

INSPECTION REPORT

DIPTFORD PAROCHIAL CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Diptford, Totnes

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113395

Headteacher: Mrs. L. M. Rutkowska

Reporting inspector: Jacqueline Ikin
3349

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th February 2002

Inspection number: 221767

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of p pupils: 4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Diptford,
Totnes,
Devon.

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Appropriate authority: The Governors
Name of chair of governors: Mr. George Lacon

Date of previous inspection: 7th February 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3349	Mrs. J. Ikin	Registered inspector	English Music Religious education The Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9075	Mrs. J. Baxter	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
29378	Mr. K. Watson	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20104	Mrs. J. Clarke	Team inspector	Art Geography History Physical education	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Diptford is a small village Church of England primary school with 82 pupils on roll, 43 boys and 39 girls. It is a popular school and many parents choose to send their children there because of its small size and Church of England nature. Pupils are arranged into three classes, mainly according to age. All children are of white United Kingdom heritage. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds and most children have attended some form of pre-school provision. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average but covers a wide span. The profile of each year group varies considerably from year to year, often changing over the course of time as new pupils join the school after the usual starting time. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below average. There are currently no pupils with statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective in promoting the personal, social and moral development of its pupils and as a result they are very well behaved, confident and keen to learn. The headteacher, governors and staff have worked extremely hard, using their combined expertise, to bring about substantial improvements to its systems and procedures since the last inspection. As a result of this good leadership the quality of teaching and learning has improved and the majority of pupils make good progress and most pupils achieve the standards that are expected for their age and many achieve above, in reading, mathematics and science. Overall the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in reading, mathematics and science as a result of the good teaching they receive in these subjects throughout the school
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good; they enjoy being at school and rise to the challenges it offers them.
- The school makes very good provision for the personal, social and moral development of pupils; and as a result standards of behaviour are very good and there are very good relationships among pupils.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and so they make good progress.
- The headteacher gives a strong lead in setting the values and ethos of the school, and this ensures that pupils receive the care and guidance that they need to play a full part in this inclusive and welcoming community.
- The staff and governors work as a highly committed team and this has ensured that the school has made substantial progress since the last inspection.
- Pupils benefit from the strong links that the school has with parents and carers.

What could be improved

- Pupils' ability to apply their good reading and speaking skills to writing.
- Curriculum guidance does not always identify what pupils should know, understand and be able to do in each year group.
- Assessment procedures are not yet sufficiently precise in all subjects to inform the next steps in learning for individual pupils.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and thinking skills in other subjects of the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 2000. Since then it has made good progress in addressing the weaknesses that were identified. As a result, it is no longer designated an underachieving school. Standards in mathematics have improved so that they are above the levels expected at the end of Year 6 and all pupils, including talented and gifted pupils, achieve well in relation to their starting points on entry to the school. Statutory requirements for information and communication technology (ICT) are now met and, although the school recognises that there is still work to be done, standards have improved and are now at the levels expected at Years 2 and 6. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements and provides a full range of learning opportunities in geography and design and technology; the curriculum for children in the reception year fully complies with national guidance and provides a range of well-balanced activities, including collaborative play, which appropriately meet their needs. There is now a clear overview of the curriculum, which shows how the subjects will be taught to ensure a broad and balanced experience for pupils. Although the school has adopted national schemes of work for most subjects, further work now needs to be done to adapt them to the school's needs and to guide staff on what pupils of different year groups are expected to know, understand and be able to do. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment have improved considerably and are now good; they are used well to track pupils' progress and set targets. They now need to be refined further to identify the next steps in learning for individual pupils. Reports to parents have greatly improved and are now good. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and governors have improved and are now good. The school has clear educational direction, roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and there are systematic monitoring procedures. Financial procedures are now rigorous and the school seeks to obtain best value for money in all its budget allocations.

STANDARDS

The school's performance in 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 6 was broadly average in English and mathematics when compared to schools nationally. In science, results were above average. When compared to schools with similar numbers of free school meals results are below average for English, well below average for mathematics and average for science. These results need to be treated with caution as they involve a very small number of pupils and the free school meals indicator does not give a totally accurate picture of the context in which this school works. Taken together over the last four years the school's results show an improving trend, which is broadly in line with the national average. The results of 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 2 were well above the national average and the average for similar schools for reading, writing and mathematics, and for reading and mathematics the school was in the top five per cent of schools nationally.

Inspection findings show that standards of reading, mathematics and science are above those expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6 and pupils are on course to meet or exceed the appropriately challenging targets set for them in these subjects. Where weaknesses occur it is because pupils are not applying their skills of reading and speaking to writing, and as a result standards in writing lag behind those in reading. In all other subjects of the curriculum pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected of them by Year 6. All pupils, including more able and those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to the school: they are keen to learn and interested in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils is very good. They are particularly considerate of others, and older pupils make a particular effort to look after younger ones.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is very good. They have very good relationships with their teachers and with each other
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory overall, but a growing number of pupils are taken out of school for holidays in term time and miss important learning as a result.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Year 1 and 2	Years 3, 4, 5 and 6
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

In reception, good teaching enables pupils to make a good start at school and to progress well in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. All teachers in the school quickly build warm and caring relationships with their pupils. As a result children feel confident and secure, enjoy coming to school and make good progress. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics lessons observed was good. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well and their planning is effective. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are high, and teaching methods and lesson content engage their interest. Good and very good teaching was also observed in history, geography, science, and music. Work is appropriately challenging to meet the needs of all pupils, including those who are more able. Pupils with special educational needs receive well-targeted support. Where weaknesses occur it is because there is sometimes an over-use of worksheets and planning is not sufficiently targeted at pupils in different year groups in the same class.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements in all subjects. The curriculum for reception-aged pupils meets their needs appropriately. Schemes do not give sufficient guidance on what pupils of different year groups are expected to know, understand and be able to do. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and thinking skills in all subjects of the curriculum
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils with special educational needs receive well-targeted support and as a result they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' personal, moral and social development is very good and as a result high levels of courtesy and respect are evident throughout the school. Provision for spiritual development is good, and pupils offer thoughtful and considered responses to their work. Cultural development is sound with good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own cultural traditions. Less is done to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school gives very good care and attention to its pupils. The secure and caring environment allows pupils to flourish academically. Assessment is satisfactory overall but needs greater precision to identify the next steps in learning for individual pupils.

The school has very good links with parents. Parents appreciate this and hold the school in very high regard.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management by the headteacher are good. All staff have a heavy load of responsibilities. They work as an effective team and this has resulted in many improvements in a relatively short period of time.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well and are highly committed. They have a good overview of the school and its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There is careful analysis of the results of statutory testing and regular checks on the quality of teaching, which are used well to plan for future improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Planning and costing arrangements are clear and take account of the all-round implications of spending decisions. The principles of best value are applied well.

The accommodation is broadly adequate. The school makes very good use of community facilities such as the village hall, the church and the playing field to make up for the lack of a hall and field on its own site. There are sufficient teachers and, collectively with other staff, they have the experience and expertise to cover the subjects of the curriculum and the age and ability range of the pupils. Resources are satisfactory, although there are weaknesses in the quality and range of equipment to promote learning through outdoor and imaginative play for reception-aged pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The standards that the school achieves and the progress that their children make.• The good standards of behaviour and the values and attitudes that are promoted.• The good teaching that their children receive.• Their children like school.• The importance the school places on the individual.• The accessibility of teachers and the headteacher.• The way the school is led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The information that they receive about homework.• The range of activities outside school.

The inspection team agree with the parents' positive views of the school. Regarding their concerns, the inspection team judges the range of extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory given the size of the school and the number of staff available. Parents' concerns regarding the information that they receive about homework are partly justified and there is scope for greater consistency and clarity in this area.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There is a wide spread of attainment on entry to the school, and the profile of each cohort varies considerably from year to year. Overall it is broadly in line with that expected for four year old children. Pupils make good progress, and by the end of the reception year achieve standards a little above those expected.
2. The results of national tests in English for pupils in Year 6 were in line with the national average, but below average when compared with similar schools. These results are less favourable than the previous year and can be partly explained by the nature of the cohort. Further analysis shows that, whilst 90 per cent of pupils attained the level expected in reading, only 50 per cent did so in writing and there was lower attainment in writing than in reading. This has been recognised by the school and plans have been drawn up to remedy the situation. The results of national reading tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2001 were in the top five per cent, both nationally and when compared to similar schools. The results of writing tests for Year 2 pupils were also well above average.
3. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in reading and most achieve standards that are above those expected by the time they reach Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress in writing overall and most achieve standards that are in line with those expected. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils have positive attitudes to the books that they read and have the skills to decipher new and more complex words. As they move into Years 3 and 4, pupils develop and use a wider range of reading cues. By the time they reach Year 6, average and higher attaining pupils read with accuracy and fluency. Lower attaining pupils have the skills to decipher words and read aloud with appropriate accuracy, but their understanding of meaning is less secure. Pupils' knowledge of the technical terms of literacy is good; for example, Year 6 pupils know how writers use alliteration and onomatopoeia to create effects. They can compare the work of different authors and make informed decisions about their choices of books to read. Where weaknesses occur, it is because pupils' apparently fluent speaking skills and their ability to decode new words, often masks their general lack of a wide and varied vocabulary. This affects their writing as pupils make limited use of new and more difficult words and do not make sufficient use of their good knowledge of literature, to enrich their work. Although pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the sound and spelling system and use it well in the course of learning spellings for tests, these skills are not always transferred to their own writing. When given the opportunity, pupils apply their literacy skills well in other subjects of the curriculum. However, more could be done to develop these links, particularly to give opportunities for extended writing in subjects such as geography and history.
4. A key issue at the last inspection was to raise standards in mathematics for pupils in Years 3 to Year 6 by improving teachers' subject knowledge, by using the National Numeracy Strategy more effectively as a basis for planning and by providing challenging activities to meet the needs of all the pupils, especially those who are gifted and talented. The school has effectively addressed these issues, and there has been an overall improvement in the test results for Year 6 pupils over the last three years. Results in 2001 were about average when compared to results nationally, but below average when compared to schools with a similar intake. This can be partly explained by the nature of the year group that took the tests and also by the fact that the school's efforts to improve standards in mathematics were not fully embedded at the time. The evidence of this inspection is that standards have risen further since 2001, and as a

result of very good teaching and improved assessment and tracking procedures, pupils are on course to reach or exceed the standards predicted for them by the end of Year 6. The results of national tests in mathematics for Year 2 pupils in 2001 were well above average compared with all schools nationally and when compared with similar schools.

