

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SHINFIELD INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL**

School Green, Shinfield, Reading

LEA area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 109886

Headteacher: Mrs Ann Nolan

Reporting inspector: Michael Tumelty  
16960

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 197137

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Green Shinfield Reading Berkshire
Postcode:	RG2 9EH
Telephone number:	(0118) 988 3389
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gwendoline Hutson
Date of previous inspection:	22 <sup>nd</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16960	Michael Tumelty	Registered inspector	English English as an additional language Religious education Equal opportunities	Results and achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
9537	Caroline Marden	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development Partnership with parents Care for pupils
30810	Elizabeth Kounnou	Team inspector	Under fives Mathematics History Geography Art Music	
18466	Kevin Hodge	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	The Curriculum offered to pupils

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Shinfield Infant and Nursery School has 168 pupils, is situated on the extreme edge of Wokingham and serves a very wide spectrum of families from both within and outside the local education authority. The school is very popular locally and the proportion of children coming to the school from beyond the designated catchment area has increased to 60 per cent since the last inspection. Very many of these children are from a particularly socially disadvantaged area of Reading in the adjoining local authority and often have very limited pre-school experience. The school is further developing the foundation stage by admitting pupils to the reception class in the term before they are five from September 2001. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased since the last inspection, but is still just within the upper section of the average band. A quarter of pupils have special educational needs. This has increased and is now slightly above average with one pupil in the infant school and another in the nursery having a statement of special educational need. An increasing number of pupils now come from ethnic minority and traveller families. An above average number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The levels of attainment on entry to the school are very wide, but broadly below what would be found in most schools.

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

This is a good school where very good leadership and management have enabled teaching to improve substantially and help pupils to achieve well and develop very good attitudes to learning. Standards of attainment, both in pupils' current work and over the last three years are higher than the last year's assessments would indicate. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Outstanding leadership from the headteacher and very good management, overall, which ensures excellent relationships and is enabling the school to continue to improve.
- The quality of teaching is good and some of it is very good which is enabling pupils to achieve above average standards in reading and mathematics.
- The national literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented very effectively.
- There are high standards of pupils' behaviour and they have very good attitudes to learning.
- It forms a very constructive partnership with parents and provides excellent information for them.
- It makes very good provision for pupils' social and moral development, happiness and welfare.

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

- Standards of attainment in art are below those expected nationally.
- The provision made for the foundation stage in the reception class is under-developed.
- The school's arrangements for the assessment of pupils under five are under-developed.
- The consistency of subject leaders' role in monitoring and evaluation could be improved further, so that all practice is at the level of the current best in the school.

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

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

There has been good improvement since the last inspection in April 1996. The school has ensured that all areas judged to be strong in 1996 have remained strong or improved further. Standards of attainment are similar to those found at the last inspection, despite the increase of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Over half of the key issues from that inspection were concerned with the need to improve teaching and learning which were judged to be satisfactory, overall, although nearly one lesson in every eight was unsatisfactory. The school has effectively made progress in relation to all key issues and teaching is now good, overall, with one lesson in five very good or excellent. Provision for both the more and less able pupils has improved. The implementation of both the literacy and numeracy strategies has been very effective. The quality of the curriculum, assessment procedures in Years 1 and 2 and the school's development planning have all improved. The significant improvements to the quality of the building have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning and the standards attained by pupils. Standards in religious education have improved, because of an improved curriculum and resources, but standards in art have declined.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	A	C	C
Writing	B	B	E	E
Mathematics	A	D	D	D

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

Despite the grades above, the school's attainment data show that in 2000 the number of pupils achieving level 2 and above in reading, writing and mathematics was consistently at the national average. There is considerable evidence that the Year 2 classes in 1999-2000 were significantly less able, having a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and many pupils who spent less than five terms in the school. Consequently, far fewer pupils than average attained level 3 in mathematics and writing particularly and this has led directly to the above grades. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress, as few pupils failed to reach level 2C. Most pupils at age five on entry to Key Stage 1 have not yet attained the early learning goals in the areas of literacy, numeracy and personal development, but they make impressive gains in their learning in Key Stage 1 as a result of good teaching. Consequently, standards of attainment, by the time pupils are in Year 2, are higher than the above grades would indicate, suggesting that test results will be higher in 2001. Inspection findings indicate that attainment in reading and mathematics is above average, while that for writing and science is average. Standards in most other subjects are at the level expected, except in religious education where standards are higher and art where standards are below those expected.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good and a strength of the school. Pupils are involved in and proud of their work and readily explain what they are doing. They work hard and conscientiously, even without direct adult supervision. Pupils use learning targets well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is very good and contributes well to pupils' achievements and the calm, ordered and welcoming feel of the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in the school are excellent and all pupils make visitors feel welcome. Adults act as very good role models and invest much time and effort into ensuring that pupils grow into mature and sensible citizens, able to take responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
Attendance	This is satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average. The school is rigorous in ensuring that there are valid reasons for absence.

Much of this area is a strength of the school, pupils are developing high self-esteem and are confident and happy. Pupils are increasingly and effectively involved in their own learning and the older pupils particularly are active participants in their targets for improvement. The adults in the school set a tone of high standards and mutual respect which pupils are happy to follow.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	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.*

There has been significant improvement in teaching and learning since the last inspection. Almost all teaching (96 per cent) is satisfactory or better. Over two thirds of all lessons (67 per cent) are good or better with more than one lesson in five (21 per cent) very good or excellent. Teaching is good in the nursery and in Years 1 and 2. Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory. The teaching assistants make a significant impact to the learning of those pupils who find learning difficult and who have English as an additional language. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching is due to insufficient teacher subject knowledge in one art lesson and inappropriate activities that impeded learning in one lesson in the reception class. The implementation of both the literacy and numeracy strategies has made a very effective contribution to pupils' learning. The best teaching is challenging, imaginative, creative and fun. There is now a strong emphasis on pupils being encouraged to investigate and develop their own ideas in a variety of subject areas.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good, overall. The curriculum is very secure in the nursery and in Years 1 and 2 where there is a suitably balanced range of subjects, with literacy and numeracy well represented. The curriculum in the reception class is less well developed, although satisfactory. Curriculum links between the reception class and the nursery are at an early stage and need to continue to develop.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Procedures for identifying need, setting targets and monitoring progress are very effective and pupils' progress is good. Pupils are very well supported by teachers who effectively plan work at an appropriate level. Teaching assistants are having a significant impact on the progress that pupils make. Parents are well informed and involved at all stages.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils' learning needs are effectively identified and they are well taught, attaining at broadly the same level as other pupils in the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good, overall, but that for moral development is excellent and social development is very good. Staff are excellent role models. Pupils are asked to reflect on the consequences of their behaviour and its impact on others. Social skills are effectively developed and used to enhance learning. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, but relatively under-developed in curriculum areas other than the daily assemblies, religious education and science.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care to ensure the welfare of its pupils. All areas of their health and welfare are taken seriously and all procedures are in place. Assessment has improved in Years 1 and 2 and is good, overall. Targets are well used with pupils to aid progress. Baseline assessment procedures in the reception class are unsatisfactory.



The very good partnership that the school has forged with parents continues to be a strength of the school. Parents have great confidence in the headteacher and the staff of the school. The information that the school provides for parents is excellent.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and a strength of the school. Development planning is very good. Other key staff, including the deputy headteacher and the core subject leaders are very effective and have a positive impact on teaching and standards. There has not been enough time for the early years leader to have sufficient impact on the new arrangements for the foundation stage. Subject leadership in the non-core subjects is developing well, although it is inconsistent.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive of the school. The chair is a very strong support for the headteacher. All statutory requirements are in place. The strategic role of the governors is developing well and all governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school very effectively monitors standards of attainment, the quality of its teaching and the outcome of development priorities. Arrangements for the subject leader monitoring of non-core subjects are informal and could be strengthened.
The strategic use of resources	The school very effectively prioritises its available funding on teaching staff and teaching assistants. This is having a significant impact on the quality of learning. Principles of best value are effectively in place.

The major developments in improving the quality of the school's accommodation since the last inspection have been very effective in improving provision for pupils. Accommodation is now very good and having a significant impact on the improvement in teaching. The level of staffing is appropriate and is well managed and effectively developed. Learning resources have increased and are well used.

