an appropriate emphasis on investigative work and the proper use of scientific language. The curriculum for information and communication technology ensures that pupils develop their skills not only in dedicated information and communication technology sessions but also when working in other subjects such as English, mathematics and art. Subjects are often taught so that they support one

another; for example, a topic on Ancient Greece involved pupils not only in studying the history of Greece but also its geography and their learning activities involved art and writing among others.

- 30 A helpful curriculum plan ensures that the mixed age classes cover the necessary ground in each subject without undue overlap and repetition. Long-term and medium-term planning is shared with neighbouring schools and the key issue from the last inspection concerning the lack of policies and schemes of work has now been addressed. Policies are kept under review and updated regularly; national guidance benefits the schemes of work. The school has developed a scheme of work for religious education that relates closely to the requirements of the local agreed syllabus.
- 31 The provision for children in the reception year is of satisfactory quality - national guidelines for the Foundation Stage have been adopted and the reception classroom reflects this. Curricular planning is dovetailed well into the overall planning for the joined reception and Year 1 and Year 2 class.
- 32 The curriculum benefits from occasional visits and visitors to the school and activities such as the visit by younger pupils to an art workshop proved beneficial in many ways. A very strong contribution is made to the curriculum (as well as to the support and development of teachers) by the very constructive links that exist with neighbouring schools. Sporting links, for example, are strong and enable pupils to participate in football and mini-hockey competitions as well as to receive coaching in a variety of games and physical activities. There is a good range of activities outside school time with, for example, a chess club and instrumental lessons in guitar and recorders available for those who wish to attend, in addition to the sports events.
- 33 Provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. A new policy for sex education has been put into practice, with the school nurse playing an appropriate part. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss issues, sometimes with visiting experts. Due attention is given to developing an understanding of the misuse of drugs, in ways that suit the pupils' ages.
- 34 Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and so make good progress. Their needs are assessed early and individual education plans of good quality are written to ensure that the teachers' planning takes full account of them. Teaching assistants are well briefed and play an important part in the learning of these pupils. When appropriate, outside agencies, such as the educational psychologist, are involved and parents are consulted and informed so that they can, if they choose, play a part in their children's development. Pupils who are identified as gifted or talented are also provided for well so that pupils who it is felt would benefit work with an age group above their own and pupils with an identified musical talent are encouraged to learn the guitar and take significant parts in school performances.
- 35 Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and cultural development, is good. Provision for their social development is very good. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to work together in lessons where they share equipment and materials constructively and have to make decisions together relating to, for example, which part would best be played by the keyboard in their musical composition. Sharing and caring are successfully encouraged in all aspects of school life where older pupils are expected to look after the younger ones and where the adults operate very effectively as role models. The tradition of team games also enhances a feeling of working together for the common good and boys and girls in the contest-



winning team are very proud to play alongside each other. The tradition of performance also enhances the team ethos very effectively.

- 36 Pupils' spiritual development is effectively enhanced through opportunities to celebrate the world of nature and to participate in musical performances and enjoy art and literature. Pupils reflect on how to take best care of the environment. School assemblies and religious education lessons introduce pupils to fresh ideas and beliefs. Moral development is effectively promoted through discussions about laws and rules and the expectations of behaviour seen in the classrooms. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. It is particularly strong in the arts, where teachers share their own enthusiasm for music and literature effectively with the pupils. Pupils encounter a good range of music, art, story and poetry, some of it from cultures from around the world. The good quality of display in the school also demonstrates the importance of the arts. Pupils have good opportunities to perform successfully and to enter art competitions. However, while pupils encounter the beliefs, values and cultures of other countries and societies, these are usually treated as things that exist outside their experience; pupils are not given enough opportunities to learn about and experience the cultural diversity of British life today.

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

- 37 The steps taken by the school to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils are very good and have improved since the last inspection. This is undoubtedly a caring environment where the safety of pupils is given high priority. All statutory checks are in place and the general welfare of pupils is very well catered for in the daily life of the school. The school has addressed the health and safety issues arising from the unsatisfactory toilet provision identified in the last inspection very well and the school now has good quality, modern toilet facilities for everyone in the school. Child protection procedures are effective though not all assistant staff have received training.
- 38 The effectiveness of educational and personal support and guidance in raising pupils' achievement is very good. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school's philosophy is to create a climate of high expectation of behaviour and responsibility and this supports pupils to develop self-discipline and not rely on imposed discipline. However, when pupils fail to reach these high standards, intervention is timely, appropriate and effective, particularly with the older pupils.
- 39 The elimination of oppressive behaviour is well promoted through the way in which the school successfully manages behaviour in general and the expectations the adults have of caring behaviour between pupils. Should unacceptable behaviour occur, procedures exist to monitor it closely and involve parents appropriately in order to support the successful rehabilitation of the pupil involved.
- 40 The procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. There are no pupils in the school with an unacceptable level of attendance. The school provides a friendly, caring and attractive environment, which together with challenging tasks makes pupils want to be there. This is most effective.
- 41 Procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are good. The school has tackled the weaknesses identified in the last inspection and now has good assessment procedures, the outcomes of which are recorded systematically. This benefits all pupils including those who join the school mid-year. The school carries out all statutory assessment requirements and reports the results to parents. The

assessment system for English, mathematics and science is effective. The school uses a range of assessment activities including end of year tests. In most other subjects, assessment procedures are less rigorous, although satisfactory. The assessment of information and communication technology is at an early stage.

- 42 The school makes very good use of assessment information when decisions are made about which groups pupils should work in with some pupils working on some occasions with the class other than their own. The school also makes very good use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress. A tracking sheet shows every pupil's attainment in English, mathematics and science year-by-year, from their entry to the school. Where actual attainment does not agree with the level expected of the pupil, due consideration is given to how best to support the pupil in the future. Each pupil also has a range of individual, short-term learning targets. These targets are used well by the pupils, who agree that they help them to make progress.
- 43 Because of the family atmosphere of the school, members of the staff know all the pupils very well. This in-depth knowledge ensures that the monitoring and supporting of pupils' personal development is good, although largely informal.
- 44 The school's links with a local nursery are very good. They help teachers to provide a smooth transition and a good start to children's first days at school. Assessment records are usefully shared between the establishments and this means that teachers gain a clear understanding of pupils' levels of attainment as soon as they start school.
- 45 Those pupils who need extra help are well provided for. They receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants and their individual education plans are of good quality. Their targets are carefully based on clear assessments and are regularly reviewed. When appropriate, pupils work with an age group lower than their own or, in the case of a gifted pupil, with an older age group. This works well. Outside agencies are involved appropriately when necessary.