5. The findings of this inspection confirm that standards in mathematics for pupils in Years 3 to 6 have risen and are now above average. Pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points. The good work being done by the higher attaining pupils is of a standard that is in line with their capabilities. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of number are good. By the end of Year 2 pupils are beginning to understand place value and use this to order numbers up to 100. The high achievers are familiar with numbers up to 1000. Most recognise sequences of numbers such as odd and even and are beginning to use different mental strategies to solve problems. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are very proficient in mental methods of calculation, understand the patterns and relationships that exist between numbers, and have well-developed powers of logical reasoning. Pupils' knowledge of space and shape is good throughout the school. Most younger pupils know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes such as square, circle and rectangle. Higher attaining pupils readily recognise a shape by listening to a description of its properties. When working with angles most pupils in the top class can use a protractor with confidence, and identify acute, obtuse or right angles. The higher achievers are able to use their knowledge that the angles of a triangle add up to 180 degrees to correctly calculate the remaining angles of a right-angled triangle or all three angles of an equilateral triangle. Where there are weaknesses it is in pupils' knowledge and understanding of measure in Years 2, 3 and 4. When given the opportunity, pupils apply their mathematical knowledge appropriately to other subjects of the curriculum; however, more could be done to extend these links.
6. The results of national tests in science for pupils in Year 6 are above the national average. More than half of the pupils taking the test in 2001 attained at the higher levels. This high standard is also evident for Year 2 pupils, where the results of teacher assessments were above national averages in all aspects of science except in experimental and investigative science, where results were average.
7. The evidence of the inspection is that pupils' knowledge and understanding of science are above the expected levels by the end of Years 2 and 6. Particularly noteworthy is the way the pupils have thoroughly absorbed the principles of fair testing. Younger pupils work well together to collect evidence to answer questions and develop their scientific ideas. Older pupils design their own tests. For example, in a lesson on soluble and insoluble substances, all the pupils in the top class, from Year 4 to Year 6, were able to organise a test taking into account the need to have everything exactly the same, apart from one variable. Pupils show a growing understanding of scientific concepts as they move through the school and show increasing ability to explain scientific phenomena and relate theory to real-life situations, for instance, when describing the effect of the forces of gravity and air pressure on a parachute jump.
8. The last inspection found that provision for ICT was poor and did not meet statutory requirements. The school has made good progress since then, and although there is still some way to go, standards overall are now satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress. They gain a sound understanding of the basic skills of how to operate a computer at an early stage and by the time they reach Year 2 are proficient in developing ideas and making things happen on screen. For example, they can create computer-generated images such as different shapes of leaves, and abstract patterns in the style of a famous artist. Pupils' skills in using computers to find things out are good by the time they reach Year 6. They confidently find, select and present information from the Internet in connection with their projects. They also know how to copy and paste passages of text, and can save work to individual folders. Pupils make

appropriate use of their ICT skills to support other subjects in the curriculum. For example, in geography they have found relevant information to produce interesting studies of different countries. The school recognises that there is still scope to develop further opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in data handling, multi-media presentations and control technology.

9. Standards in art are in line with those expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6 in all aspects of art and design, and these standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The work seen during art lessons, observations of art displayed throughout the school and discussions with pupils reflect enthusiasm for art, good artistic interpretation and sensitivity. Provision for design and technology has improved and, from the few lessons observed during the inspection and evidence from pupils' work, standards of work by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected. Particular strengths are in the planning and evaluation of the work as it progresses.
10. Standards in music are above those expected for pupils by the time they reach Year 2 and in line for their age by the time they reach Year 6. This represents an improvement for younger pupils since the last inspection and is a direct result of an increased emphasis on music in the school, which is gradually becoming embedded through some very good teaching. The quality of the singing across the school is good. Pupils sing with enthusiasm, enjoyment and commitment, listen carefully to instructions and explanations and respond appropriately, especially to the idea of singing with expression.
11. Attainment is in line with that expected of pupils in Year 2 and 6 in history and geography. Overall, standards have been improved in geography and maintained in history since the last inspection. During the inspection, only pupils in Class 1 (Years R and 1) were seen having physical education lessons. Therefore, no secure judgement can be made of standards at the end of Year 2 or at the end of Year 6, nor can a comparison be made with standards at the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be in line with expectations.
12. No lessons were seen in religious education but evidence from pupils' work indicates that standards are broadly in line with those expected for their age in Years 2 and 6. Pupils have a sound grasp of basic religious concepts and symbolism through their frequent visits to the local church and their studies of rites of passage, such as baptism. Pupils' ability to form thoughtful views on religious issues is very good. Evidence from their work shows thoughtful reflections on the feelings of characters in religious stories and how people were helped through their difficulties by their faith in God.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress both in lessons and in small withdrawal groups, where they receive additional tuition from support staff. They have full access to lessons as a result of the well-targeted support that they receive and achieve well in relation to their starting points, with some attaining standards that are in line with those expected for their age. Able and gifted pupils are identified and given work appropriately suited to their capabilities. As a result they achieve above average standards. The variation between the attainment of boys and girls is not significantly different from the national trend.
14. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for pupils in Year 6 and is on course to meet them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained very good standards of behaviour and has improved upon the good attitudes of the pupils and the relationships within the school. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are now

significant strengths of the school. Attitudes to learning are very good throughout the school, including at the Foundation Stage. Pupils of all ages are interested and eager to get involved in lessons, and are articulate and keen to express their views. Pupils in Class 1 demonstrate high levels of concentration when working on a diverse range of activities, from creating woven patterns to producing picture-maps of the countryside or town. Older pupils are keen to discuss their work with each other and concentrate well. One afternoon, due to severe weather conditions, pupils had to be sent home but, even as the number of pupils in the class dwindled, those not yet collected continued to concentrate and work with enthusiasm on the task they had been set. Pupils enjoy being at school and rise to the challenges it offers them.

16. Behaviour is very good, both indoors and out. In class, pupils do as they are asked and follow instructions quickly, so teachers do not have to waste time organising them. In the playground, the most striking feature of the pupils' behaviour is the consideration that they show one another. During lunch breaks, all year groups use the same playground at the same time and they have the choice of using a wide range of small equipment. The pupils all get on well together and share the space available amicably. Older children make a particular effort to look out for and look after younger ones, and these younger children are happy and confident because they feel safe amongst the older ones. Pupils play inclusively together, and all appear happy and content. In the dining hall, there is a warm, friendly atmosphere: lunch is a social occasion, during which pupils demonstrate good manners and enjoy chatting to each other as they eat. There have been no exclusions from the school since the last inspection. No incidences of bullying of any kind were observed during the inspection.
17. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils get on well with one another and with adults. Most children are ready to listen to the thoughts, opinions and feelings of others, and react supportively to them. When pupils work in mixed-age groups, older pupils help younger ones and make sure that they are included; this was evident in a history lesson when younger children were encouraged to express their opinions about a range of books. In a Class 3 (Years 4, 5 and 6), personal, social and health education session, where pupils were working on a range of skills, they demonstrated their high level of maturity in organising the groups and identifying, and finding solutions to, the problems they were set. Pupils made considered and perceptive comments about why individuals might feel left out of the group. All members of the school staff provide very good role models, which show that they value and respect the views of the pupils. In turn, the pupils follow these good examples; they appreciate and value what their classmates do. In a physical education lesson, all of the pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, watched appreciatively as their peers demonstrated how well they could perform a range of travelling movements.
18. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities they are given to take on responsibility around the school. Those who act as, for example, class monitors or lunchtime and playground equipment monitors or who have responsibility for helping to look after the younger pupils during wet play time, take their duties seriously and carry them out efficiently. There is further scope for the school to increase the responsibility it gives to pupils. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to use their initiative in their learning and, for example, produce interesting project work in subjects such as geography and history. Older pupils are currently posing questions that they hope to be able to answer related to environmental issues such as the problems faced by endangered species or the effects of acid rain. Individuals set themselves targets for improvement, and they evaluate how well they are doing in mathematics. Pupils actively engage in fund-raising events for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the wide range of activities within the school. They form and enjoy close, constructive relationships with other pupils in the school. Most pupils are caring and tolerant of the needs of others. The strength of these relationships and the pupils' consideration for others make a very positive contribution to their personal development.