## 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>• Their children enjoy going to school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and children are making progress.</li> <li>• The school is helping children to grow up sensibly and behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• The school has excellent leadership and management.</li> <li>• Staff are very approachable and the school works closely with parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More extra-curricular opportunities for Year 1 pupils.</li> <li>• Arrangements for parents' evenings.</li> </ul>

The inspection team strongly agrees with parents' positive views. The school is reviewing its extra-curricular provision for the younger pupils and has already introduced more choice in response to parents' concerns. The inspection team does not agree with the small amount of criticism of parents' evenings. Both the quality of information given to parents and the arrangements for giving that information are excellent.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards in relation to the national average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have broadly been maintained since the last inspection, despite the increase in the number of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. The school attained its lowest results ever in the national tests in 2000. However, when the school's results over the past three years are examined, together with the standards of pupils' work seen in the school during the inspection, the conclusion is that standards of attainment are above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing and science. Although the school's data from baseline assessment are ineffective, inspection evidence concludes that pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below average, with most pupils having not achieved the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by the time they are aged five. This represents good progress over time in English and mathematics and is due to the good and often better quality of teaching during Years 1 and 2 and the very effective implementation of both the national literacy and numeracy strategies.
2. The results of national tests in 2000 were lower than in any of the previous years. Results in reading, writing and mathematics indicated that the number of pupils attaining level 2 and above was broadly at the national average, with few pupils attaining below level 2. However, the number of pupils attaining level 3 was below the national average in mathematics and well below average in writing where no level 3 results were attained. This is consequently reflected in the comparative grades for 2000 displayed elsewhere in this report. Samples of writing test scripts for 2000 were scrutinised during the inspection and there is some evidence of under-assessment at level 3. There is also evidence that the Year 2 classes in 1999-2000 were significantly less able with a very high number having special educational needs and a significant number at stage 3 or above of the Code of Practice. In addition, a third of the year group transferred from other schools and had only five terms or less in the school. The school's targets were not fully met in 2000, but the outcomes were effectively evaluated. The school has set demanding targets for the further improvement of standards in the coming year and is generally making good progress towards their achievement. Observations of the standards of pupils' work in Year 2 indicate that test results are on line to improve and that higher attaining pupils are reaching appropriate standards. For example, with about three months to go before the 2001 national tests there is already an increased number of pupils in the top set in Year 2 whose attainments in reading, writing and number are well within level 3. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in any subject area. The pupils with special educational needs attain well in relation to their abilities, with few pupils attaining below level 2 at the end of Year 2. Their individual education plans have clear targets for improvement, particularly in areas such as writing and reading. There is evidence that they meet their targets well. Pupils who have English as an additional language attain broadly in line with their classmates.
3. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above the expectations for their age by the time they leave Year 2. The school finds effective ways of giving pupils opportunities to develop their skills and they show confidence in both small group and whole class contexts. Standards of attainment in reading are above average. The school's very effective implementation of the Literacy Hour has had a very positive effect on learning in reading for both boys and girls. Most of the youngest pupils have good phonic knowledge and can sound out unfamiliar words. The oldest pupils can read accurately and fluently, understanding how to create character when reading aloud. The most able pupils are reading demanding books unaided and are already able to deduce meaning from the text and make simple inferences from the general sense of the passage. Pupils' abilities to use dictionaries and non-fiction text are good and opportunities are effectively taken to develop the skills of using reference books in subjects other than English. The good quality school library is having a very positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of and attainment in reading.
4. The improvement of attainment in writing is a school development priority. Scrutiny of pupils' work, both in lesson observations and over a longer period, shows that standards of writing are broadly average across Years 1 and 2. The school's implementation of the Literacy Hour has ensured that

pupils experience a full range of types of writing, including non-fiction writing. The majority of pupils understand sentences and, most of the time, they can punctuate them appropriately. The most able pupils in Year 2 are increasingly able to modify their writing to appeal to the reader and are able to use some sophisticated grammatical constructions which enable them to write more complex sentences. In addition, some are beginning to paragraph their writing and are developing confidence with speech punctuation. Standards of literacy in other areas of the curriculum are in line with those found in English lessons. Standards of handwriting are generally high and the school has been successful with its policy of introducing joined handwriting from the beginning. Standards of presentation of work are satisfactory and often good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were too variable.

5. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that standards in mathematics, particularly number, are above average by the time pupils are aged seven. The school's implementation of the Numeracy Hour has made a significant contribution to higher than average standards and pupils show similar standards whenever in the curriculum they use their numeracy skills. Most pupils are confident in their understanding of the value of each digit in a number and, for many, this understanding extends to numbers beyond a hundred. Most pupils are also confident in using addition and subtraction and many are becoming adept at simple multiplication and division. Pupils are good at using and applying their knowledge of number very effectively to real life problems. They have good mental recall and can talk effectively about their thinking and describe strategies used. Standards of attainment in shape, space and measures are broadly average. Opportunities to use and apply this area of mathematics to problem solving are less well developed than those for number.
6. Standards of attainment in science are broadly at the national average. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils' knowledge is sound in all areas of science. For example, by Year 2, pupils can compare and contrast different plants, know key features of different groups and understand the function of key parts of plants. They know how to use insulating materials to muffle sound, which materials are magnetic and how water can be changed to ice.
7. Standards of attainment for other subjects are mostly in line with what is expected for pupils aged 7 years and the school has broadly maintained the standards found at the last inspection. Exceptions to this are religious education, information technology and art. Standards in religious education have improved since the last inspection and are now above average in relation to the locally agreed syllabus, as a result of improved curriculum provision, teaching and resources for learning. The school has made a major investment in resources, curriculum and teaching of information technology since the last inspection. National expectations as to appropriate standards have also risen considerably since the last inspection and the school's standards of attainment have kept pace with these advances in expectation. Standards of attainment in art have fallen since the last inspection, as there is insufficient emphasis on teaching the skills and techniques to a high enough level for pupils to produce work of appropriate standard.

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

8. Pupils have maintained the very good behaviour and attitudes reported in the last inspection and this area is a strength of the school. Many children enter the nursery class with immature skills in personal and social development. By the time they are five, there has been an increase in their personal and social skills, but many are not yet achieving the early learning goals. However, pupils make rapid progress in this area during the whole of Key Stage 1 and, by the time they leave the school, they have attained high standards in their attitudes and personal development. They happily come into school in the morning and quickly settle to their work. Pupils are proud of their work and readily explain what they are doing. In most lessons, they try hard and work conscientiously, even when they are not directly receiving adult support. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and readily follow their instructions.
9. Behaviour in all areas of school life is very good, with only the very occasional lapse. In assembly, pupils move in and out of the hall sensibly and sit quietly without fidgeting. During playtime, pupils play very well together, using the good range of play equipment supplied by the school. The very good behaviour in lessons contributes to the good achievement of the pupils. There is a very high degree of

racial harmony in the school, with pupils from different religions and ethnic groups all mixing happily. There have been no exclusions in the last year.

10. The school places great importance on developing pupils' independence and this is reflected in the pupils' ability to organise themselves in lessons. Pupils also work cooperatively in pairs and groups, helping each other to solve problems. For example, in a science lesson they worked in pairs, deciding whose bean was going to be watered and whose wasn't. The excellent relationships they have with each other and their teachers give them confidence to answer questions in whole class sessions and to "have a go" even if they are not sure of the answer.
11. The pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to their work and they behave very well both in class and in small groups. They try hard to complete their work and take a full part within activities.
12. Attendance is satisfactory and is broadly in line with the national average. However, unauthorised absence is high. The main reasons for unauthorised absence are non-notification of absence and the school's rigorous procedures for ensuring that there are valid reasons for authorised absence.

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

13. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall although over one lesson in eight was judged to be unsatisfactory and only one lesson in twenty was very good or excellent. Half of the key issues from the last inspection related to improving teaching and learning and the school has successfully invested much time and effort into that improvement.
14. Parents' confidence in the quality of teaching is well justified. The quality of the teaching is now good, overall, with over two thirds of all lessons (67 per cent) judged to be good or better and one lesson in five (21 per cent) very good or excellent. The quality of teaching is one of the strengths of the school and is having a significant impact on the quality of pupils' learning, standards of attainment, their very good attitudes to school and behaviour. Two lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory, although the amount of unsatisfactory teaching has decreased sharply since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is best in the nursery and in Years 1 and 2 where it is good, overall, in each year. The part-time teachers work together effectively in both Years 1 and 2 to ensure consistent high quality. Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory, overall, but sometimes limited by activities that are inappropriately stimulating for pupils so new to school.
15. The pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language are taught well. They receive support within lessons, with teaching assistants giving good quality help. The school and the "Friends of Shinfield Infant and Nursery School" have invested much in ensuring a high number of teaching assistants. These funds are well used and the teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning. They are well informed by teachers, work hard and are committed to improving standards. Extra help is provided in small groups on two days a week, where teaching assistants take small groups of pupils for more individualised work. The teaching in these small groups is always at least satisfactory and very often good.
16. Particularly notable among the strengths of the teaching are the excellent relationships between the pupils and all the staff in all nursery and Key Stage 1 classes. This greatly increases pupils' self-esteem and helps them to learn better. Teachers are very sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and treat all equally well. The teachers enjoy teaching and this enjoyment is infectious. As a result, almost all pupils love being in school and want to learn. There is now a strong emphasis in the school's teaching for encouraging pupils to investigate and develop their own ideas. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. This is seen not only in a variety of subjects from design and technology to science, but also in English and mathematics, where the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good, overall.
17. When teaching is excellent or very good it is challenging, imaginative, creative and fun. Amongst the best examples was an English lesson in a Year 2 class where the teacher was teaching narrative structure by skilful use of pupils' previous reading, artefacts, such as a pot and a wizard's costume and extremely demanding open-ended questions. The high quality of the pupils' thinking coupled with

effective teacher modelling of the writing enabled all pupils to create their own individual story structure which led to high quality writing. In a Year 1 science lesson, a highly enthusiastic class of pupils were learning the skills of investigation and were encouraged to pose their own questions. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils were highly enthusiastic, practising mental recall and talking about their calculation strategies by imagining different numbers of aliens from outer space appearing at the back of the class. Also in a design and technology lesson, pupils used the nursery rhyme 'Hickory Dickory Dock' as a stimulus to focus previous learning about cogs, levers and other mechanisms to design a mechanism to enable a model mouse to run up the clock. There is an effective emphasis on giving pupils in the nursery and reception classes appropriate practical activities, for example, weighing the guinea pig to understand the concept of mass. The emphasis on independent learning is also apparent in the nursery and not only in activities which are selected by the pupils themselves. In one of the teacher-led activities in the nursery, for example, pupils were exploring the properties of cylinders and the teacher's good questioning extended the pupils' first responses, so that they were able to describe simple observations, but make simple hypotheses as to what might happen next.