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

- 46 There is an effective partnership between the school and the parents of its pupils, as at the time of the last inspection. Parents feel this is a good school. The parents' questionnaires completed for the inspection reveal that parents are pleased with what the school provides for their children. The inspection broadly endorses the parents' positive views of the school.
- 47 A minority of parents does not think the school provides an adequate range of activities outside of lessons, or feel they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on. The inspection found the range of extra-curricular activities to be good but agrees with the parents who say that the reporting on pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.
- 48 The impact of the involvement of parents on the work of the school is good. They are very supportive of school functions and raise significant funds to enhance the learning opportunities available to pupils in the school. A very small number of parents work in school as volunteers, but parents escort children to swimming lessons and accompany school visits enabling these activities to take place. Each class informs parents what is going to be taught in the coming term but this really gives little more information than the title of the topic to be studied and does not include any information about English or mathematics. This is insufficient to enable parents to be fully engaged in their children's learning at home. Nevertheless, the emphasis in the school on research projects for

homework enables parents to make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning at school and at home.

- 49 Information provided for parents, particularly about their children's progress, is unsatisfactory. All parents receive an annual report on their children's progress. The reports include all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. For English, mathematics and science there is a very positive statement about what the pupil can do and, occasionally, there is some indication of what the pupil needs to do next. For pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 their attainment is helpfully reported in terms of levels of the National Curriculum in these three subjects. However, other than this none of the reporting sets the pupils' achievements in context in terms of the National Curriculum. The reporting on other subjects tends to be general, sometimes only outlining what the pupil has studied and possibly their attitude to the subject. This makes it impossible for parents to know how their children are doing compared with the national level expected for the child's age. In addition to the annual report, there is regular contact with parents through reading diaries, school newsletters and open evenings. Because of the location of the school, almost all pupils travel to and from school via the school bus which means that there is no opportunity for informal contact between school and parents at the beginning and end of the school day. The school newsletters are of good quality, keeping parents well informed about the daily life of the school. The autumn open evening is used very well to discuss and explain a pupil's individual targets to their parents. However, there is insufficient information about what is being taught in school and how it is being taught, to enable parents to be fully supportive of learning. The school's prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are clear and informative.
- 50 The school successfully makes every effort to involve parents in the learning of pupils with special educational needs, arranging meetings wherever possible to share the contents of their individual education plans and to discuss homework arrangements. This contributes to the good progress that pupils with special educational needs make during their time in school.

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

- 51 The headteacher is a very effective leader and has set a clear educational direction for the school. In part, this is to raise standards by improving pupils' attitudes to learning but it also encompasses all aspects of the school's provision. The headteacher leads by example, through successful teaching and a clear vision. The approach is calm and purposeful and has set accurately identified priorities brought together in a school development plan of good quality. Being a very small school, all teachers carry management responsibility and they share this vision for the school and are working well together to achieve it.
- 52 In the past, a key factor that has been a barrier to improvement has been the lack of a permanent staff. This has been rectified and with the support of staff and governors the headteacher has established a management structure that serves the school well. Even though this is a small school, the roles and responsibilities are formally agreed and clear. Distinct and effective contributions are made by all staff in line with their up-to-date job descriptions and with their keenness for the pupils to do as well as they possibly can. The match of suitably trained and experienced staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. The opportunity to appoint a part-time teacher to release the

headteacher from a full-time teaching commitment has been used well to extend the teaching expertise in the school by employing a music specialist. This is in line with the commitment of the leadership to improve the learning experiences available to pupils and so improve their attitudes to learning. Since the appointment of the substantive headteacher, the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed well.

- 53 Furthermore, improvements have been made in pupils' attainment in a good number of subjects, in pupils' attitudes and in the provision for their welfare. Though leadership was judged exceptional in 1997, the stability and consistency brought about by a substantive postholder is paying dividends and the school is well placed to continue its improvement.
- 54 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led and managed. The co-ordinator monitors and regularly reviews the needs and progress of these pupils carefully. The new Code of Practice is securely in place. The well-informed governor with oversight of special educational needs provides useful support.
- 55 The school is outward looking in its practice and this is important given its geographically remote nature. It has explicit aims that provide a clear educational direction over the short and long-term. It successfully fulfils its aims to facilitate children's learning and provide equality of opportunity in a stimulating environment. A weakness is in the provision to extend pupils' understanding about the diversity of culture in Britain.
- 56 The school's monitoring arrangements are supplemented by reports from officers of the local education authority on the quality of teaching and learning. Together these are used well to improve the quality of teaching. The headteacher carries out formal classroom observations from which strengths and areas for development are identified and acted upon. This has led to teaching which is never less than sound and very often good or better.
- 57 The staff have undertaken a review of their performance and challenging but achievable targets have been set. These have been managed well and the training and development that has stemmed from them has had a good impact on the curriculum in particular. Skilful use is made of the funding and training opportunities; for example, a partnership with two local schools which have much in common is helping to develop the curriculum and provides very good opportunities for professional debate and discussion.
- 58 The governing body meets regularly, discharges its requirements well and takes an active interest in the work of the school. It understands its accountability and members of the governing body know the school well. As a result, governors are well informed and able, with the guidance of the headteacher, to plan carefully and act increasingly as a critical friend. This maintains the standards found at the time of the last inspection. The systems that the governing body has in place are robust and have meant that it has kept up to date with issues brought about by external changes both locally and nationally.
- 59 The finances of the school are managed well and closely monitored. The headteacher and governors make sure that spending is closely linked to the school development plan. A large carry forward from last year's budget has been sensibly put aside to improve resources for teaching and learning. The school obtains resources at the most economic price, calling upon the help of the local education authority to make sure that correct procedures are followed. The school secretary unobtrusively ensures the efficient day-to-day running of the school office and the headteacher regularly supplies

the governors with essential financial information whenever required. An auditors' report of two years ago made minor recommendations to the school and these were acted upon immediately.