19. Pupils enjoy coming to school each day and run through the school gate eager to get on with their lessons and meet their friends. They arrive punctually and soon settle into classroom routines and procedures. In the reporting year before the inspection, the attendance rate was marginally above the national average for primary schools and as such is satisfactory. The school is to be commended on its record for that year in having no unauthorised absence. Authorised absence, which was close the national average, to some extent was due to the usual childhood illnesses but in part also to a growing number of pupils who are taken out of school for holidays during term time, during which valuable learning time is lost.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is good. In none of the lessons seen was teaching unsatisfactory, whilst in six out of the 25 lessons or parts of lessons seen, teaching was very good and in one lesson it was excellent. This indicates that there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. This is having a significant impact on the standards that are being achieved and the progress that pupils make.
21. The quality of teaching for reception-aged pupils is good. The teacher is knowledgeable about the needs of young children and the requirements of the curriculum guidance for this age group. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Planning is well structured and clear, and ensures that there is an appropriate balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated tasks. The range of activities that is provided is effective in enriching children's experience. Well-designed tasks capture children's interest and help them to learn through play and talk. Interaction between the teachers and the children is good and supports children's learning, encouraging them to think for themselves and helping them to make progress. Children are sensitively but firmly managed and this gives them security and confidence in their early days of schooling.
22. The teaching of English is good throughout the school. Teachers know their pupils well and the quality of the relationships between teachers and pupils is a strength of the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to inform their planning and preparation for lessons. They use questions skilfully to help pupils to extend their thinking and develop their ideas. They use practical methods, such as role-play, to help pupils develop their understanding of imaginary ideas, such in Class 2 (Years 2, 3 and 4) where the teacher discussed the amazing sight of Willie Wonka's Chocolate Factory with the children as if they were looking at it. They also make very good use of 'talk partners', to help pupils to share their ideas, so ensuring that all are involved in making their contributions to lessons. Throughout the school, lesson objectives are clearly linked to the National Strategy for Literacy. They are shared with pupils so that they clearly understand the purpose of the lesson. Good use is made of a wide range of literature to deepen pupils' knowledge of the grammar, form and structure of English. Lively and enthusiastic explanations are very effective in engaging pupils' attention and motivating their learning. There are appropriate grouping arrangements, which enable all pupils to learn at a level appropriate to their age and ability. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Ongoing questioning and oral feedback to individual pupils are used well to help pupils overcome misconceptions and to help with the development of ideas. Pupils readily turn to dictionaries to help with the spelling of new words and there are also some examples of lengthy writing. Although the school has made satisfactory progress in these areas since the last inspection, there remains scope for further development, for example, by promoting the use of more complex vocabulary in writing and by the development of opportunities for extended writing in other areas of the curriculum. Appropriate use is made of homework to build on the

work that pupils do in school and parents give good support to their children. This has a significant impact on the progress that pupils make, particularly in reading and spelling.

23. Teaching is good in mathematics and some lessons are very good. This has a significant impact on the progress that pupils make. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved since the last inspection, and this is particularly evident in the best lessons, where teachers use this knowledge to plan for the precise needs of individuals, setting clear objectives that the pupils understand. In these lessons the teachers challenge and inspire pupils so that motivation is high and learning sustained. The tasks are carefully tailored to the needs of different abilities because the teachers have assessed knowledge and understanding and planned accordingly for each group or individual. The top class provided an outstanding example of this, where the teacher had designed a variety of worksheets to consolidate and extend learning for all abilities and ages in the class. The pace of the lesson, and the high level of challenge in both the aural and the practical work, led to high levels of motivation and excellent learning for all pupils in each year group. Where weaknesses occur it is because records show the work that pupils have covered rather than what they know, and planning based on this is less effective.
24. The few science lessons seen were disrupted by children having to be sent home due to severe weather. However, the teaching was good. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have high expectations for the pupils. There is very good teaching of experimental and investigative science in the top class. Activities are often open-ended enough to give higher attaining pupils extra challenge and develop their understanding. There is, however, scope for improvement in the way skills and knowledge are taught systematically as pupils move through the year groups, particularly when pupils of different ages are taught in the same class
25. The quality of teaching in ICT is good, and appropriate use is made of ICT to support other subjects of the curriculum. Teachers' subject knowledge has greatly improved since the last inspection and this is having a significant impact on the progress that pupils make and their positive attitudes to the subject. A well-trained teaching assistant makes a substantial contribution to the ICT.
26. From the one lesson seen and the quality of pupils' work, the teaching of music is very good. Lessons are well planned and structured to develop learning, and resources are appropriately prepared to support the learning objectives. Skilful use of questions encourages pupils to think for themselves and includes excellent open-ended questioning to establish pupils' level of understanding. Questions are also appropriately challenging, frequently addressed to specific year groups within the class and focused on what they are expected to know and understand.
27. No lessons were seen in religious education and too few lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and physical education to form a view about standards of teaching in individual subjects. However, the clear overall strengths were lively explanations and skilful questioning, together with a range of well-planned activities designed to extend pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils are very well managed, and the good relationships between teachers and pupils make a substantial contribution to pupils' motivation and interest during lessons. Where there are weaknesses it is because planning is not always sufficiently matched to the levels expected for the different age groups in each class.
28. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well so that their needs are met. Teachers and support assistants work together, often with advice from the school's special needs co-ordinator; suitably matched work, which directly addresses pupils' individual targets, needs and stages of development, is well planned. Where necessary or appropriate, the advice and support of outside specialists are sought. In many lessons, particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics, pupils with

special educational needs benefit from the good support offered by classroom assistants. These valuable members of staff are well briefed about what the pupils might be expected to achieve, and are well trained so that they are able to interact very constructively with groups of pupils and with individuals, helping them to make good progress.

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

29. The last inspection identified a number of weaknesses in curriculum provision, which was judged to be unsatisfactory. The school has made great efforts to address these weaknesses and now has a curriculum that meets statutory requirements and which is broad and balanced. The curriculum for children in the reception year fully complies with national guidance and provides a range of well-balanced activities, including collaborative play, which appropriately meet their needs. Better planning structures are now in place, geography and design and technology are taught regularly, and provision for ICT has been greatly improved. These improvements, together with the implementation of schemes of work based on a two-year rolling programme, mean that strengths now outweigh weaknesses and that curriculum provision is broadly satisfactory.
30. The medium and long-term planning has been refined to include regular assessment, particularly in the core subjects of mathematics, English and science. The rolling programme of topics is now firmly embedded and gives sound coverage of all National Curriculum subjects and religious education throughout the school. There is room for improvement in the way teachers' planning identifies expected learning for each age group. This is in place for English and mathematics but is not as evident in science or the foundation subjects. There is still a need to review and revise the two-year rolling programme to ensure that it meets the needs of three year groups when they are taught in one class, and in particular where an age group is split between classes, as is the case in Year 4.
31. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. This is largely because all teachers know the pupils very well and are sensitive to individual needs. The very good relationships among pupils, and between pupils and staff, encourage an atmosphere where all feel valued and special gifts as well as special needs can be catered for successfully. Gifted and talented pupils attend mathematics and science sessions with others from the local group of schools (the Academic Council), and have attended residential courses for art and English in North Devon. The school identifies needs early through liaison with local pre-school groups and its baseline assessment. It also caters well for pupils who transfer from other schools; this number is increasing as the school gains a reputation for its sensitive handling of special needs. Individual education plans, which are in the school's own format, are tailored to address the needs of each child and extra support is given where appropriate. Liaison with outside agencies is effective in obtaining further support where it is needed.
32. The emphasis put on the needs of each individual is also effective in ensuring that all pupils are treated with equal respect and care. Equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum are good, but could be even better if planning was further refined to ensure that all pupils build systematically on skills and knowledge regardless of which class or group they are in, or which teacher is taking them.
33. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are now firmly embedded in policy and practice, and the recent emphasis on mathematics has had a positive effect on achievement, particularly at the top end of the school. The decision to make more use of particular staff expertise in some subject areas is having a positive effect. For

example, the co-ordinator is now taking all the mathematics lessons in the top class and the co-ordinator for ICT is taking all classes for basic skills training in the ICT suite. Attainment in both subjects has improved significantly as a result. However, literacy and numeracy skills are not practised widely enough in other curriculum areas. Writing skills are not promoted and used sufficiently well in subjects such as history and science and there is not enough evidence of numeracy skills being used on a daily basis. For instance, there are very few examples of such things as height and weight graphs or daily temperature charts around the school. This lack of reinforcement can lead to gaps in knowledge if a topic has not been covered for some time. Many of the pupils in the middle class were very unsure about units of measure and could not, for example, talk with any confidence about their height or weight.

34. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and includes recorder, violin and guitar tuition, a football club, which is implementing the 'Football in the Community' programme, and regular visits to places of interest or to shows such as the Devon County Show. The school participates in a local swimming gala and has a well-established programme of residential visits, which make a lasting impression on the pupils. There are also keep fit sessions before school and plans are in hand to start a computer club. Personal, social and health education was identified as a major strength of the school at the last inspection and, although less was seen of this curriculum area during this inspection, it still appears to be strong. Sex and drugs education are dealt with as part of the Year 6 health education programme, which is currently under review. A particularly strong aspect of personal and social education is the way pupils' confidence and self-esteem is promoted in every part of school life.
35. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good. Parents value the school and see it as a central part of the community. Many attended the school themselves and are keen to support it through money-raising activities or by giving their time, for instance to help with reading. There are strong links with the church. The vicar visits the school regularly and churchwardens are closely involved with the work of the school in various ways. There are strong links with partner institutions such as the local pre-school groups and secondary school, and through the 'Academic Council', which provides a forum for local schools to help each other in a variety of ways.
36. Overall, provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The strongest aspects are moral and social development, which are both very good. The school is very successful in realising its aims, which include maintaining its small school character and nurturing its family atmosphere, promoting personal values of respect, consideration and courtesy, and developing children's self-esteem and respect for others. From very early in their school lives older pupils are encouraged to help their younger classmates. A good example of this was provided by the youngest class when Year 1 pupils were paired with reception children to work with calculators. For such young children the level of co-operation was remarkable, so, given this good start, it is not surprising that social skills are well developed further up the school. Parents are very appreciative of the way the school works hard to promote the values of truth and justice, right and wrong, and respect for others. They also value the way older pupils carry out numerous responsibilities around the school.
37. Spiritual development is good. Through assemblies, religious education and circle time the values, principles and beliefs that underpin society are successfully introduced. In an 'achievement assembly', pupils put forward by their teachers as worthy of award because of hard work or helpfulness to others accepted their award stickers with great pride. Other pupils were generous in their applause and obviously genuinely appreciated each other's achievements. Spirituality is well promoted through English. For example, in one Class 3 lesson pupils were encouraged to reflect on the deeper meaning of a poem, trying to get into the mind of the poet. Comments such as, "It's like

a puzzle”, “You don’t know what he’s thinking” and, “It’s like a magical city” led to a real sense of mystery as pupils listened to the poem being read out again. There is, however, room for improvement in the way displays are used to promote appreciation of things like works of art or poetry. Very few of the displays at the time of the inspection featured pupils’ work or evaluations of their own or others’ efforts.