18. Teachers always plan well for each term's work and generally prepare thoroughly for lessons each day. In almost all lessons, the level of work is appropriate for the different levels of attainment within the classes and, in both the Year 2 sets and in the mixed ability Year 1 classes, the higher attaining pupils are effectively challenged. Teachers' planning is consistently good in the nursery class and pupils are effectively helped to understand what they have to learn. The pace of teaching in all parts of the school is generally brisk, but never too fast for pupils to learn effectively. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are often given time targets for tasks and teachers stick to them. A particular strength is the way that teachers not only share learning intentions with pupils using the acronym W.A.L.T (we are learning today), but also have a clear understanding of what successful work would look or sound like, thanks to the sharing of success criteria using another acronym H.W.I.K. (how will I know). These success criteria are generally well used during the lesson to ensure that pupils are learning effectively. They are also often well used at the end of the lesson to review progress in learning with pupils where oral feedback helps the teacher assess what learning has taken place and how the next lesson's planning needs to be modified. Pupils also have targets for their writing on a flap at the back of their books. While they are working they lift out the flap and have the target in front of them while working and as a help to self-correction at the end of the lesson and a prompt for effective teacher marking. Practice is particularly impressive in the Year 2 set for the most able pupils where pupils can talk in depth about their target and how effectively they are meeting it.
19. The teachers mainly have a good grasp of the subjects they are teaching. It is particularly strong in English and mathematics, although it is not as strong in art as it needs to be. This good teacher subject knowledge ensures effective questioning where teachers modify their questions to challenge the different attainment levels within the class. There is a very effective insistence, in many subjects, on the use of subject-specific vocabulary and this is well understood by pupils. Teachers are very effective in modelling specific techniques in the teaching of writing, in mathematical thinking and in design and technology, particularly. The climate for learning in the nursery is vibrant and exciting and actively engages pupils' interest and involvement. The teacher's understanding of the early learning goals is particularly strong in the nursery and many activities sensibly address goals from a variety of curriculum areas.
20. Most teachers have high expectations. They make it clear that work needs to be of a high standard and be presented well. They also expect pupils to behave well, to listen to each other and co-operate and collaborate at appropriate times. Teachers are sensitive and helpful when asking pupils to improve their work. They praise them for working hard, for behaving well and for meeting their personal targets. Pupils value the teachers' approval at least as much as they value the more tangible rewards the school offers.
21. Homework is set regularly and is appropriate for the ages of the pupils. It supports the work of the school, encourages pupils to be independent learners and helps to raise standards. Parents are generally very supportive of the school's homework policy.
22. A very small amount of teaching is unsatisfactory. This is due principally to a teacher's inadequate subject knowledge in one art lesson and to a lesson in the reception class where learning was

impeded by inappropriate learning activities. In this lesson, only the group of pupils working directly with the teacher were effectively engaged in learning.

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

23. The school provides a good broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for nearly all of its pupils. This is a more secure picture than at the time of the last inspection where the curriculum was broadly satisfactory. Improvements have been made to the school's planning for most subjects with a greater emphasis on the development of investigative skills. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have also been introduced very effectively since the last inspection. The curriculum for pupils in the nursery is good and very secure in Years 1 and 2. The quality of the curriculum for pupils in the reception class, although broadly satisfactory, is less well developed and planned activities sometimes restrict learning. Links between the reception class and the nursery to ensure coherent Foundation Stage planning are developing and need to continue.
24. Each subject in the National Curriculum has an appropriate teaching time, with more time spent on teaching language skills in line with the school's priorities for pupils' learning. The statutory requirements of all the subjects in the National Curriculum are met. Health education, including guidance on sex and drug education, is covered as topics occur naturally within subject work and personal social education programmes. Teachers' planning is good, overall, and very good in English and mathematics, where the literacy and numeracy hours have been very effectively developed. For all subjects except art, teachers have clear guidance about teaching. This enables clear, step by step progression to enhance the pupils' learning. Curriculum planning has yet to set out fully how children will develop art skills.
25. There are good opportunities for the pupils to benefit from additional activities to extend the curriculum. There are regular visits to the local church. Pupils have worked with local businesses where the school choir has performed. A day is planned where all the school is visiting the local leisure centre to take part in 'healthy' activities. Other pupils have visited their local supermarket as part of work in numeracy. The school also has a number of visitors, such as the Young Musicians Trust and a local theatre group. Individual 'special' days, such as a Victorian day and world book day are celebrated regularly and have significant impacts on learning. A number of charities are supported throughout the year, such as the National Children's Home, and local community events are supported well. All of these experiences enhance pupils' understanding of the world and give a wider perspective to their learning. There are sound curriculum links with the junior school.
26. The school has adopted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and their implementation is consistently very good throughout the school. This is having a very positive effect on raising pupils' attainment. The school has been chosen by the LEA to receive additional help and support in further implementing these strategies, which is also having a positive effect. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Boys and girls work and play together very well and both sexes have the same opportunities in all lessons, including games and physical education. During the inspection, no evidence of any difference in progress between boys and girls was seen.
27. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The process for identifying needs and the quality of support is good. Pupils are supported well in class by teaching assistants and other specialist helpers. The school has an inclusive approach and provides well for pupils who have English as an additional language and the traveller pupils. They are supported well by a class assistant and visiting teacher.
28. The provision of extra curricular education is good. Some activities, such as the French club, take place during the lunchtime. Provision for after school activities is constrained since many pupils cannot stay because they have to take the bus home. Pupils are enthusiastic about activities such as recorder club and choir. These are limited to Year 2 pupils and many parents would value their extension to cover Year 1 pupils. The school is investigating extending provision involving adults other than teachers.

29. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual moral and social and cultural development is good overall and those aspects that were strong at the last inspection remain so. Aspects such as moral and social development are very strong features. Pupils' spiritual awareness is developed satisfactorily.
30. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The daily assemblies held in the school give opportunities for pupils to reflect and learn about the views of others. Pupils listen very well to the teachers who are leading assembly. They enjoy the stories and are keen to contribute. Shrove Tuesday enabled the theme of forgiveness to be shared in a humorous, but thoughtful way by the Headteacher. The singing of songs from memory contributes effectively in providing a sense of fun and a good link with the theme of the day. Within class lessons, the opportunities to develop pupils' spirituality are less effectively highlighted or developed. An exception was a science lesson in Year 2, which provided some pupils with time to reflect about how different things grow.
31. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. All staff provide very good role models in the way they treat each other and they promote excellent understanding of moral issues. Pupils are asked to reflect on the consequences of their behaviour and the impact it has on others. This is carried out in a low key, but highly effective way. Pupils can readily tell what they are allowed and not allowed to do and the need to treat everyone with respect. A very good system of rewards, combined with seldom used, but effective, sanctions, promotes very strong moral development. Daily assemblies are used well to emphasise Christian values as well as the importance of the school as a community.
32. The development of pupils' social skills is very strong within the school. Pupils are encouraged to work and play together very well both in and out of classrooms. This is often reflected in the way pupils share equipment and apparatus and engage in group-work activities in a variety of subjects. Very good examples were seen within lessons, where pupils worked together in social or attainment groups to complete work. This was particularly good in a physical education lesson in Year 2 where pupils worked very well in small groups to improve their standards of throwing and passing skills. At lunchtimes, in the dining hall, pupils sit together in groups, where the best table has a vase of flowers in recognition of its success. Each table also has a pupil called a 'food friend' who helps other pupils and aids the smooth running of lunchtime arrangements. Older pupils also show visitors around the school in a structured way and they recently hosted a grandparent's day.
33. The overall provision for pupils' cultural development is good. They learn to play the recorder and sing in the school choir. This is extended to learning French for some pupils. The school has been visited by a number of groups such as musicians, and theatre groups. Good work on a Tapestry supported the local community art week. Visits to local country parks, churches and involvement in the Village May Day celebrations all contribute effectively to pupils' awareness. Pupils are effectively encouraged to participate fully in World Book Day. Pupils' multicultural development is promoted appropriately through assemblies where other faiths are explored and festivals such as Chinese New Year and Divali. The school has also had visitors such as parents sharing their experiences of Jewish and Hindu faiths. Within lessons, opportunities are developed appropriately to become aware of other countries, for example exploring features of African masks in art and design.