- 60 The school is administered effectively. However, even though sensible routines are in place to control the day-to-day tasks, the increasing bureaucracy that the school has to deal with is difficult in this small school where the headteacher has a very large teaching role and only a small amount of time away from the teaching for management. The use of information and communication technology is at an early stage, though used prudently given the small numbers of pupils on roll.
- 61 The accommodation is much improved since the last inspection by the addition of modern toilet facilities within the school building. There has also been an improvement in the playground and office facilities at the school. In spite of these improvements, the accommodation is unsatisfactory overall as it prevents the delivery of some aspects of the curriculum for physical education. Gymnastics cannot be taught effectively due to the limited floor space and lack of space to store equipment. In addition, there is not enough indoor space for pupils to practice other physical education activities involving speed and travel. The school compensates for these limitations on the physical education curriculum by taking pupils swimming throughout their time in the school and as a result pupils achieve very well in swimming. There is also a strong focus on outdoor games. There are further limits to the accommodation but the school organises and uses the space well. For example, the library is housed in an area which is also used as a kitchen, staff room and dining area. The school makes sure that pupils have sufficient access to the library for learning purposes. In addition, outdoor play facilities for the reception age children are limited. Nevertheless, the school makes good use of the facilities it has and functions very well. It is conducive to teaching and learning. The building is well maintained and a lack of litter, graffiti and damage indicates the respect pupils show for the school.
- 62 Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum as a whole but there are variations across the subjects. In history and geography, resources are inadequate as the books in the library are of poor quality and there are poor resources for teaching and learning in these subjects. The school borrows topic boxes to supplement these resources where appropriate. The resources for mathematics and religious education are satisfactory and in all other subjects resources are good in quality and quantity other than in physical education where large apparatus is not provided. Well-planned educational visits successfully extend pupils' experiences and support their learning and development.

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

- 63 In order to ensure the school's improvement, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- Improve the challenge in independent work for the reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. (paragraphs 20, 22 and 88)
  - Provide opportunities for pupils to learn about and experience the cultural diversity of British life today. (paragraphs 36, 109 and 110)

Minor issues:

- Improve the quality of information to parents about their children's progress.  
(paragraph 49)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	5	10	5	0	0	0
Percentage	9	23	45	23	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	37
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	34
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.2
Average class size	16

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	24

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000 / 2001
	£
Total income	110988
Total expenditure	105957
Expenditure per pupil	3028
Balance brought forward from previous year	8947
Balance carried forward to next year	13978

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.1
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.*



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

36

Number of questionnaires returned

19

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	42	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	29	0	0	12
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	50	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	39	11	0	6
The teaching is good.	65	24	6	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	22	22	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	32	11	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	39	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	59	24	18	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	29	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	18	12	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	22	33	0	0

The inspection judgement is that the school provides a good range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors agree with parents that they are not kept well informed about their children's progress.

## **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**

- 64 Education for children in the foundation stage is provided in the joint reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is broadly average for their age in each area of their learning except in knowledge and understanding, where their attainment is below that typically expected.
- 65 Children make sound progress because the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and at times good or better. Children are on course to attain standards that are expected of their age in all aspects other than knowledge and understanding of the world in which standards are likely to be below those typically expected.
- 66 The curriculum is sound and developing appropriately to take account of the requirements of the very youngest children in the school. Opportunities for exploration and structured play are timetabled through the week though this does not allow time each day for children to get really involved in structured play because more formal work has to be completed first.

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

- 67 Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a good priority. The children quickly begin to understand class rules and what is expected of them. They settle down well to the activities provided and are able to concentrate for reasonable lengths of time.
- 68 Lower attainers play and work alongside others, watching and learning from them. Middle attainers are able to co-operate with other children and higher attainers often initiate activities and confidently lead small groups often working with pupils a year older than themselves.
- 69 The teaching addresses the age group appropriately through good quality lesson planning and through the deployment of teaching assistants to provide firm guidance to the children during group work. Children make simple choices though opportunities to exercise choice from a range of activities are too limited because children are at times over directed. Children make gains in their understanding of the beauty of their local world through time set aside to enjoy looking at books, listening to well chosen stories and appreciating the striking natural landscape surrounding them. Very positive relationships between adults and children impact well on children's social development. Children, with some adult encouragement, are willing to share special moments and their fascination comes to the forefront as when they used magnifying glasses to look closely at plants and root structures.

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

- 70 Children's skills at speaking and listening develop soundly. They join in simple discussion with the rest of the class and make quiet yet worthwhile contributions to the daily lessons in literacy and mathematics. Higher attainers are particularly confident and are able to speak in considered sentences. Adults extend pupils' speech through effective questioning which engages children's interest and has good expectations of the children's responses. This way of working extends to other areas of learning. For

example, when finding out about two contrasting countries, children came to a better understanding of the climate when they quickly became engaged through questioning. Resources are also used well to promote children's language development.

- 71 The developing spoken language is reflected soundly in children's writing. The teaching is satisfactory and effectively follows the national strategy for literacy. Children make sound gains in forming letters correctly though uncorrected pencil grip means that writing lacks fluency at times. Children have an increasing understanding of letter sounds and simple patterns of spelling. Higher attainers and average attainers can spell very simple words independently though lower attainers struggle to write their name correctly.
- 72 Children love to read and to listen to stories though infrequently have the opportunity to choose this as an independent activity because their work is so closely structured. When they shared a book in a literacy lesson, they were enthralled as the story about monsters unfolded and delightfully sequenced events. Middle attainers gave a sound amount of detail and higher attainers provided adventurous ways in which the story might conclude. The teacher guides the children's formal reading times well and pupils make gains in recognising simple words and in linking the written word with the spoken word. The teacher draws well on day-to-day assessment to direct questions and elicit responses from individuals, though records of pupils' progress in reading are not always kept sufficiently well.