38. Cultural development is sound. Local culture is promoted through visits to places of interest and participation in local events. Assemblies follow a well thought out plan, which includes opportunities to reflect on attitudes towards others, the achievement of famous people, and stories from other faiths. In music lessons, pupils have ample opportunity to hear a range of music from different times and places. The well-planned programme for religious education develops soundly pupils’ knowledge and understanding of Christian and other faiths such as Judaism and Hindu traditions. After the events of 11th September pupils were encouraged to consider the issues from the point of view of a Muslim and an American child. The school has some multi-cultural books in the library, but more could still be done to raise pupils’ awareness of the wealth of cultural diversity in Britain and to prepare them for life in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Diptford School is at the heart of its community. It has established a secure and caring environment for its pupils, allowing them to flourish academically and to understand the importance of being part of a warm and inclusive community. This aspect of the school’s work has been well sustained since the previous inspection.
40. The headteacher is the named officer for child protection. The school has adopted appropriate guidelines and procedures in accordance with local child protection guidance and policy. These procedures are well known and understood by all staff, who know exactly what to do if they are concerned.
41. The local authority undertakes a rigorous annual review of health and safety in the school. This is supported by regular risk assessment and discussion on the part of governors. The headteacher and the school caretaker deal with any health and safety matters immediately if they arise. This vigilance is well placed not only to ensure a continuing safe environment on a daily basis, but should prove invaluable when the building extension takes place later in this school year. All staff are due to have a refresher course in basic first aid in the near future and the school is aware that it needs to consider arranging for one, perhaps two, staff, to undergo the more intensive, certificated, training in first aid. Accidents and relevant incidents are properly recorded in the school record book and fire drills are undertaken regularly.
42. Attendance is monitored regularly at the end of each school week on an appropriate computer programme. This means that details of individual attendance and absence can be monitored and evaluated at any time if necessary. Effective and appropriate procedures are in place to record and check reasons for absence.
43. Monitoring of pupils’ behaviour and personal development is done informally through the detailed knowledge staff have of their pupils and in regular discussions amongst them. However, when the need occasionally arises, the headteacher keeps confidential written records in order to be able to provide appropriate support and guidance to any pupils concerned.
44. The school has worked hard to develop a systematic means of assessment since the last inspection, when assessment was identified as a key issue for development. Overall, the improvements made in this aspect are good. The school has established good procedures for monitoring pupils’ academic performance throughout the school. The school now benefits from a comprehensive assessment and recording policy

which provides very useful guidance for teachers, including a workable timetable for assessments. Priority has been given to assessment in English and mathematics to determine strengths and weaknesses. All teachers are now using the same system of coding which clearly identifies which pupils need extra support or further challenge in literacy and numeracy.

45. The results of the National Curriculum tests in mathematics are analysed and are beginning to be used to predict progress. The analysis of the English test results is planned for the future. The school is currently developing systems for tracking pupils' progress in writing and the tracking of ICT skills has started so that targets can be set for year groups.
46. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress in reading are mainly focused on the group guided reading sessions within the literacy hour; a good model for these is the useful, diagnostic records kept by the Class 1 teacher. Most pupils, except the oldest in the school, have a home-school reading log, which provides good contact between parents and teachers.
47. In addition to the National Curriculum tests at the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils take nationally approved tests at the end of Years 3 to 5 and standardised tests for spelling and reading. Pupils are assessed at the end of each unit of work, often at the end of each term or half term; these assessments are based on nationally approved guidance. This form of assessment relies on a 'best fit' approach of whether individuals know, understand and can do most of what is expected of them. These assessments require further refinement so that they identify precisely what individual pupils need to do next to make progress, particularly those pupils who do reach the national expectation, or exceed it. Currently, this is limiting the pupils' learning.
48. An example of good practice is the involvement of pupils in their own assessment and evaluation. Pupils set specific targets for themselves; this involves using their initiative in identifying their own needs. In addition, pupils have the opportunity to evaluate their work in mathematics and this helps them to recognise their own strength and so builds self-esteem.
49. Overall, assessment information is used satisfactorily to help teachers know what to teach next. Reception children are assessed during their first term in school; the county's baseline assessment scheme is used appropriately to identify starting points for learning.
50. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs reflects the fact that the teachers know the pupils well and have due regard for the needs of individuals. Pupils are well supported by the teaching staff and by learning support staff. This ensures they make good progress and play a full part in the inclusive and welcoming school community. The monitoring of the academic progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans to meet special educational needs ensures that the work builds in small steps and contributes to good progress. There is an appropriate review process for pupils at the higher stages of the special educational needs register, including pupils with statements, should the need arise. It is thorough and designed to ensure that all interested parties are informed about progress.
51. Ongoing assessments across the curriculum are used to provide information for parents and to inform the next teacher. The quality of annual reports to parents is good. They are thorough and detailed and greatly improved since the last inspection. Good use is made of the reports as a tool for individual target setting when they are discussed with pupils, and when used positively in the monitoring and evaluation of individual progress. This results in pupils being clear about their personal areas of strengths and weakness. Samples of pupils' written work are checked at the end of taught units to determine if the records made by teachers are correct. Targets for Year 6 pupils are

beginning to be set, based on a combination of tests and assessments. Teachers are beginning to use the assessment information productively to help their planning to ensure that tasks are appropriate. However, this is hampered because in most subjects there is no clear guidance related to the progression of knowledge, understanding and skills that pupils are expected to gain year on year.

52. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. The systematic use of the results of National Curriculum tests to determine differences in the attainment of different groups of pupils, and the evaluation of lessons to improve teaching and learning, are at an early stage of development and as yet are not fully established. However, the analysis of some of this data is being used to set targets for improvement, and to meet the need of the different groups. Subject portfolios are being developed but these are not yet consistent: the music file is an example of a useful collection of well-annotated work and information that can be used to aid assessment and monitor the quality of learning.
53. The school has a draft marking policy which teachers are trialling. It appropriately emphasises the use of oral feedback and the importance of constructive written feedback to help pupils make progress and improve their work.
54. Diptford School's attention to ensuring that its pupils are well cared for makes a considerable contribution to the standards they achieve and the good progress they make during their years there.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. The strong partnership between the school and parents has been well maintained since the previous inspection. It firmly underpins the school's success and contributes well to the school's results and achievements.
56. Many positive comments were made at the pre-inspection meeting for parents and these were echoed on the large number of returned parental questionnaires, over 50 per cent. Parents feel that the school achieves good standards and are pleased with the progress that their children make. They feel that the values that it promotes and the high standards of behaviour achieved are a particular strength. They say that their children like school and believe that this is because of the good teaching that their children receive. Parents particularly appreciate the way the school values the individual nature of each child. They feel that the school is well led and managed. Parents enjoy the school's open-door policy and in particular they appreciate the headteacher's presence on the playground at the end of every school day. All staff are accessible and pleased to talk to parents at any time if they have concerns about their children. Areas that the parents would like to see improved are the information given about homework and the amount of extra-curricular activities. The inspection team agree with the parents' positive views of the school. Regarding their concerns, the inspection team judge the range of extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory given the size of the school and the number of staff available. Parents' concerns regarding the information that they receive about homework are partly justified and there is scope for greater consistency and clarity in this area. Overall, the picture presented to the inspection team is one of a very strong and mutually supportive partnership between the school and parents.
57. The Friends of Diptford School (FODS) is a hard-working parent teacher association that arranges social and fund-raising functions to benefit the school and all its pupils. The parent governors hold regular informal 'surgeries' when parents can come along and talk, air worries if they have them and make suggestions that might be helpful to the school. Parents' views and suggestions are welcomed and very good use is made of

parental talents and skills as, for example, in the construction of the planned building extension.