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

34. The school has very good procedures for ensuring the welfare of the pupils and they are even better than was reported in the last inspection.
35. The very good knowledge teachers have of their pupils and the strong, positive ethos of the school underpins the care the staff show. For example, on World Book Day, teachers and teaching assistants made a point of ensuring that those pupils who were not dressed as a character from a book were nevertheless fully included in all the activities. A very good behaviour and anti-bullying policy promote positive behaviour through a sensible reward system. Sanctions are rarely needed as pupils are keen to please their teachers. Parents report that staff very effectively deal with any minor incidents before they have time to grow. They also have confidence that the headteacher would deal effectively with any more serious problems. The school's procedures for monitoring attendance are good. The school closely monitors attendance and investigates all unexplained absences. Punctuality during the week of the inspection was good, but parents report that heavy traffic can, periodically, cause lateness to the buses from Reading.



36. Child protection procedures are in place and are effective. The headteacher is the designated member of staff responsible for child protection and has recently been trained. She ensures that all staff are aware of what they should do if they have any concerns. The school has adopted the Local Authority Health and Safety policy, which the school governors review annually. Supervision of pupils during lunchtime is very good. Individual class teachers have good records of pupils' particular needs, such as allergies to certain products or drugs.
37. The procedures for monitoring and assessing of pupils' academic progress are good, overall, but best in Years 1 and 2 where they are very good and enable teachers to ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' needs. In Years 1 and 2, there are well-developed systems which allow teachers to record, in detail, the progress of pupils. This is particularly true in English, mathematics and science where each pupil's progress is assessed in relation to National Curriculum levels. This has been extended to other subjects and provides clear evidence for teachers to judge how pupils are progressing. It is supplemented by the use of tests that identify difficulties at an early stage. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
38. The school has introduced individual targets for pupils in English and many pupils successfully refer to them when completing their work. It is impressive that pupils in Year 2 know their targets well and are clear how they can be attained. Whole school target setting is well developed and is leading to improvements in pupils' attainment in English. Teachers use a range of information to set appropriate targets for individuals, particularly older pupils, and the information gathered is used effectively to inform the annual report to parents. Practice could be improved by the use of wall displays that highlight progression in targets so that more able pupils could see the next steps to be taken.
39. The quality of assessment in the foundation stage is not effective, overall. An entry profile is completed at the start of a pupils' time in nursery. Whereas it is useful to the nursery staff and helps them plan appropriately for pupils while they are in the nursery, it is not integrated with the school's assessment system, does not effectively track progress through the nursery and is too limited to be used as an effective initial assessment to help determine the degree of progress that pupils make during their time in school. When pupils enter the reception class or Year 1, in the term after they are five years old, the school has recently begun to administer a baseline assessment procedure recommended by the local authority. This is not related to the entry profile for the nursery. The baseline assessment is also not effectively administered and, therefore, the data generated are not useful for the school. During the inspection, the results of baseline assessment conducted a month earlier were compared with observations of the same pupils in the reception class. This observation showed that pupils' attainments on entry to the school are over-estimated by the assessment used. Consequently, the teaching staff rightly mistrust the resultant data and it is not effective in enabling teachers to plan appropriately for pupils' learning needs. Ensuring effective baseline assessment procedures, deriving useful data from the assessments, integrating procedures in the nursery and reception classes and using the data effectively to guide teaching are crucial to the further development of the Foundation Stage in the school.
40. Pupils who have English as an additional language are very well supported. The pupils with special educational needs have full, detailed and effective records. These include individual educational plans with clear focused targets, in addition to the same range of targets available to all pupils.

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

41. The very good partnership the school has forged with parents continues to be a considerable strength. Parents are very supportive of the school and consider the quality of teaching is high. Parents have great confidence in the headteacher who they feel effectively leads the school with great skill.
42. The school provides excellent information for parents. The annual reports provide parents with clear information about what their children know and understand in all areas of the curriculum. In addition, targets are set for children to work towards in English and mathematics. The management of the school is highly responsive to parents' feedback. As a result of parental opinion about the pattern of parents' evenings, there are now three parents' evenings a year and the timing of the issuing of reports for pupils in years one and two has been changed this year to February. This is to give pupils time to

work towards the targets identified in the reports. Reception pupils' parents receive a report in July. Nursery staff make home visits before the child starts at the nursery and have meetings with the parents during the first term and before the child begins school. In addition, parents know that they can request an appointment at any time.

43. Information about what pupils are learning is also excellent. Newsletters identify topics that pupils will be studying. The school holds occasional meetings and workshops to enable parents to have a better understanding of how their children are taught. Most recently there has been an evening to explain the numeracy strategy. The draft prospectus is exemplary giving prospective parents very clear information about the school. Parents are kept up to date about the life of the school through the headteacher's frequent newsletters. The report to parents from the governing body is very informative and effective.
44. Parental involvement in the school is very strong. The school encourages parents to help in classes which has resulted in many parents helping with a range of activities, including playing maths games with the pupils and helping them cook. They also help with mending library books. In addition, "The Friends of Shinfield Infant and Nursery School" is a very active organisation that raises considerable funds for the school. The "Friends" pay the salary of one teaching assistant every year and give each teacher £100 to spend on resources for their classes. They have also contributed to the cost of climbing equipment that the school has ordered for the nursery.
45. Parents of pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language regularly meet teachers to review the progress their children have made in relation to their targets. These close links are effective in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs make gains in their learning and attain as high as possible.

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

46. Since the last inspection, the strengths of the leadership and management of the school have been maintained and further improvements have been secured. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and a strength of the school. Her drive and determination greatly enhance the quality of education that the school offers and she is well focused on improving standards of pupils' achievements. The school has clearly defined aims which are effectively used to guide its work and which are clearly being met. The overall quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and most other key staff is very good and is reflected in the progress that has been made since the last inspection. The team spirit is impressive and involves all who work in the school and not just the teaching staff. The clear direction of the school is very strong. The impact of this can be seen in the overall ethos of the school, the excellent relationships, the very good parental involvement, the development of the quality of teaching since the last inspection and the commitment to improving standards of attainment. The school clearly has the capacity to continue to improve. There is a very positive attitude to promoting equal opportunities and equal access for all pupils through the curriculum and the good quality teaching. Over half of all pupils come from outside the village of Shinfield and an increasingly large number come from a particularly deprived part of a neighbouring town outside the local education authority. Feedback from parents and observations during the inspection show that the headteacher has the total confidence of all parents who know and understand her vision for the future of the school.
47. The quality of the professional relationship between the headteacher and her deputy is strong and has had a very positive effect on the improvements made in the quality of education in general. The deputy is currently working part-time and will shortly be leaving the school. The appointment of an early years leader, to co-ordinate effort towards the development of a coherent foundation stage with younger pupils in the reception class from September 2001, is relatively new. This area is a development priority for the school. Although the teacher concerned is making a significant impact in the nursery, there is, as yet, little evidence of effective impact of the role across the whole of the foundation stage.
48. The governing body works hard and is very supportive of the changes that have been made by the headteacher since the last inspection. The chair, particularly, is in school regularly and is a very strong support for the headteacher. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities very effectively through a range of appropriate committees that meet regularly. The strategic role of the governors is developing well and they are very well informed and knowledgeable about the strengths

and weaknesses of the school. The headteacher has been very effective as the professional adviser to the governing body, but it is not over-dependent on her as it currently debates the issues of whether to appoint a new deputy headteacher, the effects on the school of reducing class sizes to 30 in Year 1 and the costs and consequences for the school of taking younger pupils into the reception class from September 2001. Some individual governors regularly support work in classrooms, but more formal involvement in the quality of the curriculum and the work of subject leaders is at an early stage. Some governors have worked with senior staff to sample pupils' work at different attainment levels as well as the "All About Me" books which exemplify progress. A few governors have observed literacy lessons and reported back to the governing body. Although this is at an early stage, the governing body does have a clear view of the quality of teaching in the school and is very confident that pupils' test results will be significantly higher in the summer of 2001.

49. Structures for development planning have improved significantly since the last inspection. The school's development plan has been used as a model of good practice by the local education authority. All staff and governors are effectively involved in its construction and in the evaluation of the outcomes of developments. The development priorities are manageable and appropriate and include demanding targets for improving pupils' attainments. Development targets are effectively related to the budget and evaluation processes are rigorous. The headteacher has a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The quality of the curriculum, the standards of pupils' work and the progress they make over time are all effectively evaluated and the outcomes shared with staff and governors. Her monitoring and evaluation of teaching is very good. The number and qualifications of staff are appropriate and their induction and professional development are well addressed. The school has always appraised staff well and these procedures have been effectively adapted in the light of new systems for performance management.
50. Subject leadership is developing well and is best in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and ICT where it is good, overall, and the further development of teaching is well supported. It is never less than satisfactory in other subjects, although a greater focus on monitoring teachers' planning, assessments and standards of pupils' work in the non-core subjects is needed. The further improvement of subject leadership forms one of the headteacher's performance management targets. The co-ordination of special educational needs (SEN) provision is good. The SEN Code of Practice is fully implemented and there are effective procedures in place for the early identification of pupils with particular special needs and progress towards the achievement of individual targets is good. The SEN co-ordinator works closely with other teachers and teaching assistants are full members of the team and very well managed.
51. The quality of the school's accommodation was heavily criticised in the last inspection. There have been considerable improvements since then, involving the creation of some new classrooms, a new hall and extra office and meeting rooms within the roof space. This has created a very good learning environment which is excellently used and valued by staff, pupils and parents alike. The improvements in the accommodation have had a positive impact on the improvement of teaching and learning. The computer suite and library are both attractive resources that are used well to enhance learning. This is set to continue, with improvements underway to the outdoor play area near the reception class and the improvement of access between the nursery and the reception class. The level of learning resources is good, overall, although more tuned percussion instruments are needed for music teaching. The school's financial planning is very good and the governing body's finance committee is highly effective in ensuring that finance is effectively targeted to development priorities. The school's funding reserve is targeted for the appointment of a full time deputy headteacher when the current deputy leaves. Principles of best value are in place. The school does not confuse cheapness with financial effectiveness and evaluates the impact of spending effectively. For example, the school's spending on teaching assistants is higher than average. The management of the school and the governing body are rigorous in ensuring that they have an appropriate impact on pupils' learning. Good use is made of the standards fund and other specific grants, including funds to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The chair of the finance committee works in close partnership with the school's administrative officer and spending is effectively controlled from week to week. The administration of the school is making sound use of new technology.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. To improve provision for pupils and raise standards of achievement, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

**i. Improve the standards of pupils' attainment in art by:**

- setting out clear exemplification of what appropriate standards look like in all parts of the subject;
- setting out in the planning for the subject the steps by which pupils make progress in subject specific skills;
- ensuring that teachers develop sufficient subject knowledge to teach skills effectively and enable pupils to attain high standards.