### **Mathematical development**

- 73 Children make sound progress in understanding about number, measurement and shape. Children steadily build on their mathematical vocabulary and are on course to attain the early learning goal in mathematical development. This is because the teaching is sound and provides tasks well matched to the children's levels of attainment. Children achieve soundly over time and come to a better understanding of numbers and their values because, even though they are taught in class alongside older pupils, the teacher manages to make the reception children feel special and target work at the correct level for them through setting clear objectives for their learning. For example, in a good lesson, the teacher explicitly explained, 'Today the reception class children are learning a new counting pattern'. Clarity to the learning means that children know what is expected of them and that in the concluding plenary they are able with guidance to begin to consider how well they have done and what they need to learn next.
- 74 Average attainers work with numbers up to 10 confidently and higher attainers are using numbers beyond ten. In recorded work, many reverse numerals and have yet to remember the correct formation. Children enjoy their mathematical work because of the variety of activities presented. For example, children cheerfully joined in number rhymes and enjoyed such lines as 'number five, do a jive' where they used accompanying actions to help them recall the order of numbers to ten. They are at times seated for lengths of time when they would be better deployed to investigating through structured play.

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

- 75 The quality of teaching is sound but children have quite a lot of ground to make up to widen their understanding of the world about them. Pupils make sound gains but are not on course to meet the early learning goal in this aspect. Early understandings of science, geography and history are soundly developed as children work alongside older pupils. The provision for structured role-play widens children's understanding of the

world and provides a secure foundation for later geographical work, though the opportunities for this are somewhat limited. When given the opportunity, as when they sorted clothes for a bear to take on holiday to a hot or a cold country, children were able to give increasingly sensible reasons for their choice. The resources were of very good quality and children almost held their breath as the suitcases were introduced and they were invited to help pack for a holiday abroad.

- 76 Children also enjoyed the practical approach to the beginning of a science lesson when they were each provided with a buttercup plant to explore the root structure. They made faster gains in the practical aspect than in the following work when they recorded the different parts of a plant. They worked well with a partner, taking turns and explaining their findings.

### **Physical development**

- 77 The quality of teaching and the resultant learning is satisfactory. Access to outdoor play is planned soundly given the limitations in this small school. Children play with increasing control and awareness of space and others, use tools and equipment carefully and cut and stick with developing accuracy. A significant number have yet to learn how to hold pencils correctly. Staff are insufficiently aware of this and as a result pencil grip often goes uncorrected by adults. Children are positive in their attitude and careful to produce the best that they can. When cutting round shapes with scissors, for example, they follow the guidelines carefully. Higher attainers were quick to cut loosely around the shape initially and then to trim it while average attainers took more time following the line round its corners and repositioning the paper as necessary. The teacher provides tasks that are well suited to the age group and are matched to pupils' level of attainment.
- 78 Much of the outside play relies on a daily playtime along side Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and means the use of large equipment and wheeled toys is unnecessarily limited. The use of small apparatus such as balls and skipping ropes is left to the individual and children are not always encouraged to use the play times to improve their skills in physical education. Nonetheless high attainers can jump and land safely knowing to bend their knees and ankles while average attainers can hop on each leg and are beginning to skip. Lower attainers make good attempts at these actions but have not yet mastered the co-ordination to execute them well.

### **Creative development**

- 79 Too little teaching and learning was seen in this area of learning to judge its quality. Discussions with children and sampling of work shows that children enjoy using a range of materials and that well-planned activities support their learning. Children are on course to meet the standards expected in creative development by the end of their time in the reception class. Middle attainers can draw recognisable figures with facial features while the work of higher attainers includes much well observed detail. Most of the pictures that children have made using the computer show developing detail, appropriate use of colour, care and effort. The classroom is set out to provide activities to promote creativity.

## **ENGLISH**

- 80 Pupils' standards are above the national average by the end of Year 6, showing an improvement since the last inspection. This is markedly better than the standards reached in last year's national tests, where performance was well below the national average and the average for similar schools. The school is on track to exceed its target for this year, which is an appropriate one. The difference in performance between this year and last year is very largely because last year there were more pupils with special educational needs in a very small group. Last year, boys achieved less well than girls; in the present Year 6 group, there are no girls. However, girls and boys achieve equally well in other year groups. Pupils of all levels of ability achieve well, including those with special educational needs. This is because teachers plan carefully for the full range of ages and needs in the class and set very effective targets for reading and writing. These feature in the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs and are used effectively in the teachers' marking of the work of all pupils.
- 81 Standards in speaking and listening are above average. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they are confident and articulate, discussing their favourite books and authors enthusiastically and showing perceptive insights into the characters' feelings and behaviour. They answer the teacher's questions fully, providing, for example, clear explanations of the rules of some complex board games such as Cluedo and chess. Teachers are good at targeting questions at particular pupils to draw them out or to develop their confidence.
- 82 Standards in reading are above average by the end of Year 6 because basic reading skills are taught effectively throughout the school and pupils are presented with a good range of interesting books to read. Higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 read challenging texts with good understanding and are able to compare the styles and qualities of different authors. They compare features of fairy tales from different cultures with good insights. Pupils read aloud with confidence, correcting themselves when necessary and using a good range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Many of the more able read with good expression, following the example of their teachers. Pupils have well developed information retrieval skills, are familiar with the layout of the library – particularly the two who are librarians – and can use the index and contents pages well.
- 83 Standards in writing are at average levels by Year 6. Pupils write for a variety of audiences and purposes, composing poems and writing book reviews, composing stories and writing diary and other accounts. Notable was the originality of some of the play-texts based on the Christmas story – reading about the arrival in Bethlehem written from the donkey's point of view was a novel experience! Work on myths, legends and fairy tales was particularly productive in producing lively and imaginative writing. Because the teaching of the basic skills of writing is systematic and thorough, pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally correct and they write to a structure because of the practice they have in using story outlines and in planning their writing. Pupils' learning benefits because of the way that other subjects support literacy – for example, work in science on the seasons led to some very clear writing about the features of each time of year. The reason that standards in writing are lower than those in other aspects of English is in part because of the frequent changes in teaching and consequently teaching styles in the past. Now that the teaching is consistently good or better the pupils are feeling confident in sharing their thoughts in writing. Pupils are encouraged to be adventurous in their choice of words and they rise well to the challenge as when a boy described 'cowardly octopuses spitting oily stuff to prevent predators getting near'.
- 84 Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with the national average, maintaining the standards seen at the last inspection. Pupils' performance last year in the national tests

was well above the national average in reading and writing and in line with similar schools in reading and above in writing. This year's group includes fewer higher attainers and more pupils with special educational needs. The performance of higher attainers is also affected by the fact that they are not always set challenging enough work in writing. Pupils achieve satisfactorily although those with special educational needs make good progress because the work they are set is more effectively targeted at their needs and they receive good support.