58. The quality of information provided by the school for parents and communication overall is very good. Newsletters are sent during each term when necessary to keep parents informed and up to date with what is happening in the school. Pupils' annual reports at the end of the school year are good. They are detailed and inform parents about what their children know, understand and can do. They are greatly improved since the previous inspection and this is appreciated by parents. Good use is made of the reports as a tool for individual target setting when they are discussed with pupils, and when used positively in the monitoring and evaluation of individual progress. This results in pupils being clear about their personal areas of strengths and weakness.
59. Two consultation evenings take place in each school year for parents to discuss their children's work and progress. At the beginning of each term parents are informed of the forthcoming timetables and areas of curriculum study. Homework is given regularly and homework diaries provide an effective means of communication between the school and parents. The prospectus is a helpful document for new parents and the governors' annual report to parents is particularly detailed and informative in fulfilling the governing body's statutory requirement to be accountable for its work during the school year.
60. A number of parents help in classrooms and are available and willing to help on trips and outings. Some parents commented that they would like a wider range of out-of-school activities to be available. The inspection team found that the school's provision in this area is similar to that in most primary schools in the country and it also noted that the school is shortly to set up a computer club in addition to the activities it already organises. The team also noted that a number of children use school transport to and from areas at some distance from the school, making activities after school almost impossible. Other pupils enjoy activities out of school organised by their parents, for example gymnastics and dancing. In a school of this small size it is not easy to ensure good take-up of extra-curricular activities out of hours and the inspection team is satisfied that the provision made in Diptford is adequate.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The headteacher gives a strong lead in setting the school ethos and values and is highly effective in promoting the positive attitudes that the pupils have to the school, to learning and to each other. She is a significant presence in the school and is highly respected by governors, parents and pupils. She is well supported by a highly committed team of teachers, who, in this small school, carry many curriculum and management responsibilities, even when they work on a part-time basis. As a result of their combined efforts, an effective range of procedures, structures and systems is now in place and there is an improved balance between the pastoral and the academic leadership of the school. All the weaknesses from the last inspection have been addressed and because of these substantial improvements the leadership and management of the school are now good.
62. The governing body gives good support to the school and, since the last inspection, governors have developed their role so that they now have a better understanding of its work. It is ably led by the chair of governors, who works well with the headteacher. An appropriate range of committees is in place. The chairs of committees carry out their responsibilities efficiently and meetings are always well attended. Governors with responsibilities for monitoring aspects of the curriculum, such as literacy and numeracy, take an appropriate interest and are well informed about their subjects. All governors take a keen interest in the school and visit it regularly. The positive and constructive approach they take to school development has a beneficial effect on both the academic and the pastoral life of the school. The governors have a good awareness of the school's performance, know the challenges that it faces and ensure that the statutory requirements are met.
63. The headteacher and staff, together with governors and parents, have been involved in the construction of the school's action plans and in agreeing priorities for the subsequent improvement plan. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are good overall. Appropriate use is made of numerical data to analyse the results of national tests against similar schools both locally and nationally. There are also appropriate systems in place to track the performance of individual pupils and to help set targets. Subject co-ordinators, who are responsible for more than one subject, have a good understanding of the subjects they lead. They monitor planning and sample work and provide their colleagues with useful feedback. The headteacher has monitored teaching and learning by observing lessons throughout the school. There is now scope to extend this good practice to all co-ordinators in order to enhance their roles in monitoring their subjects.
64. Subject development has been managed well. All staff have areas of responsibility covering the whole curriculum. Subject co-ordinators have defined roles and management responsibilities, which are clear to all staff. Job descriptions have been reviewed and revised. Co-ordinator files are in place for most subjects and show full details of the subject in the school, with maintenance and development plans, evaluation and summaries. The school plans to extend this development to the remaining subjects of the curriculum. Professional development opportunities have been identified and performance management objectives are linked well to the school's priorities for improvement as well as to individual professional development. Allocated budgets have been used effectively to maintain and develop subject areas. Subject action plans are variable in quality. The best plans are clearly aimed at improvements in standards, teaching and learning, and identify these improvements as success criteria. Weaker plans are driven by task completion.

65. Efficient administration makes a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school. Newsletters, curriculum and policy documentation are all well presented to ensure that all those within the school community are kept informed about current issues. All visitors to the school are made to feel welcome and day-to-day matters are dealt with calmly and efficiently. This makes an important contribution to the calm and orderly atmosphere that prevails throughout the school. Finances are efficiently managed. The school has written a new financial policy. The budget is carefully targeted towards school improvements and governors are provided with clear and comprehensive budget reports. Governors apply the principles of best value well. They debate expenditure rigorously, compare costs between suppliers, contrast their own expenditure with that of other similar schools and ensure that all the money that is available to the school is directed towards obtaining the best possible education for its pupils. The strategic financial management is good and ensures that there are sufficient funds to sustain developments. Capital funding for a major building project has been prudently spent as part of the school's ongoing work to maintain and improve its accommodation. Taking into account the attainment of pupils on entry to the school, the good teaching in the school, the way the school is led and managed, the high standards of personal and social education and the good standards of reading, mathematics and science, overall the school gives good value for money.
66. All staff have a clear understanding of the school's policy for equal opportunities and consistently put it into practice. The school is particularly sensitive to practical aspects of inclusion, such as funding of outside visits made by pupils. The school's ethos ensures that every child is valued and supported according to his or her needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator is the headteacher. She is experienced and well qualified, and is supported well by the teachers. She makes good use of her time to manage special needs provision, monitor its effectiveness and link with teachers. Resources are appropriately chosen to reflect the needs of pupils. The school uses its analysis of assessment results effectively to identify pupils at risk of underachieving.
67. There are sufficient teachers and, collectively with other staff, such as the peripatetic music teachers, they have the experience and expertise to cover the subjects of the curriculum and the age and ability range of the pupils. The school also makes very effective use of expertise within its community, for example, a parent who works with pupils to develop work in design and technology. There are good procedures for staff development and induction, which make a significant impact on the quality of teaching. The local authority has given effective support to help the school move forward, for example in assessment.
68. The accommodation is in sound condition and improvements, such as the development of the well-organised computer suite, are having a significant impact on improving standards. The school makes the very best use of its accommodation, although the lack of a hall and the lack of toilets in the temporary classrooms cause some time to be lost as pupils move from one building to another. The school benefits from the work of the caretaker who keeps the classrooms clean and in order. There is good use of display throughout the school to support and inform learning. The outdoor area has been developed well to support the curriculum, although there is no immediate access to a grassed area suitable for outdoor field games and athletics. The school has a satisfactory range of resources to support and enrich the curriculum in most subjects, although there is scope to improve both the quality and quantity of resources for reception-aged pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to raise standards and to improve elements of the curriculum the following key issues should be addressed.

(1) Improve pupils' writing skills by:

- increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge of how authors and poets use language for effect, to enrich and extend their own writing;
- developing opportunities for extended writing, not only in English but in other subjects of the curriculum such as geography and history;
- reducing the use of worksheets.
(See paragraphs 3, 22, 85, 86, 87, 88)

(2) Refine curriculum guidance and assessment procedures so that:

- there are clear written expectations of what pupils should know, understand and be able to do in each year group;
- assessments are precise enough to identify the next steps in learning for individual pupils;
- records can be used to monitor accurately the gains in knowledge and skills of individual pupils.
(See paragraphs 23, 24, 27, 30, 51, 102, 112, 113, 123, 129, 138)

(3) Develop links across the curriculum by:

- creating more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum;
- planning the key skills of thinking and problem solving into subjects of the curriculum.
(See paragraphs 33, 35, 106, 112, 118)

In addition to the key issues above, the governors should also consider the following issues for inclusion in their action plan:

1. Improving resources for reception-aged pupils.
(See paragraphs 68, 78)
2. Develop more opportunities to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.
(See paragraph 38)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number of lessons	1	6	16	2	0	0	0
Percentage	4	24	64	8	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		82
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		7

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	69
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y R – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	NA
Total aggregate hours worked per week	NA

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
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	£
Total income	190626
Total expenditure	189079
Expenditure per pupil	2556
Balance brought forward from previous year	9013
Balance carried forward to next year	10560

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	77
Number of questionnaires returned	42

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	29	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	86	14	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	40	8	2	5
The teaching is good.	76	21	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	38	2	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	24	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	88	12	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	52	45	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	67	33	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	85	15	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	36	29	2	2

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

70. Children are admitted to the reception class in either the September or the January of the school year in which they become five. Induction arrangements include appropriate opportunities for parents and children to visit the school in the term prior to starting. Most children have attended some form of pre-school provision, including the local pre-school playgroups and nursery. The school has good links with these groups.
71. There is a wide spread of attainment on entry to the reception classes, and the profile of each cohort varies considerably from year to year according to the individuals in the small year groups that are a feature of the school. Overall attainment on entry is broadly at the level expected for four year old children. They make good progress in relation to their starting points to reach standards that are a little above those expected for their age by the end of the reception year; and they are well prepared for the curriculum for five to seven year olds. This is because of the good teaching they receive. The school provides a well-planned curriculum, which is soundly based on the national guidance for young children. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are good arrangements to ensure that children gain the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. The personal, social and emotional development of most children who enter the school is at the level expected for their age. Teaching is good and as a result pupils make good progress and rapidly gain in confidence because of the supportive and caring ethos which helps them to feel secure. They settle quickly into well-established procedures. An appropriate range of interesting and stimulating activities is provided and this results in them being eager to learn from an early stage. They learn how to take care of their own needs and also something about how to keep safe. The development of pupils' social skills is good. Children are encouraged to use the conventions of courtesy and politeness from an early stage, and activities which help them to get to know each other, both formally and informally, are encouraged. Teachers model the language of social conventions and consistently encourage co-operation and politeness through a range of activities which promote collaboration through play and talk. Children are able to make informed decisions and choices about the activities that they will take part in and are encouraged to develop independence. At a very early stage they are given responsibilities around the classroom and they respond well to this. Behaviour is good. They understand something of the differences between right and wrong, and are developing an understanding of the consequences of their actions for others.

Communication, language and literacy

73. Assessments of children's early literacy skills, made during their first term in the reception classes, show that their performance is generally at about the level expected for children of this age. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress in relation to their starting points and attain standards that are a little above those expected for their age by the end of the reception year. They listen attentively, follow discussions well and show good concentration. Higher attaining and more confident children are keen to answer questions and also ask questions of their own, or pass comments. They are articulate, and they express their ideas clearly and well. When children are more reticent and not readily drawn into discussions the teacher is extremely skilled in handling these situations and sensitively ensures that all pupils are involved, engaging with them individually when they say little in group discussions.