(Paragraphs 89, 90, 91, 92)

**ii. Improve the provision made for the Foundation Stage in the reception class as part of the school's preparation for its first intake of pupils under five into that class by:**

- reviewing the job description and ensuring effective professional development for the early years leader;
- ensuring that the curriculum for the reception class is coherently linked to that of the nursery in terms of
  - a. content;
  - b. learning activities;
  - c. teaching methodologies;
  - d. resources.

(Paragraphs 22, 23, 47, 54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 62, 69)

**iii. Improve assessment practice in the Foundation Stage as part of the school's preparation for its first intake of pupils under five into the reception class by:**

- reviewing the nursery entry profile and ensuring that it is effective in tracking pupils' progress through the nursery;
- ensuring that there are effective links between the nursery entry profile and baseline assessment in the reception class;
- ensuring effective procedures for baseline assessment in the reception class which provide an accurate measure of attainment on entry to reception and which can be used
  - a. to plan effective learning activities for individuals
  - b. as a baseline from which to measure pupils' progress both at the end of reception and at the end of Key Stage 1.

(Paragraphs 39, 55)

**iv. Improve the consistency of subject leaders' monitoring and evaluative role in non-core subjects, so that all practice is at the level of the current best within the school by:**

- developing procedures in each subject for systematically monitoring the quality of teachers' planning, pupils' learning and standards of pupils' work;
- evaluating the outcomes of monitoring to ensure the further development of the subject.

(Paragraphs 50, 92, 100, 104, 113, 118, 122 )

## **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Improve resources for the teaching of music (paragraph 112).
- Review the quality of computers in classrooms to enable ICT to be more effectively linked to other subjects in the classroom (paragraphs 107, 108, 109).
- Increase the planned opportunities for pupils' spiritual development across the curriculum (paragraph 30).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	17	46	29	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	168
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	37

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.47	School data	0.82
National comparative data	5.9	National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	32	31	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	25	29
	Girls	28	29	29
	Total	54	54	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (87)	86 (93)	93 (87)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	29	30
	Girls	29	29	28
	Total	55	58	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (85)	92 (87)	92 (99)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	116
Any other minority ethnic group	13

*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 – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5
Average class size	23.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	141

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.6
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	332,719
Total expenditure	334,624
Expenditure per pupil	1,880
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,524
Balance carried forward to next year	23,622



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	194
Number of questionnaires returned	69

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	0	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	41	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	44	2	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	58	5	0	5
The teaching is good.	68	32	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	48	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	27	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	26	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	47	42	6	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	70	30	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	29	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	38	12	5	17

## **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**

53. The good standard of provision made for pupils in the nursery has been maintained since the previous inspection, even though there have been many changes to manage. Provision for pupils in the reception class is less secure, but is satisfactory, overall. The school's policy has been to take pupils into the infant school in the term only after they have reached their fifth birthday. Autumn term entrants have gone directly into Year 1 while Spring and Summer entrants have spent one or two terms in the reception class. Pupils in the reception class at the time of the inspection were already aged five and had been in school for just over a month. Local authority policy is changing to one of taking pupils into the reception class in the term before they are five and the school will be admitting younger pupils into the reception class as rising fives from September 2001. The further development of the Foundation Stage is one of the priorities for the school.
54. The staff in both classes have worked well together to begin to establish appropriate strategies for teaching the new Foundation Stage curriculum. The school reports that very little training has been available to them locally and this has resulted in some weaknesses in the design of the curriculum for the reception class. The school has wisely arranged opportunities for staff to visit other local foundation stage settings in other schools and the school development plan highlights the need to develop curriculum planning so that there is a closer match to the early learning goals. Parents remain strongly committed to supporting the nursery class, giving a great deal of time and financial support. A new climbing frame will soon be erected in the secure area outside the nursery class, providing much needed facilities for children to develop physical skills. The local authority is making alterations to the building to enable the nursery to have a closer physical link with the reception class.
55. The early years co-ordinator has worked hard to secure these improvements and has already begun to review the curriculum. However, her role as leader of the Foundation Stage is at an early stage of development and is not yet having sufficient impact on ensuring that children throughout the foundation stage have opportunities to work at activities that are suitable for their levels of experience and attainment. The entry profile in the nursery is useful to the nursery staff, but is insufficient as a baseline assessment and could be better integrated into both the assessment practices in reception and the school's generally good assessment system. The use of the local authority recommended baseline assessment procedures in the reception class is not currently providing the school with secure and rigorous information when pupils enter the school. Consequently there is no clear picture of the needs of all the pupils. This is particularly important since children begin the reception class with very different pre-school experiences and levels of attainment. The curriculum that is planned is good in the nursery. In reception, it is satisfactory, but not matched closely enough to children's needs and pupils sometimes work at activities that are too restrictive.
56. Although some children have good skills in language development when they begin nursery, many find it difficult to talk confidently and to listen with concentration. Story sack activities of role play material linked to books, are well planned in the nursery. In mathematics, whilst some children can count when they begin, few understand how numbers work. There is a similar difference in children's personal and social skills, with many children finding it difficult to share or to use their own initiative. Many pupils enter the reception class or Year 1 without having previously attended the nursery. Those pupils who do attend the nursery achieve well and make a good start to their schooling when they enter the infant school. The attainment on entry to the reception class or to Year 1 is very mixed, but below average, overall.

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

57. Many children enter the nursery class with immature skills in personal and social development. By the time they are aged five, they have developed their skills further, but most are still not achieving the early learning goals. There is a strong emphasis on personal and social development right from the start. In the nursery, activities are organised well so that children have plenty of opportunities to work

with adults and plenty of chances to work at activities they chose themselves. Through this good organisation they are gaining confidence. Games play a strong part, with many opportunities to learn how to take turns and follow rules with an adult. In both classes, children learn how to play together, but many are not yet aware of the needs of other children. The veterinary surgery in the reception class is a hub of social activity in the afternoon, with children enthusiastically making appointments and bringing their 'animals' to see the vet.

58. All the adults provide good role models for the children. The good relationships and sensitive support that are provided help children to develop self-esteem and independence.

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

59. In both the nursery and reception class children enjoy listening to stories and poems. Some children recognise and name letters, most recognise their own name. In both classes, a few children are able to read some words. Nevertheless, by the time pupils are aged five, most have not achieved the early learning goals in this area. Many of the children find it difficult to use talk to explain what they are thinking or feeling, or to share their ideas clearly. There is good provision made for the development of communication skills in the nursery with emphasis on collaborative play often aided by an adult. Opportunities to develop confidence in talking are sometimes missed in the reception class.
60. In both classes, there are many activities to help children to recognise and remember the name and sound of letters of the alphabet. In the nursery, children make the shapes of letters with plasticine and trace letters in sand. In the reception class, children have regular opportunities to copy the teacher's writing. Children, playing in the veterinary surgery, busily use the paper and pens to write out appointments and to make notes about the animals. Their play writing shows that some children are able to write letters independently. However, there are not enough planned activities in the reception class to encourage children to write in this way.

### **Mathematical development**

61. Children in both classes have lots of opportunities for counting and recognising numbers, but most pupils in the reception class do not understand the mathematical language that is expected in this area. By the time pupils are aged five, most have not achieved the early learning goals in this area. Children in the nursery are entranced when they weigh Millie the guinea pig with their teacher, estimating and counting the number of books it will take to balance Millie on the scales. In the reception class, children learn to count on by taking it in turns to stand on a huge number line and stepping forward to count on. A few children are able to count on to twenty, but sometimes they copy larger numbers without knowing what the number represents. At the beginning of mathematics lessons, children in the reception class use number paddles competently to count on in ones.
62. Some mathematical activities in the reception class are restrictive, with children expected to work out sums before they understand what addition and subtraction mean. This limits their enthusiasm as they become frustrated when they don't understand what to do. On Shrove Tuesday some children in the nursery enthusiastically weighed out the ingredients for pancakes. They used small plastic teddy bears as weights, counting out the right number to balance the flour.