- 85 Standards in speaking and listening at the end of Year 2 are above those expected. Pupils are frequently encouraged to talk together in pairs or small groups to discuss possible answers or to share opinions. This develops their confidence so that they are not at all embarrassed to answer the teachers' questions or to make a point in front of the class. Even the youngest pupils take part in the school performance and this, too, benefits their skills in speaking and listening. Higher attainers are not at all perturbed at working with older pupils and sharing their ideas and experiences with them.
- 86 Standards in reading for seven-year-olds are broadly in line with those expected. Pupils read accurately and with sound understanding; higher attainers read with good expression and understanding. More able pupils use the context of the word to supply its meaning for them but most pupils sound out the word or break it up into parts when they are unsure of what the word is. Occasionally, they use pictures in the book to provide them with a clue. These skills have been systematically developed by the teachers and, together with regular and frequent reading to an adult, have had a beneficial effect on pupils' reading skills. Pupils' skill in finding information from books is at about expected levels; they were able, with prompting, to explain the use of the contents and index.
- 87 Standards in writing are broadly in line with the average for pupils in Year 2. Pupils write for a satisfactory range of audiences and purposes though a great deal of their work is done on worksheets which, while often providing a useful structure for lower attaining pupils, sometimes inhibit the higher attainers from choosing their own topics and the form in which they wish to write. Pupils produce book reviews and write letters which are correctly set out. They provide descriptions of the queen and retell the Christmas story with a sound sense of structure and a clear beginning, middle and end. Higher attainers, who work with older pupils, have opportunities for a broader range of writing and achieve well because of this; they produced lively writing in response to the novel, *Fantastic Mr Fox*, for example, that had good levels of spelling and punctuation and a good shape. Handwriting varies though most pupils are making good progress in response to the systematic teaching they receive.
- 88 The quality of teaching and learning is good for Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory for Years 1 and 2. The school's literacy strategy is well understood by the teachers and support staff and adapted well for the demands of such a wide age range within each class. Planning is good and has clear objectives that are informed by thorough assessments, tracking records and targets set for individuals and groups. For the most part, this leads to work that is well matched to the full range of needs in the class. In particular, pupils with special educational needs are well catered for in this way because their learning objectives are usually closely linked to their individual education plans. However, there are times when, particularly in the class with younger pupils, the independent group work is insufficiently challenging, especially for the higher attainers. These pupils have too few opportunities to make choices about their writing. The whole class sessions at the beginning and end of the literacy hour are used well, notably in the younger class, where, for example, an appropriate choice of text was read very effectively to catch the interest of the pupils and learning was effectively reviewed and reinforced in the concluding plenary. Teachers' enjoyment of books and stories and the sometimes exciting way in

which they present them produce a very positive response both in particular lessons or assemblies and also in the long term; pupils have an enthusiasm for books that will stand them in good stead in later life. Teachers also teach the basic skills of literacy effectively, providing regular handwriting practice and spelling tests of carefully selected words learned for homework. The pupils' skills of punctuation are taught systematically, sometimes, as in the teaching of speech marks, using amusing examples that motivate the pupils. Pupils are given opportunities to use their reading and writing skills in other subjects and also use information and communication technology to support and extend their written work. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support individuals and small groups, particularly of lower attainers, but they are less effectively used when the whole class is together; there are opportunities missed for individual support or assessments of pupils' speaking and listening performance, for example.

- 89 The subject is well managed and the staff work well together as a team. The school is well placed to continue to improve standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 90 Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. What it conceals is that over time, due to the changes in staff, the achievement of Year 6 pupils has been inconsistent and that it is only recently that standards have been pulled up and the rate of progress increased so that pupils learn at a good rate. The well below average levels attained in 2001 were in part due to the composition of the year group and in part the lack of continuity in teaching over time. This is in contrast to the high attaining group of pupils in Year 2 in 2001 who attained well above average in national tests and who continue to do well. This year pupils in Year 2 are attaining average standards overall.
- 91 By the end of Year 6, pupils' mental recall of multiplication facts is good and they draw well on these skills to calculate quickly and efficiently. Pupils want to do well in mathematics and many say it is one of their favourite subjects. They take pride in their written calculations and this helps the accuracy of their work. The application of their knowledge to solving problems is a comparative weakness and even though pupils are quick with their calculations they are not as confident in working out which set of rules is needed to solve particular problems. Pupils particularly enjoy the challenge of mathematical investigations and high attainers work logically through the process, discussing their findings maturely and taking pride in their results. Middle attainers take longer to come to conclusions though they are good at tracking back through calculations to find errors and are increasingly independent in their work. Lower attainers often work well with teaching assistants to tackle their work.
- 92 By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils understand the value of digits up to 100 and are able to add and subtract within 20. Higher attainers go beyond this. All have a sound understanding of shape and the passage of time. Not only do they learn to tell the time but they use it daily, being very aware of the time for assembly and play time, for example. Average and higher attainers use metric measurement to record simple linear measures and capacity.
- 93 The quality of teaching is good overall and sound for the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The good planning enables pupils to build on what they already know. This is because the differing needs of the pupils are skilfully managed through effective lesson planning and through the deployment of staff to provide a good amount of direct teaching. A strength is in the use of assessment and it is by this means that staff know their pupils so well and can set tasks that challenge pupils but that are achievable. Government funds have

been spent well to provide extra classes to boost the attainment of Year 6 pupils and this has resulted in a minority attaining at a level expected for pupils two years older.