74. All children enjoy sharing stories with their teacher. They enjoy hearing about 'Little Red Riding Hood', and talk with their partners about other books that they know which are set 'in the woods'. They follow the events in stories closely as the plot unfolds when they listen to stories being read aloud. They look closely at the illustrations and can use them to find out more about the characters and their feelings. The more able children are already very aware of how books work and turn readily to them. A few recognise some key words on sight and know something about the sounds that letters make. Evidence from pupils' records show that the majority of children develop a satisfactory awareness of phonics, which enables them to read most words accurately in simple texts by the end of the reception year and begin to identify meanings beyond the literal in the stories that they read or hear.
75. When account is taken of their starting points, all the children are making sound or better progress in letter formation and handwriting. By the end of the reception year most can form their letters accurately and write their own name neatly. Many are able to compose, and write down, short simple statements and sequences of ideas, although they are not yet using punctuation consistently to show where one 'sentence' might end and another begin. Most children can use their knowledge of letter sounds to build simple three-letter words, while the more able children make very plausible attempts at spelling the words they need to convey their own ideas.

Mathematical development

76. When children enter the school at the age of four, their mathematical development is at about the level expected for their age. As a result of good teaching they make good progress so that by the end of the reception year the majority attain levels that are a little above those expected for their age. They confidently count to at least ten: some can count beyond that and are quite secure in combining numbers of objects and counting accurately how many are in the full set. Most children can recognise numerals from one to nine and write them accurately. Many children have a limited mathematical vocabulary when they start school. By the time they reach the end of the reception year they can talk about how they arrive at the answer to number problems such as 'one more' or 'one less' than a given number up to 20. Many children can identify simple two-dimensional shapes such as a square, circle and triangle and recognise the language of position. They create simple patterns, for example printing with two-dimensional shapes to depict different number sequences and patterns.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world are a little above the levels expected for their age by the end of the reception year as a result of good teaching which ensures a wide range of opportunities for learning; these include formal input, practical play experiences and visits to places within the locality and further afield. Children become increasingly aware of the area in which they live and of the services that people who live in the area provide. For example, they have been to the church and re-enacted a baptism. They know something about growth and change in living creatures through their observations of frogs in the school pond. They have an early understanding of the passing of time and their place within it as a result of reflecting on changes in themselves and the toys that they play with. Children achieve well when making models from construction. They demonstrate good levels of achievement for their age when using computers. They follow instructions carefully and demonstrate good hand and eye control when controlling images on screen using a mouse.

Physical development

78. Children in the reception class benefit from suitable opportunities to develop their manipulative skills when using construction toys, and when painting, weaving, drawing

and cutting. They make good progress and develop an appropriate degree of dexterity for their age as a result of good teaching. Appropriate use is made of the village hall and playground for physical education which involves the children in more formal activities. Children listen carefully and respond to instructions to move in various ways and in various directions. They show a good awareness of their own space in relation to others, and are able to control the speed of their movements. Children have access to an outdoor play area, which is equipped with climbing apparatus. There is, however, scope for more resources to improve the quality of outdoor play.

Creative development

79. Teaching for children's creative development is good and as a result children make good progress to achieve standards a little above those expected by the end of the reception year. They respond well to opportunities to express their ideas when singing, painting, role-playing and moving and dancing to music. They learn a good range of songs by heart, and sing them enthusiastically at an early stage. There are good opportunities for children to use musical instruments to make up their own musical compositions. Children have the ability to make up their own imaginative stories when using the role-play areas and small world equipment but there is a paucity of resources to develop these skills. They are taught the skills of mixing paint and brush control and go on to use these skills in creating imaginative representations of what they see, hear and feel. There are ample opportunities for children to explore a range of different media and to use them for mark making and to compose their own pictures and patterns.

ENGLISH

80. The results of national reading tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2001 were in the top five per cent, both nationally and when compared to similar schools. Results of writing tests were also well above average. The results of national tests in English for pupils in Year 6 were in line with the national average, but below average when compared with similar schools. These less favourable results can be partly explained by the nature of the cohort. Further analysis shows, however, that whilst 90 per cent of pupils attained the level expected in reading, only 50 per cent did so in writing. There was lower attainment in writing than in reading. This has been recognised by the school and plans have been drawn up to remedy the situation.
81. The findings of the inspection are that pupils throughout the school make good progress in reading and most achieve standards that are above those expected by the time they reach Years 2 and 6. In writing they make satisfactory progress overall and most pupils attain the levels that are expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the very good provision that the school makes and the good support that they receive from teaching assistants. Gifted and talented pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve the levels expected in relation to their starting points on entry to the school.
82. The evidence of the inspection is that pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average. Throughout the school, pupils speak confidently, articulate words clearly and use Standard English. They listen attentively and with understanding, both to their teachers and to their classmates. For example, in the course of their work in literacy, Year 1 pupils engaged in well-focused discussions about story settings with their 'talk partners'. In Year 2 pupils suggested a range of interesting adjectives to enliven the meaning of nouns and to describe settings within the book 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. The oldest pupils in the school generate questions in response to given answers, describe alternative solutions, and develop their ideas using complex sentences. They presented rational arguments well in the course of short debates, such as, "Would you rather be thrown into a bed of nettles or chased by a lion?" Pupils' skills

in choral speaking are also well developed. For example, Year 6 pupils recited the poem 'Matilda' by Hilary Belloc, with confidence, enthusiasm and expression, clearly appreciating the rhythm of the words and the humour of this cautionary tale.

83. Pupils' reading skills are above average throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils use a range of phonetic and grammatical clues to decipher new words and have positive attitudes to the books that they read. With the help of the teachers they look more deeply into the text to find hidden meaning. Older pupils develop and use a wider range of reading cues. Average and higher attaining pupils read with accuracy and fluency, and enjoy reading complex literature and poetry, both at home and at school. Although lower attaining pupils have the skills to decipher words and read aloud with appropriate accuracy, their comprehension is weak and this limits their enjoyment of the stories they read, reducing their ability to use contextual clues to work out the meaning of new words. Throughout the school, where weaknesses occur, it is because pupils' apparently fluent speaking skills and their ability to decode new words, often mask their general lack of a wide and varied vocabulary.
84. Pupils develop their literacy skills well in the course of sharing a range of texts during whole-class sessions. For example, pupils in Year 6 know how authors use figurative language to create effect, and demonstrated this, for example, when reading the poem 'The Highwayman', suggesting that when the poet wrote, 'The wind was a torrent of darkness coming from gusty trees', it made the poem come alive. In the course of their study of the poem 'The Door', by Miroslav Holub, pupils in Years 4 and 5 noted that the poet had used few adjectives, and yet he had created a poem which evoked great mystery. When asked about its meaning they commented, "Its like a puzzle", "You don't know what he's thinking", and, "Maybe there is a magical city, you don't know". Pupils' knowledge of the technical terms of literacy is good; for example they suggest how authors and poets choose their words carefully, using alliteration and onomatopoeia, to create impact. They also demonstrate that they know about a wide range of literature, both in their reading at home and in their studies at school. This enables them to state their reading preferences with knowledge and confidence, often comparing the work of different authors.
85. Throughout the school standards of writing are broadly in line with those expected for their age, but are not as high as in reading. Standards of writing are much the same as those found in the last inspection for pupils in Years 1 and 2 but are not as high for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. In Years 1 and 2 pupils recognise different genres of text, and can write in similar styles. For example, they have produced list poems, recounted versions of 'The Pig in the Pond', and written imaginative stories based on 'The Snowman'. However, attainment at the higher levels is limited because pupils do not always apply the skills they gain from the study of literature to their own writing. For example, they listened to descriptions of the factory that is the main setting of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. They suggested a range of appropriate adjectives to enrich their imaginative ideas of the setting for the story, but then regressed to simple words and phrases in their own writing.
86. Older pupils communicate meaning clearly in narrative and also non-narrative form, for example, in their writing up of factual information about other countries of the world, autobiographical accounts of their own lives, instructions on 'How to wash the dog', and their own creative poetry and myths. By the end of Year 6 they are familiar with a range of textual genres and write in a range of styles. They produce some effective descriptions; for example, one pupil wrote a description of a wood, "The sun is just visible through the leaves, its rays falling through the branches, flooding the darkness with light". However, where weaknesses occur it is because pupils are not making sufficient use of their good knowledge of literature in their own writing, for example by

developing their ideas using complex sentences and making use of figurative language to enrich their work. They also make limited use of new and more difficult words.

87. Although pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the sound and spelling system and use it well in the course of learning spellings for tests, these skills are not always transferred to their own writing. Work in English is usually satisfactorily presented, with fluent and legible handwriting. In the main pupils make satisfactory use of their literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum, although they are constrained in some lessons by the overuse of worksheets. There is also scope for pupils to develop their skills of extended writing in other subjects such as geography and history. Appropriate use is made of computers, both for research and for word processing.
88. The teaching of English is good throughout the school. Teachers know their pupils well and the quality of the relationships between teachers and pupils is a strength of the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to inform their planning and preparation for lessons. They use questions skilfully to help pupils to extend their thinking and develop their ideas. They use practical methods, such as role-play, to help pupils' develop their understanding of imaginary ideas, such as the amazing sight of Willie Wonka's Chocolate Factory. They also make very good use of 'talk partners', to help pupils to share their ideas, so ensuring that all are involved in making their contributions to lessons. Throughout the school, lesson objectives are clearly linked to the National Strategy for Literacy. They are shared with pupils so that they clearly understand the purpose of the lesson. Good use is made of a wide range of literature to deepen pupils' knowledge of the grammar, form and structure of English. Lively and enthusiastic explanations are very effective in engaging pupils' attention and motivating their learning. The grouping arrangements enable all pupils to learn at a level appropriate to their age and ability. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Ongoing questioning and oral feedback to individuals are used well to help pupils overcome misconceptions and to help with the development of ideas. Pupils readily turn to dictionaries to help with the spelling of new words and there are also some examples of lengthy writing. Although the school has made satisfactory progress in these areas since the last inspection, there remains scope for further development, for example by promoting the use of a more complex vocabulary in writing and by the development of opportunities for extended writing in other areas of the curriculum.
89. Support staff are used well to help pupils with special educational needs make progress and also to support groups of pupils working independently of the teacher. Appropriate use is made of homework to build on the work that pupils do in school, and parents give good support in this to their children. This makes a significant impact on the progress that pupils make, particularly in reading and spelling.
90. The subject is well managed and the curriculum fully complies with statutory requirements. A range of good assessment procedures is in place, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. There is now scope to develop their use to precisely inform the next steps in learning for individual children. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

91. The last inspection found that there was a need to raise standards in mathematics for pupils in Years 3 to 6 by improving teachers' subject knowledge, using the National Numeracy Strategy more effectively as a basis for planning and providing challenging activities to meet the needs of all the pupils, especially those who are gifted and talented. The school has put in place a series of measures to address these issues, and their success can most readily be judged by looking at the results of tests for pupils in Year 6 over the last three years. In 1998 only 58 per cent achieved the levels expected, whereas in the last two years the figure is 85 per cent and 80 respectively.