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

63. There are plenty of good opportunities for children to extend their general knowledge in both classes and, by the time they are aged five, most children will have reached the early learning goals in this area. In the nursery, the theme for the week was guinea pigs. This requires the children to take part in a range of exciting activities, including caring for the guinea pigs and building a hutch with boxes and glue. Baking is a regular activity, with both pancakes and biscuits being made during the week. Children often choose to build vehicles with the construction sets. On one day, most were flying vehicles of one sort or another that were a vital part of an imaginative game.
64. In the reception class, the theme was night and day and children enthusiastically explored a range of sources of light, with many knowing the difference between natural and artificial light. In both classes, children use the computer independently to aid learning.

## **Physical development**

65. In spite of some limitations in the equipment that is available, most children achieve the early learning goals by the time they are aged five. The outdoor area, linked to the nursery, is used at playtime with all the adults guiding the children in their use of the large play equipment. Balancing and climbing are limited at the moment due to lack of resources. However, a new climbing frame has been ordered and will soon be erected, bringing much needed improvement in the equipment. The area outside the reception class is used appropriately for structured lessons, with children making good use of the painted circles to control their movement. For example, they try to throw their bean bags into the inner circle when standing on the outer ring. Children in the reception class use the hall for appropriate physical education activities.
66. Within the classrooms, there are plenty of opportunities to develop smaller physical skills. Cutting and drawing are regular activities and most children learn how to control tools competently by the time they leave the reception class.

## **Creative development**

67. The exciting range of activities available in the nursery makes an effective contribution to children's development in this area. By the time that children are aged five most have achieved the early learning goals, although children's lack of confidence and limited language skills sometimes impede imaginative play.
68. In the nursery, adults often dress up to lead activities, putting on hats to take on different roles in the pet shop. Children use clay to make models of Millie the guinea pig, observing closely where to place her whiskers. Those children playing with the farm use their imagination to create a game and others call instructions to one another as they build models with the construction kits. In the reception class, children dress up and use puppets to enhance their games in the veterinary surgery and use several different voices to show who they are. They use coloured chalks to make bright pictures of night and day scenes.
69. The outdoor spaces beside the nursery and reception classes are not used well to promote creative development. Use by the nursery is too limited and the reception area has no outdoor equipment to encourage creative development. Improvements to this aspect of the reception class provision are already in hand.

## **ENGLISH**

70. Results of the 2000 national tests in reading indicate that standards of attainment are broadly at the national average. Standards in writing are at the national average for the percentage of level 2 and above results, but no pupils attained level 3. Consequently the average points score for writing in 2000 is well below average. These results were the worst results the school has attained recently. However, the school has considerable evidence that despite these results, pupils made at least sound progress. The Year 2 cohort in 2000 were significantly less able than in other years as over half the group had special educational needs. Writing test papers from 2000 were scrutinised during the inspection and there is evidence that a small number of level 3 samples were under-assessed. Results over the previous three years, including 2000, indicate that standards of attainment in reading are above the national average and standards of writing are broadly average. During the inspection, scrutiny of both pupils' current class work and past work shows that standards are in line with this three year average. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection and there have been significant improvements made to the curriculum, teaching and resources with the implementation of the literacy hour. Ethnic minority pupils attain standards in line with their classmates and boys and girls attain equally well.
71. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is above the expectations for their age by the time they leave Year 2. The school finds effective ways of giving pupils opportunities to develop their skills and they show confidence in both small group and whole class contexts. Pupils in all literacy lessons are

keen to discuss the characters in the stories they read together, expressing ideas logically and clearly, using, by Year 2, a comprehensive vocabulary. Teachers' good and often very good questioning in the literacy hour from Year 1 onwards encourages pupils to answer for themselves, discuss with classmates and express their own opinions. In one Year 1 class, pupils restructure their spoken news item to make it more interesting for the listener. By the time they are in Year 2, very many can confidently justify opinions with reasons and develop their own ideas in response to others' comments. The provision made in other subjects, such as mathematics, for pupils to explain their thinking makes a solid contribution to their speaking and listening attainment. Teaching assistants are also skilled in asking questions and encouraging pupils to articulate their thoughts. The school is working to further improve provision for speaking and listening. However, whole school events, such as the school's celebration of World Book Day, indicate that progression in speaking and listening is secure.

72. Standards of attainment in reading are above average at the end of Year 2. The school's very effective implementation of the Literacy Hour has had a very positive effect on learning in reading for both boys and girls. Most of the youngest pupils have good phonic knowledge and can sound out unfamiliar words. The oldest pupils can read accurately and fluently, understanding how to create character when reading aloud. The most able pupils are reading demanding books unaided and are already able to deduce meaning from the text and make simple inferences from the general sense of the passage. Pupils' abilities to use dictionaries and non-fiction text are good and opportunities are effectively taken to develop the skills of using reference books in subjects other than English. This was particularly effective in religious education and geography. The school has identified that more non-fiction big-books are needed, as well as increased resources for the more able pupils. The good quality school library is having a very positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of and attainment in reading.
73. The further improvement of attainment in writing is a school development priority. Scrutiny of pupils' work, both in lesson observations and over a longer period, shows that standards of writing are broadly average across Years 1 and 2. The school's very effective implementation of the Literacy Hour has ensured that pupils experience a full range of types of writing including non-fiction writing. In one class, however, there is too great a concentration on handwriting practice at the expense of more demanding learning activities. There have been significant improvements in the teaching of shared and guided writing across the school. Shared writing, with the teacher modelling skills for pupils is having a significant impact on pupils' learning. The majority of pupils understand sentences and most of the time they can punctuate them appropriately. The most able pupils in Year 2 are increasingly able to modify their writing to appeal to the reader and are able to use some sophisticated grammatical constructions which enable them to write more complex sentences. In addition, some are beginning to paragraph their writing and are developing confidence with speech punctuation. This was seen very effectively in a Year 2 class when pupils were writing their own traditional story in response to the week's reading. Standards of spelling are broadly sound. Standards of handwriting are generally high and the school has been successful with its policy of introducing joined handwriting from the beginning. Standards of presentation of work are satisfactory and often good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were too variable.
74. The quality of teaching in English is good overall with half of all lessons seen very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching in English was seen. Teachers transmit a real enthusiasm for English to pupils, for example, in a Year 2 lesson developing narrative writing. The teacher was so enthusiastic about the ideas pupils generated and her own efforts in modelling writing for pupils that they couldn't wait to get to the tables and begin. Planning for the literacy hour is thorough and incorporates the appropriate teaching objectives. An extremely positive feature of the teaching is the way learning intentions are shared with pupils and there are also clear success criteria given, so that they know how good work can be demonstrated. Most teachers' have good levels of subject knowledge and questioning skills are good, especially when questions are adapted for the different attainment groups within the class. Marking of work is effective and assessment and target setting practices are good. Teachers have a very clear understanding of individual pupils' current attainment. In all lessons seen, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported, often by good quality teaching assistants. Pupils use computers successfully to develop sentence skills. Homework is well used to give pupils opportunities to apply and develop their skills.

75. The headteacher has taken the role of subject leader and is leading the subject well. The curriculum is good, overall. There are good assessment procedures, with individual target setting beginning to have a major impact on learning. The quality of provision and pupils' standards of attainment are effectively monitored, evaluated and used to plan improvements. Developments in improving provision for writing are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. There has been an effective audit of resources and gaps have been identified which are now being addressed.

## MATHEMATICS

76. Results of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in the summer of 2000, based on the average points score, were just below the national average. However, there is clear evidence that the Year 2 cohort in 2000 achieved well in relation to their prior attainment. For example, 92% of pupils achieved at least level 2 and this is in line with the national average. The number of pupils attaining level 3 was much lower than average as over half of the year group had special educational needs. Consequently, this lowered the average points score in mathematics to being below average. This is a similar picture to that in the previous year. Inspection evidence shows, however, that the very effective implementation of the numeracy strategy has ensured that standards in mathematics have significantly improved, with pupils in each of the three attainment sets achieving well. Standards seen in lessons and in the pupils' work are above average. There is every indication that results in 2001 will be higher than 2000 as many pupils are already achieving level 3 in number work.
77. Standards are improving, mainly due to the very effective way the school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy, combined with good teaching. Most of the good practice reported in the last inspection has been maintained and the quality of teaching has improved significantly. The strong focus on teaching pupils how to use mathematics in real situations is giving children of all abilities great confidence in understanding mathematics.
78. By the age of seven, all pupils are good at solving number problems. They tackle these enthusiastically, often working well in small groups or pairs. They work out the best way to solve the problem, jot down notes and test ideas. For example, more able pupils in Year 2 were testing out a series of statements to decide if they were true or false. They talked together to decide the best way to go about finding out. They soon realised that they could reduce the number of sums they needed to do before they could say whether or not the statement was true. Pairs of children, trying to find out if it is true that *if a number is multiplied by 3 the sum of the digits will always be 3, 6 or 9* worked quickly in their heads, using a secure knowledge of multiplication tables, addition and mathematical vocabulary, jotting down the answers to see if there was a pattern. The very able pupils who completed this work before the end of the lesson were given a further challenge to write their own statement. This caused great excitement as they happily tried to work out how best to do it.
79. Pupils' work on shape, space and measures is at about the level expected by the age of seven. Although pupils' achievements are satisfactory in these areas of the curriculum, they are not as good as achievements in using and applying numbers. This is mainly because pupils do not have nearly as many opportunities to work on these topics.
80. The quality of teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and only one lesson was of less than good quality. Examples of very good and excellent teaching were also observed. The pupils' outstanding response in the best lesson was electric. Pupils in Year 1 were beside themselves with enthusiasm as the teacher skilfully set challenging questions. For example, the pupils were asked to look behind them and imagine that 5 aliens were standing there. When they looked again a second later another 4 had arrived! One pupil could then go out to the front of the class and write the sum on the whiteboard. The teacher was very clear that she didn't want to know the answer, but how they would write the sum. Almost all the children were desperate to be chosen, some were supported well by teaching assistants who helped them to work it out. The effective features of this lesson were mirrored in almost all the lessons seen. Teachers challenge pupils well through good questioning, making them think about numbers and how they work. The pace of lessons is usually good with very little time wasted and, as a result, pupils work hard.
81. Information and communication technology is used well to support the numeracy hour. Sometimes, pupils use the computers to play games which are testing their knowledge of tables. Teaching

assistants make notes which are added to the half termly assessments that are made in each class. The results of assessment are used well to guide future planning, for example the setting by prior attainment in Year 2.