- 94 Teachers use resources well to give pupils confidence to tackle new work and consolidate other work. When a pupil in Year 3 had difficulty understanding how to apply a particular method to subtract 11 from given numbers, the teacher quickly assessed the difficulty and provided good quality resources to help in the subtraction process. Questioning is used extremely well to get pupils to think about the methods they use to calculate. In an excellent lesson in Year 3 to Year 6, the teacher asked effective questions to guide pupils to the importance of carefully reading problems to identify precisely what was being asked of them. This resulted in one average attainer later stating 'It was hard at first but now I've got the hang of it and it's easy'. 'Yes,' continued a higher attainer in agreement who, following the teaching example, clearly explained 'Just break down the number into manageable parts' and concluded 'We need to get on!' Planning of good quality underpins the sound teaching for the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. It includes extra materials for those pupils who finish their tasks quickly.
- 95 Teaching assistants add much to the rate of pupils' learning during group work. They provide clear explanations and listen well to what the pupils have to say about their calculations. Conversely, the deployment of teaching assistants in the initial and concluding plenary is ineffective. They either listen to the teaching or sit apart waiting for the group work to begin. Either way, opportunities are lost to employ their effective skills to the full.
- 96 The subject is well led and managed and as a result the national strategy for numeracy is implemented well despite the previous rate of staff turnover. Lessons are well structured into three parts and routines well established so that no time is wasted between whole class teaching and the times when pupils move to work in groups or independently. A mark of the clear explanations that teachers provide is reflected in the way in which pupils discuss their work with a partner maturely and helpfully. Classrooms are alive with a buzz of hard work and endeavour and as a result pupils achieve at least soundly and often well. Information and communication technology is used well to teach and consolidate the pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills. Numeracy is used soundly to support learning in other subjects.

## SCIENCE

- 97 Pupils' standards are above the national average by the end of Year 6, showing an improvement since the last inspection. This is also a significant improvement on last year's national tests results, which were well below the national average and in the bottom five per cent when compared to similar schools. The difference in such very small groups lies in the number of pupils in last year's group that had special educational needs; also the boys last year were markedly less successful than the girls. There are no girls in the present Year 6 but there is no marked difference in achievement between boys and girls in other years. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers achieve well from their below average starting point in Year 1. The subject is well led and the school is well placed to continue to make progress.
- 98 By the end of Year 6, the pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of an appropriate range of topics covering the programmes of study of the National Curriculum; higher attainers have a more developed understanding of this material. Pupils have a particularly good knowledge of plants and their habitats and are able to use a database to identify particular plants and discover their characteristics; higher attainers



can develop their own database for this purpose. Their knowledge and understanding of light is enhanced by the art work they produce in drawing and painting objects that are distorted in reflections from a spoon. Pupils understand clearly the nature of a test that is fair and can carry out a variety of investigations that they can show are valid. They can record their findings in a variety of ways, using the computer, for example, to generate a block graph. Pupils have too few opportunities to select areas for investigation or to choose their own means of recording their findings.

99 Pupils' standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2, maintaining the standards seen at the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, although higher attainers are not sufficiently challenged by the work they are asked to do and they have too few opportunities to, for example, choose how to record the findings of their investigations or to explore further afield within the topic. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the support they receive. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the topics required by the National Curriculum and all reach the required standard. Higher attainers present their work more neatly but have little opportunity to take their learning further than that of the rest of the class. Pupils undertake a range of investigations and use a number of ways of recording their findings though the teacher mostly directs these; they use information and communication technology to record results and discuss reasons for any discrepancy between their predictions and the actual results.

100 Teaching and learning are sound in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers choose topics and activities that are interesting and assess the outcomes effectively. They are particularly good at using the familiar and giving pupils opportunities to use first hand experiences, to which the pupils respond very well. For example, the older class were asked, as part of their topic on the habitats of plants, to identify and classify a variety of weeds that could be found around their own locality. The familiarity of the samples, added to the fact that the pupils did not always know precisely what they were, added considerable interest to the activity. Pupils worked hard together to identify the plants with lower attainers using a key that the teacher provided and higher attainers being expected to devise their own key. Very good levels of learning resulted for all groups of pupils. In the best lessons, the teacher showed well developed and secure subject knowledge and prepared and organised a range of stimulating resources very well to catch pupils' interest. Very good class management based on very positive relationships ensured that pupils' behaviour and concentration levels were very good and that they enjoyed their learning. Good use is made of information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy to support work in science.

101 In a satisfactory lesson in Year 1 and Year 2 strengths lay in the whole class sessions at the beginning and ending of the lesson. The introduction was clear and caught the pupils' interest and questioning was effective in developing pupils' understanding. Pupils enjoyed the challenge of their work and were inquisitive and keen to investigate. The final whole class session was used effectively to check the pupils' learning and revise the knowledge they had learned. They made good progress overall, however, their rate of learning slowed in the group activities in the middle of the lesson. This was because some pupils were insufficiently challenged and they lost concentration.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

102 Standards are at expected levels for pupils by the end of Year 6 and Year 2; pupils achieve satisfactorily throughout the school. The standards overall are not as high as they were at the time of the last inspection because the school has concentrated on other subjects and has yet to review art and design. Pupils with special educational

needs and higher attainers make satisfactory progress; the latter achieve above average standards. Pupils explore the works of a wide range of artists and work in their styles, thus learning to appreciate their qualities – a Year 2 pupil, for instance, talked about Van Gogh's 'swirls of colour'. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 produced an impressive series of landscapes in the style of Chagall, Klimt, El Greco and other painters. Year 6 pupils talked with enthusiasm of the 'people in action' pencil sketches they had done in their sketch books and they were right to be proud of them; they were well observed and the best of them captured human movements well. Older pupils used the computer very effectively to produce landscapes and collage effects in the style of Kandinsky and Mondrian. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and the sketch book of a higher attainer included a pencil sketch of a cliff that showed a lovely sense of form and the pupil's sensitive analysis of the sketch; he later added colour to develop the work even further. Productive learning also took place for the pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 through their exploration of Hindu and other patterns; pleasing designs of repeating and contrasting patterns were produced. Younger pupils produce a narrower range of work but painted a series of portraits that show appropriate levels of observation, colour sense and skill for their age.