Results in 2001 are in line with the national average, but well below those of similar schools. This can be partly explained by the nature of the year group that took the tests but also by the fact that the school's efforts to improve standards in mathematics were not fully embedded at the time of the tests. The evidence of this inspection is that standards have risen further since 2001 and, as a result of very good teaching and improved assessment and tracking procedures, pupils are on course to reach or exceed the standards predicted for them by the end of Year 6.

92. The results for Year 2 pupils in 2001 national tests were well above average compared with all schools nationally and when compared with similar schools. This suggests that the high standards witnessed by the last inspection team have been maintained. There are no significant differences between boys and girls at either key stage.
93. The findings of this inspection confirm that standards for pupils in Years 3 to 6 have indeed risen and are now above average and that pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve well in relation to their starting points on entry to the school. The very good work being done by the higher attaining pupils is of a standard that is in line with their capabilities. This is an improvement since the last inspection and there is no longer underachievement in this area. In a lesson observed with the top class, pupils in Year 6, and many of the younger pupils too, were very proficient in mental methods of calculation. They had prepared number 'journeys' to a precise set of instructions that required high-level mental arithmetic skills to follow, for example, starting with a number, which was doubled, multiplied by 100, halved and divided by 10 etc. All were able to follow a good part of the journey, and the more able quickly came up with the right answer even when it involved keeping large numbers in their heads and doubling or halving decimal fractions. When working with angles almost all could use a protractor with confidence, could identify acute, obtuse or right angles and many, including all of Year 6, could accurately estimate and then measure a variety of angles. The higher achievers were able to use their knowledge that the angles of a triangle add up to 180 degrees to correctly calculate the remaining angles of a right-angled triangle or all three angles of an equilateral triangle.
94. Pupils in Year 1 can count with confidence beyond 30 and show with their fingers different ways of making the number five. They can use a calculator with confidence to find the question when given the answer, for example, knowing that $6 - 1$ is a way of giving the answer 5. Most know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes such as square, circle and rectangle. A higher attaining pupil recalled having made a hexagon by putting triangles together and other more able pupils could readily recognise a shape by listening to a description of its properties. By the end of Year 2 pupils are beginning to understand place value and using this to order numbers up to 100. The high achievers are familiar with numbers up to 1000. Most recognise sequences of numbers such as odd and even. They are beginning to use different mental strategies to solve problems.
95. Teaching in mathematics is good and sometimes very good. This has a significant impact on the progress that pupils make. In the best lessons the teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and plan appropriately, setting clear objectives that the pupils understand. In these lessons the teachers challenge and inspire pupils so that motivation is high and learning sustained. The tasks are carefully tailored to the needs of different abilities because the teachers have assessed knowledge and understanding and planned accordingly for each group or individual. An outstanding example of this was provided by the top class, where the teacher had designed a variety of worksheets to consolidate and extend learning for all abilities and ages in the class. The pace of the lesson, and the high level of challenge in both the aural and the practical work, led to high levels of motivation and excellent learning for all pupils in each year group, including those with special needs and the specially talented. Learning is less effective when the tasks are not appropriate for all the pupils.

96. A great deal of work has been done since the last inspection to improve the quality of mathematics provision throughout the school. There is now a very good policy that contains much sound and practical information about how the subject is delivered. It includes advice on teaching styles, assessment and recording, continuity and progression, availability of resources and homework. There is also a good section on the contribution of mathematics to other subjects in the curriculum. There is particular and appropriate emphasis on planning for mixed age classes to ensure a steady progression of skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the school. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is not mentioned in the policy and this should be rectified. However, there is plenty of evidence of good practice in this area with targets for mathematics included in some individual education plans and differentiated work and extra help being given where needed. Booster classes are also having a positive impact for older pupils.
97. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress have improved considerably since the last inspection and teachers are now using a system of recording to indicate which aspects of each mathematical topic pupils have or have not fully understood. For example, the worksheets on angles given to pupils in the top class were closely related to what the pupils knew and understood so that all made very good progress during the lesson.
98. Leadership is good, and the co-ordinator provides a very good role model with her enthusiasm and secure knowledge of the subject. She has carefully analysed test results and put into place strategies for developing weaker areas. For instance, her analysis suggested that many pupils had a weakness in solving 'word' problems, so this was discussed at staff meetings and strategies put in place to reinforce this area of learning. 'Maths Diaries', in which pupils record objectives and make their own evaluations, have been successfully introduced in the top class. This has helped to give pupils more involvement in their own learning and has also given support to the system of target setting. An audit of resources has been carried out, and new resources carefully introduced alongside topics to give extra support to teachers in their planning. Plans for further development, which include linking mathematics more closely to the rolling programme of topics, and to subjects such as ICT, are appropriate. The co-ordinator now needs to make sure that these good systems are firmly embedded so that the recent improvements in teaching and learning are consolidated throughout the school.

SCIENCE

99. Science was found to be a strength of the school at the last inspection. The evidence available at this inspection suggests that this remains the case. The latest results from the national tests for eleven year olds show that by the end of Year 6 the school's performance is above the national average. This is because more than half of the pupils taking the test in 2001 attained at above the levels expected. High standards are evident in assessments for pupils in Year 2, which show that the school's results are well above national averages in all aspects of science except experimental and investigative science, where results are average. There are no significant differences between boys and girls at either key stage. Progress between the key stages appears to be only average, but the small size of cohorts and pupil mobility make it difficult to calculate this reliably.
100. Only two science lessons were seen during this inspection, and because of severe flooding, which caused parents to collect their children earlier than normal, both lessons were disrupted. However, enough evidence was gleaned from these lessons and from pupils' workbooks, to conclude that pupils' knowledge and understanding of science are still above average by the time they leave the school. Particularly noteworthy is the way the pupils have thoroughly absorbed the principles of fair testing. In a lesson on soluble and insoluble substances, all the pupils in the top class from Year 4 to Year 6 were able to organise a test taking into account the need to have everything exactly the same apart from one variable. When one pair tried to introduce variables by crumbling a meat-extract cube into a glass of hot water while the whole cube remained in cold water, they quickly realised that this invalidated the test. Pupils were able to clearly explain scientific terms such as soluble. Their workbooks show that by Year 6 they are making predictions and drawing conclusions that are consistent with the evidence. They are showing a deeper understanding of scientific concepts and relating these to real-life situations in an individual way, for instance when describing the effect of the forces of gravity and air pressure on a parachute jump.
101. Very little was seen of younger pupils' work, but in her planning for the weather-disrupted lesson, the teacher was clearly building on previous investigative work carried out on the topic of 'hot and cold'. In the brief discussion which time allowed, the pupils showed a good understanding of how objects might lose or gain heat according to the conditions in which they were kept. They were able to describe how an ice cube had taken longer to melt when wrapped in paper towels or 'bubble wrap'. The more able are already beginning to understand what constitutes a fair test.
102. With their record of good achievement in science, the teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have high expectations for the pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their science lessons, and tackle investigations in a positive and confident way. They work well together in pairs or small groups and listen carefully to each other's opinions. All contributions are valued, and less able pupils or those with special educational needs take a full part in activities and discussions because they are not afraid to make mistakes. Activities are often open ended enough to give higher attaining pupils extra challenge and develop their understanding, but there is scope for improvement in the way skills and knowledge are taught systematically as pupils move through the year groups. In the full lesson observed, and in the work-books, it was not always clear what was expected from the older pupils which was not necessarily expected from the younger ones.
103. The adoption of national guidelines, which are still being adapted to the needs of the school, have ensured good coverage of all the programmes of study. Procedures and practices for assessment are better than at the time of the last inspection. Assessment sheets at the end of each unit of work are completed, and this is a useful guide to what has been covered, but monitoring of standards is still at a relatively early stage and

there is no system of target setting. The use of ICT to support the science curriculum is still underdeveloped. In order to ensure that the high standards of the last few years are maintained, the co-ordinator will need to work towards a system for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning to enable her to have a clearer picture of strengths and weaknesses in the subject throughout the school.