82. The setting arrangements are having a positive impact on raising standards of attainment still further. Within each of the three sets teachers adapt the curriculum well, so that even the most able pupils are stretched and challenged and those that find mathematics very difficult have good support. This, combined with the positive attitude of all the staff to the numeracy strategy and the good leadership of the mathematics subject leader, means that the school is well placed to make even more improvements in mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

83. Standards of attainment in science are broadly average. In the latest national teacher assessments in 2000, 92% of the pupils reached the expected standard of at least level 2 by the time they left the school. This is close to the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 results was also close to the national average. There are more level 3 results in science than in writing or mathematics as much of the evidence for attainment in this subject is gathered from oral as well as written responses. Inspection evidence indicates that, across the school, pupils now meet the standards expected, overall, and that higher standards are attained in some areas of work. Although standards are broadly similar to those at the last inspection, the school has improved resources for learning and further developed the investigative aspects of the subject.
84. Pupils have sufficient opportunities to undertake experiments and develop their skills in scientific enquiry. Developments in this aspect of the subject since the last inspection have improved pupils' learning. Effective emphasis has been given to pupils talking about their science. The youngest pupils observe well and can describe their findings. As they progress, they compare and contrast different items and the most able explain their findings, coherently, often with good scientific justification. Pupils' scientific knowledge is developing well in all aspects of the subject. In Year 1, pupils correctly identify the parts of a plant, including the root. They know that this is what the plant uses to take in water. The pupils make sensible predictions about what they think might happen to the plant over time. In Year 2, pupils correctly identify different vegetables, knowing that different parts are called such as the stem, leaf and that a carrot is the root of that vegetable.
85. Pupils' samples of past work also indicate at least average standards. The pupils know different ways to muffle sound, using insulating materials, and record their experimental findings in a logical order. They know which materials are magnetic and how some substances can change their form, for example when water becomes ice. Pupils learn well, overall, making good gains in their knowledge in all areas of the different attainment targets. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good gains in their learning.
86. The quality of teaching is good, overall, and in a number of lessons very good. This has a direct impact on the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers plan their lessons well, applying good subject knowledge. They use clear explanations and questions are used well to get the pupils to think. In Year 2, pupils made good gains in their knowledge about the different parts of vegetables, although some opportunities were missed to extend the investigation. In a Year 1 lesson, very good teaching on a similar subject area, extended the pupils fully in their thinking and the teacher was skilful in allowing pupils more independence in their learning. The use of information technology skills is not well developed, but is planned for the future development of the subject.
87. In all lessons seen, pupils throughout the school enjoy their work and have a positive attitude to science. Pupils listen particularly well during introductions and often ask sensible questions to aid their understanding. They like to know what they are trying to learn, causing them to be enthusiastic. They present their work well. In one Year 2 class, the standard of presentation was particularly high. Overall, pupils are willing learners who enjoy the subject.
88. Teachers' assessment in the subject is good. They assess the pupils' progress both during the lessons and by a manageable recording system. Enough time is planned at the end of lessons for teachers to find out the pupils' understanding to plan what they do next. Regular assessment tasks

are set during the class activities. The deputy headteacher, who is the subject leader, has good subject knowledge and monitors the teachers' planning well. Her monitoring of pupils' standards of attainment is good and she has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject to enable her to plan well for its further development.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

89. Standards of attainment in art have declined since the last inspection. Whilst children are covering a range of art topics, review of pupils' work both during lessons and on display in the school, indicates that standards of attainment are inconsistent across the school and most pupils do not achieve the standards expected by the end of Year 2.
90. Pupils' paintings of human figures are generally immature, with little understanding of how to represent the human form. The painting techniques are often very simple, with little evidence that colour mixing or shading is used effectively. Printing patterns are too simple, showing the use of one colour and one repeated shape to stamp a pattern. This style of work is more suited to much younger children. The school has wisely decided to use sketchbooks to enhance pupils work, but this potentially good resource is not yet used well. The range of work in most children's sketchbooks is generally too limited.
91. The quality of teaching seen is satisfactory, overall, but varies between satisfactory and unsatisfactory. In all lessons, teachers use good strategies to manage behaviour and organise lessons well, so that children have opportunities to think and ask questions before they begin work. The level of teachers' subject knowledge is too variable and was only satisfactory in the lesson taught by the subject leader. In this lesson, pupils were making sound gains in their learning and skills development. In a lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils were asked to look at a range of African artefacts before designing a pattern with pastels outlined in black pen. The work was restricted by pupil's limited skills with pastels and by the lack of creativity in the task. Overall, in all lessons most pupils enjoy art, mainly due to the good relationships and happy atmosphere that is created in the classes.
92. The leadership and management of the subject is sound, overall. Although systems for monitoring pupils' learning and standards of attainment are still too informal, the subject leader has identified the key developments that need to be made. Curriculum planning has yet to set out fully how children will develop art skills in both year groups and individual teachers need a structured development programme to increase their subject knowledge. Teachers need to be able to see what appropriate standards look like.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

93. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection, but scrutiny of pupils' past work and discussions with pupils were taken into account when reaching a judgement. In the last inspection, standards were judged to be at the national expectation by the time the pupils left the school, although criticisms were made about the variability in teaching, teachers' subject knowledge and the quality of learning activities in the subject. Present inspection evidence indicates that the standards attained by pupils have been sustained fully since the last inspection, the criticisms have been fully addressed and improvement secured.
94. The quality of the teaching in the one lesson seen was very good and had a significant impact on pupils' learning about the design process. The teacher had particularly high expectations of the way the pupils thought about their designs and offered constructive advice. Pupils proposed designs for making a simple mechanism for getting a mouse to run up a clock in the well known nursery rhyme. The designs drew upon knowledge they had gained about cogs and mechanisms over the previous half term. Pupils produced pleasing designs and most identified what materials would be needed. Most designs incorporated the use of string or levers to move their 'mouse'. In discussion with pupils, they were able to explain clearly how they designed and made simple wind up mechanisms. Pupils were encouraged to evaluate their designs and were particularly good at explaining how they modified their efforts. The conclusion of the lesson was also used very well to review what the pupils had learned. The pupils with special educational needs also make good progress through the key stage.



95. The leadership of the subject is sound, overall. Since the last inspection, the subject has been improved by the construction of a teaching policy and a scheme of work with appropriate guidance for teachers. The subject leader monitors the subject soundly and pupils' achievements are noted well and used to identify areas for improvement. The available resources are used well and there is a good supply of resources for the needs of the school.

## GEOGRAPHY

96. Standards of attainment meet the expected national standards at the end of Year 2 and this is similar to the outcome of the previous inspection. In response to criticism in the last inspection report, positive effort has been made to develop the teaching approach, so that pupils are more involved in their work. This has been effectively undertaken and is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.
97. Older pupils in Year 2 use their knowledge of maps for a number of activities in lessons. Pupils learn to distinguish between human and physical features on a map and list the features that might be found at the seaside under those headings. One child shared a good mnemonic suggesting *Never Eat Shredded Wheat* to help the class remember the sequence of North, East, South, West. Using this, most pupils were able to locate coastal towns on the South, East and West coasts of Great Britain.
98. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers endeavour to involve pupils creatively in their learning. Often lessons start with pupils looking together at posters and maps. Teachers use skilful questions to make pupils think about the reasons, for example, why a particular picture might be a human feature on the landscape. Consequently, pupils extend their answers, giving good geographical reasons. Other activities involve the children finding something out for themselves or using resources. Effective links with literacy are made in ensuring that, when using an atlas to locate coastal towns, the contents pages are effectively used to find the correct map. Writing the names of towns on individual whiteboards took away any pressure to record neatly, so that pupils of all abilities were able to concentrate on map skills. This inclusive approach was a good feature of both lessons.
99. Good in-service training has been provided for staff at school to help them increase their skills. This has resulted in the curriculum being redrawn so that lessons concentrate on problem solving, developing pupils' questioning and reasoning skills. Good use is made of the locality to aid teaching. Good use is made of the Internet to support research and links are planned with Canada and Scotland.
100. The subject leader has drawn up a clear, ambitious plan for further improvements in geography which include developing a wildlife area in the school grounds. Structures for the assessment of pupils' work have improved since the last inspection and are now good, although not yet effectively used to monitor standards across the school. The subject leader's monitoring of standards of work and the quality of pupils' learning is informal and does not yet give the co-ordinator a sufficiently clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject.