- 103 No judgement about teaching and learning is made but there is evidence of the systematic development of the skills of, for example, observational drawing and portrait painting. Art and design is used to good effect in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 painted portraits of Henry VIII, one of which won a prize at a local exhibition. The pupils knowledgeably discussed the portrait of Henry VIII painted by Holbein and had a good knowledge of the history of the times. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 produced effective coloured pencil studies of Ancient Greek armour and artefacts as part of their history studies and drew distorted pictures from reflections in spoons as part of their study of light in science. Pupils in Year 2 talked enthusiastically about a visit they had made to an art workshop where they made mud and twig sculptures of Indians. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, cultural and social development. Pupils' achievement is monitored well through a photographic portfolio.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 104 By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain standards that are similar to those seen in most schools. This represents satisfactory achievement across the school. Standards are broadly similar to those found during the last inspection and improvement since then is sound. No judgement about teaching and learning is made.
- 105 Year 6 pupils generate ideas for making a range of items. They clearly explain why particular features are incorporated. Tasks are appropriately planned to help pupils acquire design skills though they are given limited choices in developing their own ideas when dealing with problems or tasks. Pupils have a sound knowledge of materials and can make sensible assessments of their suitability for a given purpose. Pupils developed these skills appropriately, for example, when they made alarmed lunch boxes using electric circuits. A weakness in pupils' attainment is their understanding of the importance of reviewing their work and thinking about improvements that could be made. Once an article is finished, pupils are more interested in the next challenge rather than thinking what they would change in their present design.
- 106 Year 2 pupils are able to work with a range of materials to a satisfactory level. This was the case when they made glove puppets from felt. Though all were basically similar, they used a range of buttons and shapes to decorate them. Higher attainers carefully joined the material by a range of suitable stitches and applied their sewing skills to fixing buttons to represent eyes. Pupils enjoy their work and are confident designers drawing well on their speaking and listening skills to explain and discuss their work. The items that

pupils make are well finished, such as the papier-mâché fishes which have been made over a period of lessons to a good finish. Good use is made of computers to produce, for example, attractively decorated lists of ingredients for fruit salad. Effective links are made with other subjects - the fruit salad fitted in well alongside observational drawings of fruit and poetry on the same topic. Pupils draw well on the literacy as pupils label and write about their work.

107 Pupils have a lively curriculum for design and technology and good use is made of a digital camera to record the stages and outcomes of the work. Because of the lack of storage facilities, the choice of materials can at times be limited with staff having to bring in materials for particular lessons. Pupils have opportunity to work with a range of materials but have a limited amount of freedom in their choice for any one item. Homework is used well to broaden pupils' understanding of design and technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

108 The standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly typical of those seen in most schools and similar to those at the time of the last inspection. This represents good achievement by the end of Year 2, brought about by teaching of good quality. Pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 achieve soundly. No teaching and learning was seen in these latter year groups.

109 By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of the physical and human aspects of geography. Through building up fact files on countries, pupils come to a better understanding of life in Greece, for example. They are able to explain the location, population and climate of Greece, forming a good link with their work in history on the Greeks and Persians. Higher attainers speak confidently and knowledgeably about their studies and have a growing understanding of how change can affect the environment. The understanding even of the higher attainers is underdeveloped in connection with the social aspects of the subject. They study contrasting environments but their knowledge of the British society further afield than their own area is limited. Pupils have a wide geographical vocabulary which they use well in providing explanations and in recording their work. They use their skills in reading and writing well to find out facts and to record their work. Numeracy skills are used soundly, for example, in work with grid references. Year 6 pupils are not well supported through resources; the amount and quality of books for reference is poor though the school borrows books from a central source.

110 By the end of Year 2, pupils have a growing understanding of their local area. In maps they made tracking their journey from home to school they were able to identify particular landmarks. They understand the use of buildings such as their school and the post office. Higher attainers could discuss their local town in simple terms while average attainers tended to concentrate on their immediate surroundings be it school or farm. All could relate their map to the hilly landscape view from the school. Those from the farming community have a good understanding for their age of land use and crops. The teaching draws well upon this and extends pupils' knowledge by using their first hand experience of trips out and holidays abroad. The use of very good resources, mostly provided by the teacher from home, engages pupils' curiosity about the wider world and in part is the underlying factor in the good progress they make. For example, in studying the difference in climate between Spain and Norway, the teacher drew on items of holiday clothes and pupils' imagination to set the scene for finding out about places hugely different from Farlow. The introduction to the lesson held pupils attention and they were as quiet as the first snow in winter, intrigued to find out what the teacher would produce next to help them find out about other countries. Though pupils have a sound understanding of places and their local environment, their appreciation of people who live

in areas away from their school is limited. They study the lives of people living on an island in Scotland but to some extent the lives of these are similar to their own in that each group lives in an isolated area, leaving pupils with little experience, for example, of the diversity found in cities and towns.

## **HISTORY**

- 111 Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained at an average level across the school. This represents good achievement over time from the levels at which pupils entered the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of the historical periods they have studied. They are able to speak in some detail about the Second World War and higher attainers have much empathy with the situation people found themselves in. They speak quite knowledgeably of rationing, for example, and have a sense of citizenship as they explain how rationing was meant to treat people the same during times of shortage. One pupil, in the role of a person in the blitz wrote, 'I think it wouldn't be easy being a child in the blitz' and went on to give convincing reasons. A relative weakness is in pupils' understanding of how one period in history relates to another.
- 112 By the end of Year 2, pupils have made good gains in understanding about famous people. For example, middle attainers can explain about Pepys and his famous diary and higher attainers recall much detail. Pupils' skills of enquiry get off to a good start because of the good teaching, when they devise a range of historical questions that could be asked about the great fire of London. One pupil wanted to find out for instance how the fire started and how long it burnt; another, how the fire was extinguished. Pupils have a sound understanding that history is about the past and that events can be sequenced. Topical work on the Queen's Jubilee has led pupils to sequence events in the Queen's reign and to draw well on literacy and art to document their work.
- 113 Planning shows that the teaching provides a range of opportunities for pupils to learn enquiry skills and lessons build well upon each other. Pupils are encouraged to pose questions and think of ways in which aspects can be investigated. Pupils have a good attitude to the subject. They are enthusiastic to find out not only factual information but to consider a range of evidence and how the past has helped to shape the present.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 114 Pupils' achievement is good because the teaching of the subject has improved since the time of the previous inspection and is now consistently good. Pupils attain levels that are above those typical for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. This is a higher standard in Year 6 than at the time of the last inspection. Standards in Year 2 have been maintained. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons because they are supported well and teachers include them in all classroom activities.
- 115 Teachers get on well with their pupils and expect a lot from them. Pupils' response is very good. They use expensive resources very carefully, sensibly and independently. They naturally turn to computers to support them in work in many subjects because effective links are made with other subjects, particularly with literacy, mathematics and art. For example, pupils record lists of things they will need and use databases to record findings and find information.
- 116 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Explanations are clear and expectations high. The use of information and communication technology is planned carefully resulting in the computers being used very well through out the day. Pupils are taught to

become self-reliant workers. A mark of the pupils' skills is that they learn aspects so well they are able to teach others how to use particular programmes. This was the case, for example, when a pupil in Year 6 taught a younger pupil how to play a game with number grids which involved multiplication. The pupil understood the program well enough to be able to relate it patiently to multiplication facts resulting in consolidation of his work and fast learning on behalf of the younger pupil both in using computers and in applying multiplication facts to solve problems. Both pupils were confident to make mistakes and learn from them.