## HISTORY

101. During the inspection, no history teaching was seen. Nevertheless pupils' work and teacher's planning for history, combined with information gained from talking to pupils, indicate that pupils by the age of seven achieve standards that are in line with the national expectations. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. Teachers' planning for the subject indicates that the school has taken seriously the criticisms of the last inspection and has done much to develop subject skills and encourage pupils to investigate topics more effectively.
102. By the age of seven, pupils have made models of *Stephenson's Rocket*, based on their understanding of Victorians mechanisms. They talked enthusiastically about this project, demonstrating their understanding of how transport was different in Victorian times. Younger children walking past the models on a daily basis still show fascination with the work and clearly remember a lot of information that older children have shared in assemblies. Topic books show that pupils have made a transport time line and have also looked at important historical events, for example The Great Fire of London and the Gunpowder Plot. Younger children have made good comparisons between hospitals in the past and modern institutions.
103. The school building is used as an excellent resource for teaching aspects of Victorian life, brought to life for Year 2 by a dressing up day, when children act out Victorian schooldays in their own school.
104. The subject is led by an enthusiastic subject leader with good subject knowledge. She has ambitious plans for the subject which include developing the use of information technology skills. Structures for

monitoring the quality of pupils' learning and standards of attainment are informal and not fully effective in enabling the subject leader to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

105. At the last inspection, the standards of attainment were judged to be in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. Since the last inspection, the nature of these national expectations has increased significantly and the school has kept pace with these national developments. Pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectation by the time that they leave the school.
106. By the time pupils are seven they have a sound understanding of how computers are used in appliances and, in discussion, can highlight the different use of machines, such as telephones. The pupils know the main features of the computer and can load a CD-ROM. In Year 2, pupils loaded a CD-ROM to use a program designing different machines and effectively used a keyboard, mouse and different functions of the program. Activities, using a programmable toy, called a 'roamer', enabled pupils to enter simple instructions to make it move in predetermined ways. In another activity, pupils wrote imaginary postcards, correcting their mistakes as they went along, although they were not as familiar with other features of the program, such as the spell check. An analysis of their past work indicates that the pupils have sufficient knowledge to use simple art programs to draw different shapes and to produce some basic word-processed writing in their design books.
107. The quality of teaching is generally good and good use is made of the new computer suite. Teachers manage activities well and their subject knowledge is good. This enables pupils' questions to be answered quickly and learning to be extended. A teaching assistant successfully led an activity where pupils were investigating directions to use the school's programmable 'roamer'. Other instances were seen in English and mathematics lessons, where pupils used computers to enter information or write sentences, but the use of information technology skills in other areas of the curriculum is not as well developed.
108. The pupils at both key stages enjoy their activities and concentrate hard when listening to their teachers' guidance and instructions. The younger pupils persist well when entering information and enjoy the process. Older pupils are patient when other pupils are using the class computers and the pupils contribute effectively in question and answer sessions. The pupils behave well in all lessons. Generally pupils learn well, due to the enhanced computer facilities, although the quality of computers in classes does not always allow the skills acquired in the suite to be used in day to day activities. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress, overall.
109. The subject leader is a relatively new member of staff, but is leading the subject well and has a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' work in the subject. There are suitable schemes of work and the policy is clear. Recent additions to the planning such as guidance on using the Internet have enhanced teaching and learning. The teachers' training in the subject has been effective and some staff are considering more advanced training. The level of resources is now good in terms of the suite, but individual computers in classrooms are now in need of updating, as this limits the progress pupils can make.

## **MUSIC**

110. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve the standards expected for their age and most children enjoy using musical instruments. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection even though the school has no music specialist on the staff. It was possible to observe only two lessons during the inspection, both in Year 1. The judgement about standards has been made from evidence from these lessons and from talking to pupils in Year 2 about music.
111. Year 1 pupils are familiar with rhythm and can alter music to make it loud or soft. In Year 2, pupils talk about counting beats and know a variety of songs. Many of these are sung in assemblies and often accompanied by actions, with most pupils remembering the words by heart. Pupils also talked enthusiastically about recorder club and concerts that musicians played for them. The instruments used in these concerts particularly fascinated them.

112. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in both the lessons seen. However, pupils' learning was limited by the shortage of tuned percussion instruments. This made it very difficult to teach notions of pitch to pupils in Year 1. They became confused, muddling high and low sounds with loud and soft sounds. In both lessons, the teachers' good subject knowledge and quick thinking led them to realise the difficulties that children were experiencing and they compensated appropriately. High expectations in the better lesson resulted in pupils effectively taking turns with those chime bars that were available, while others listened to them play deciding if the notes were high or low. The children responded well to the trust that was shown when they were asked to let others take a turn. Children were later able to suggest a variety of songs in which to explore pitch.
113. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory and improving, although the monitoring of standards of pupils work is at an early stage. The good quality singing in assemblies and in the choir is helping to develop music in the school. Music is planned to have a high priority in the school development plan from April and the subject leader has high expectations for further improvement. The school plans greater investment in music resources, which are currently unsatisfactory.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

114. Pupils achieve standards that are in line with the national expectation by the time they are seven, in dance, gymnastics and indoor games lessons. Overall, this is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection. However, at the last inspection, games skills were criticised as being too low. These have improved and are now at the level which should be expected.
115. Pupils in Year 1 demonstrate different rolls, stretches and other gymnastic activities which they are able to sequence to form a series of movements. These show some good attention to style and pupils are able to finish their sequences with some finesse. Older pupils in Year 2 develop simple dance steps, moving appropriately and giving sufficient attention to warming up and improving their performance. They keep to the beat of the music when skipping and performing their dances, although many find clapping at the same time difficult. In a Year 2 indoor games lesson, pupils developed sound skills in throwing and aiming, as well skills in bouncing and catching a ball.
116. Pupils' attitudes to their work are generally very good. Learning for all pupils is developing well, with good involvement of pupils in the different activities. Most take a pride in their achievement and try hard to improve their performances. They are keen to participate and listen carefully to instructions. The pupils always change quickly and sensibly and walk to and from the classroom quietly wearing appropriate clothing and carrying equipment safely. The pupils usually wait patiently for their turn. Pupils who have special educational needs make good gains in their learning in this subject.
117. The teaching is good, overall, with only one satisfactory lesson. Generally, the teachers have good subject knowledge and they often suggest ways in which the pupils can improve their performance. In a Year 2 lesson, where the teaching was very good, a wide range of activities was planned which motivated the pupils who moved to the different activities sensibly. Lessons are planned with clear objectives which allow pupils to practise and further improve their techniques. All lessons start with a warm up and teachers ensure that pupils understand the importance of exercise and its effect on the body.
118. The curriculum is broad, balanced and fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is an effective scheme of work for the key stage and this enables the teachers to plan well for lessons. The quality of assessment in the subject is satisfactory, but has improved since the last inspection. The school benefits from having a new hall and this has enhanced the accommodation for the subject. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The leadership and management of the subject are good, overall. The subject leader is effectively monitoring teachers' planning and is beginning to monitor pupils' learning and standards of attainment. Resources are generally good and support the standards attained.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

119. Although standards of attainment were judged to be broadly sound at the end of Year 2 in relation to the locally agreed syllabus at the last inspection, the subject was criticised for not enabling pupils to develop skills and concepts at an appropriate level. In addition, the level of resources was also judged to be too low. Improved planning for the subject, improvements made to the quality of teaching and the development of good quality resources have ensured that the subject has its rightful place in the curriculum and that standards have improved.
120. By the age of 7 years, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have a high level of knowledge of a number of world religions including Christianity. They are able to talk knowledgeably as they compare other traditions with their own and can see the relevance of particular symbols for believers.
121. The quality of teaching, in the small number of lessons seen in Year 2, was good and contributes to high standards. In the lesson on the Muslim festival of Eid, effective teacher's questioning enabled pupils to compare and contrast their own experiences with those of a Muslim child. Pupils understood the main symbols of Islam and were encouraged to understand the meaning of both Ramadan and Eid for a Muslim family. There were also good links to literacy, with effective teacher modelling of the use of non-fiction text to find information. The use of simple role-play, with water and dates to encourage pupils to understand the symbolism of the breaking of the fast and express their feelings, contributed well to their growing understanding. The teacher was very sensitive in the way she encouraged the single Muslim pupil to contribute to the lesson.
122. The planning for the subject has improved and now focuses more on the acquisition of skills and the development of understanding. This has had a positive impact on standards. Methods of assessing the quality of pupils' learning have yet to be developed. The quality of resources to support the subject has improved considerably. They are effectively managed, used well in the classroom and make a significant impact on pupils' learning. The involvement of parents from a variety of faiths, talking to pupils about their beliefs, is valued by the school and aids pupils' learning. The subject leader's monitoring and evaluation of the subject is informally undertaken, but is insufficiently rigorous to guide the future development of the subject.