117 Pupils can use the Internet to find information but their skill is less well developed here than in other aspects of the subject because resources have only recently been available for this to take place. The school builds well on the experience that some pupils bring from using computers at home.

118 The subject is well led and managed. There is a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development and the school is very clear that it will not sit on its laurels but will strive to make standards even higher.

## MUSIC

119 By the time pupils leave the school, standards are well above those expected for eleven-year-olds, improving on the good standards seen at the last inspection. Pupils, particularly those in Years 3 to 6, achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into lessons and achieve well. Talented pupils make very good progress. Pupils throughout the school sing pleasantly and tunefully and those in the junior class sing in three parts with good tone and control, holding their part well. They have experience of a rich variety of songs from around the world. By the time they leave the school, pupils have experience of singing together, accompanying the singing with a variety of instruments and performing their own compositions. Older pupils listen to music well and can identify featured instruments and discuss the style of the piece; they can describe the qualities of reggae, ballad and rock opera, for example, or show similarities and differences between pieces by Saint Saens and Prokofiev. Pupils in Year 6 are familiar with elements of traditional notation and can create their own compositions using pictorial notation, indicating the percussion instruments they used. They can compose and evaluate a complex piece, the 'middle eight' bar instrumental piece in the middle of *The Yellow Submarine*, using keyboard effects, percussion, voice effects, rhythm and pulse. Higher attainers play the guitar to a level that is appropriate for their age and a number of pupils play the recorder.

120 The quality of teaching and learning is very good and sometimes excellent. The teaching is particularly good for Years 3 to 6 but all pupils benefit from the specialist teacher's expertise during hymn singing with the whole school. The very high quality of the teaching was seen in a lesson which involved the pupils in Years 3 to 6 working at a level well above what would be expected for their age on a number of aspects of music. They sang in three parts; they discussed the form of the music they were working on in appropriate technical language, referring accurately to rhythm and pulse when appropriate; they discussed the style of the piece they were working on; and composed a number of group pieces that were then performed as part of the original piece that they were considering. All this was achieved at a very brisk pace, leaving no one, not even the youngest pupils, behind. The pupils responded as positively because of the very high expectations of the teacher – expectations that he was determined to see met. The teacher's perceptive assessment and subject expertise enabled him to group pupils to best effect so that they could help each other and present varying levels of challenge for all abilities. His highly developed class management skills and his inspirational energy

and drive kept their interest throughout the whole lesson. And after all that, they listened to extracts from a selection of classical music and discussed them.

121 The subject is supported by a tradition of performance that enables all pupils to participate. It makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The appointment of a music specialist for part of the week has had a considerable positive impact on standards in music and on pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. The subject is energetically and knowledgeably led and managed and, with the continued presence of a music specialist, the school is very well placed to continue to improve.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

122 Standards overall by the time pupils leave the school are in line with those expected of pupils in Year 6 but standards in swimming are well above average and the pupils do well in local games competitions. The standards seen at the time of the last inspection were above average, although facilities in the school for gymnastics and dance were as limited as they are now. Pupils achieve well in games and swimming and satisfactorily in other areas of physical education. All pupils in Years 4 to 6 are able to swim at least 25 metres, with almost all swimming substantial distances.

123 The school works hard and, to a large extent, successfully to overcome limitations of space to ensure as full a curriculum as possible – all pupils have swimming lessons for two terms and, in the summer term, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils do games outside while Year 3 to Year 6 pupils mix rounders and dance. Pupils' standards in dance are at expected levels for their age. The curriculum is supported by opportunities for a variety of extra-curricular team sports and, for those who choose, gymnastics at the local sports college. Years 1 and 2 visit another school for 'Top Play' activities while the older pupils have 'Top Sport' activities. There is also a residential visit planned with another school that will enable pupils to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities. Swimming visits involve relay races and water polo. The school enters two teams for the local schools football league and one team won the spring tournament this year. Another team did well in a mini-hockey competition with other schools. The school benefits significantly from its relationship with other local schools. The local sports college hosts junior pupils for a block of gymnastics and Farlow joins with another small local primary school for after-school coaching in a variety of sports and games; this year, pupils have received coaching in table tennis.

124 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers make careful and safe use of the space available for dance and choose stimulating music that catches the pupils' interest and imagination; for example, the Afro-Caribbean music chosen for the lesson motivated the pupils to work hard and to extend their range of movements well. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and behave well. They were very proud, for example, of their successful football teams. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Effective leadership and management have a positive impact on the curriculum and on standards. The school, limited as it is by its accommodation, nonetheless is satisfactorily placed to continue to make progress because of the efforts it makes to provide a relevant curriculum.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

125 Standards are as expected for eleven-year-olds and in line with the locally agreed syllabus, maintaining the standards seen at the last inspection. Pupils achieve soundly from Years 1 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs and higher attainers make

satisfactory progress. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of a range of religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism. They know something of the significance of numbers in these religions, understanding the five precepts of Buddhism and the five 'Ks' of Sikhism. They also know about the Ten Commandments and have applied their knowledge to discussing their own rules for school and in five-a-side football. Pupils are familiar with stories from the Old and New Testaments and have produced their own versions of the Easter Story and the Christmas Story, sometimes very originally. Their studies of a variety of creation stories and myths particularly interested the older pupils and they talked about them with enthusiasm.

- 126 No judgement is made about teaching in Years 1 and 2. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good and the subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers and visiting adults seek to make religion relevant to the pupils and relate their learning to their own lives and circumstances. However, while a good range of beliefs is studied, there is insufficient attention paid to the fact that many of the religions that pupils encounter are now part of the British way of life and should be seen as such. While pupils have visited local Anglican and Methodist churches and have met the vicar and the Methodist minister regularly, they have had no first hand experience of members of other religions nor have they had opportunities to visit their places of worship.