ART AND DESIGN

104. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Although teaching and learning were good in this lesson, it is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching and learning throughout the school. Other judgements are based on scrutiny of past work and the displays around the school. The pupils' attainment in Year 6 and Year 2 is average, and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment. Displays around the school and samples of past work show a good standard of presentation but lack the recognition they deserve, as work is not always named and there is little accompanying text to inform the viewer about the display. This is a missed opportunity for pupils to appreciate their own achievements and those of others.
105. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a variety of materials and techniques successfully, including paint, pencil, collage, pastels and printmaking. The pupils in Year 1 produced portraits showing important facial features accurately when drawing themselves and when copying portraits by famous artists. Work in folders shows that Year 2 pupils have had a range of experiences and materials, including printmaking. They have produced attractive fish prints, which clearly show elements of texture and line.
106. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to use a range of materials to create effects and record their experiences. Pupils increase their skills and employ a wider range of techniques in their work. In the middle class, pupils used more than one medium together to produce attractive leaf designs and water lilies in the style of Monet. Pupils in the top class created still-life pictures, making choices about how to use colour, line, shading, perspective and texture. Pupils use the work of famous artists as a starting point for their own creative work; this was particularly evident in the work linked to ICT when pupils created work in the style of Matisse and Mondrian. Older pupils use sketchbooks well to experiment, record and develop techniques. Throughout their time in school, pupils improve not only their two-dimensional skills but also their three-dimensional techniques as they experiment with textiles and threads to produce weavings and attractive appliquéd leaves. There is scope to give more opportunities for pupils to evaluate their work to help them develop and improve their own skills.
107. Art now has a specific place on the timetable and the school has maintained the standards since the last inspection. Art has not been the focus for development recently so there is no policy for the subject. However, the experiences provided by the teachers are based on the nationally recommended guidance and the co-ordinator has put together a portfolio which provides teachers with useful ideas and guidance related to working in a range of media and for teaching various techniques. Medium and short-term planning does not clearly indicate the progression pupils are expected to make year on year and this restricts the pupils' progress. There is an effective balance of activities, with the exception of three-dimensional work using clay. The pupils have benefited from working with the enthusiastic co-ordinator and from visits from various artists. Each year, talented pupils have the opportunity to attend residential workshops, and this has a positive impact on their learning. Currently, assessment is based on national guidelines but does not clearly indicate what pupils need to do next in order to make progress. The action plan to improve the subjects is based on tasks rather than objectives, so the outcomes do not relate to how the quality of teaching and learning can be improved. Resources are satisfactory and the school is fortunate in having a kiln on site.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. The school has made sound improvement since the last inspection. Although the subject has not had a high priority, there have been clear improvements in the way it is planned and monitored, and provision in Years 3 to 6 is now satisfactory.
109. Two lessons were seen during the inspection and during these standards achieved by pupils were broadly in line with expectations. Pupils in Year 2 used appropriate language when talking about food products and were able to discuss important features about packaging. All showed an awareness of the need for a strong container to prevent squashing, and the more able appreciated the advantages of the container being transparent and understood the importance of a 'sell by' date. They were all familiar with different food groups and understood the need for a balanced diet. In previous work on designing torches they were able to design for a particular purpose and select materials and techniques appropriate to the task.
110. In the top class, pupils in Year 6 showed sound recall of previous learning about structures. They understood that a flat sheet becomes much stronger if it is curved or folded and that a triangular shape is particularly strong. Some of the more able could explain that this is because when pressure is put on the point of a triangle the load is spread to the base. In the discussion led by a volunteer helper they demonstrated a good understanding of how this technology is used in roof construction. They showed sound skill and confidence in the way that they assembled materials such as construction kits, wooden sticks and rolled newspapers. In previous work on cams their diagrams and written accounts show that most have gained a good idea of how this technology is put to use in various types of machine.
111. In both lessons, all pupils, including those with special needs, were fully involved and making satisfactory progress. A particularly strong feature is the way pupils co-operate and work together in a mature and sensible way, and take an active part in discussions. The 'brainstorming' sessions when pupils consider a question in small groups are very effective. In these ways the subject makes a good contribution to personal development.
112. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. The best features are the way in which teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves and continually evaluate what they are doing. For example, in the lesson on structures they considered why most had chosen a flexible rather than a rigid join when constructing a tent shape. However, there is not enough clarity about the progression of skills and knowledge in each year group, which results in tasks and expectations being too similar for such a wide age range. Good use is made of visitors to enrich the curriculum and provide practical expertise. The examples of triangular structures, such as a kite and a model of a big wheel, brought to school by a volunteer parent, were very effective in providing inspiration for the pupils' own efforts.
113. The adoption by the school of National Curriculum guidelines has ensured better coverage of the programmes of study for design and technology. A start has also been made on a folder to exemplify work at different levels and on whole-class assessments at the end of each unit of work. The action plan is realistic and reflects the fact that further development in the subject is a long-term aim, but in the short term the co-ordinator should ensure that there are clear guidelines for the basic skills, knowledge and understanding expected in each year group.

GEOGRAPHY

114. By the end of Year 6 and Year 2, pupils attain standards which are expected nationally for pupils of these age groupings. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be unsatisfactory and the subject did not meet statutory

requirements. Only one geography lesson was seen and so judgements are based mainly on scrutiny of past work and displays. Most pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, build appropriately on their prior attainment and achieve satisfactorily as they move through the key stage.

115. Pupils in Class 1 easily identify differences between the town and the countryside using geographical vocabulary for the places and features they know. Pupils in Year 1 discuss Russian artefacts with enthusiasm and they asked and answered questions about the resources, remembered facts from when a visitor spoke to them about Russia and were fascinated by the fact that the weather can be so cold that the hairs inside your nose freeze. Due to severe weather conditions when pupils had to leave the school early, it was not possible to observe a full geography lesson in Key Stage 2. However, pupils in Class 3 were working on their own projects; setting their own questions and using the Internet to find answers and information about ecological themes such as the effects of acid rain and endangered species; their work was of a satisfactory standard.
116. The teaching was good in the lesson observed at the lower end of the school. The teacher established effective links with the pupils' previous experiences, by asking probing questions and making good use of the Russian artefacts so that pupils responded positively and with enthusiasm. Activities were well planned to consolidate, and then extend, the pupils' knowledge and understanding. The teacher made good use of 'talking partners' when pupils discussed aspects of the lesson with each other. Most pupils are very articulate and this discussion makes a good contribution to their oracy skills.
117. During the lesson in Class 3, the teacher had to supervise the collection of the pupils due to severe weather conditions and consequently had a limited input to the lesson. During the afternoon, the number of pupils dwindled from 28 to six. Therefore, it was not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2. However, the teacher's planning was good and pupils were given the help and support they needed to continue with their project work.
118. Scrutiny of previous work indicates that, by Year 6, pupils can describe physical features and processes related to the water cycle and explain the meaning of geographical vocabulary relating to rivers, such as meander and tributary. Older pupils use ICT skills effectively to find and print out information to include in their topic work. There is scope to extend opportunities for pupils' to apply literacy and numeracy skills in geography.
119. The school has adopted the scheme of work suggested nationally and this is used throughout the school, but in Classes 2 and 3, all pupils in the same class are expected to complete the same work regardless of the year group they are in. This is because the medium and short-term planning does not clearly indicate the progression pupils are expected to make year on year and this restricts their progress. In addition, there is an overuse of photocopied worksheets, and this hinders progress and limits opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding to deeper levels. Teachers provide scope for project work, which enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils, with opportunities for independence and challenge. Assessment is based on the nationally accepted guidelines but does not clearly indicate what pupils need to do next in order to make progress.
120. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and the policy gives useful guidance for teachers. There is scope to develop action plans that are more precisely related to how the quality of teaching and learning can be improved. Resources are satisfactory overall; the school has built up a wide range of geography books in the library which are useful for research work, and artefacts are borrowed from the library and museum service when required.

HISTORY

121. Only one Class 2 history lesson was seen during the inspection and this was based on research techniques, which are useful in history but would apply equally well to other subjects. Judgements relating to standards are based on scrutiny of previous work and work on display. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain average standards. The last report did not make a judgement on standards at the end of Year 2, but judged standards by the time the pupils leave the school to be above average. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily in relation to their prior attainment by the time they leave the school. There was very little work available in history for Year 2 pupils, as all previous work had been sent home. Current work in progress relating to the Celts and Romans revealed that pupils in Year 2 are developing factual knowledge of the life of the Celts and are beginning to answer questions about the past, using reference materials, such as what implements they used and what work they did. Pupils in Year 6 know basic facts about civilisations such as the Ancient Egyptians and the Victorians, finding their information from a range of sources such as books, the Internet, and CD-ROMs. They develop an appropriate understanding of how societies have changed, and about the lives of famous people, for instance Dr. Barnardo and Lord Shaftesbury. They make sensible comparisons with life now and develop effective skills in gathering evidence to support their ideas.
122. There were insufficient opportunities to judge the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 but in the one lesson seen in, teaching was good. The teacher's objective to produce a whole-class reference chart to enable the pupils to find historical information more easily in the future was communicated effectively to the pupils. The teacher gave clear, step-by-step instructions then monitored the pupils to ensure that they understood what was expected of them and to clarify any misunderstandings. The pupils soon realised what a good idea the reference chart was, and responded very enthusiastically by working together in mixed age groups to make decisions, older pupils helping the younger ones. By the end of the lesson, most had a good understanding of how to begin using the chart to help them to find information in the future. This lesson provided good links to literacy and enhanced research techniques.
123. Evidence from past work indicates that older pupils use ICT skills effectively to find and print out information to include in their topic work. Overall, pupils have few opportunities to write extensively or use their numeracy skills; most of their writing is factually based and of limited length. The standard of presentation varies and the teachers' marking is mainly ticks. These shortcomings restrict the pupils' progress. Nationally recommended guidance is used for planning throughout the school, but in Class 2 and Class 3, all pupils in the same class are expected to complete the same work regardless of the year group they are in. This is because the medium and short-term planning does not clearly indicate the progression pupils are expected to make year on year and this restricts pupils' progress. Teachers address individual needs by giving opportunities for pupils to complete independent project work. Currently, assessment is based on the nationally accepted guidelines but does not clearly indicate what pupils need to do next in order to make progress.
124. History has not been the focus for development recently. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership overall and the policy is currently under review. However, the action plan is based on tasks rather than objectives, and the expected outcomes do not relate to how the quality of teaching and learning can be improved. Resources are satisfactory overall; the school has built up a wide range of history books in the library which are useful for research work, and artefacts are borrowed from the library and museum service when required. The subject is enhanced by a number of visits to places of historic interest such as Morwhellam Quay.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

125. The last inspection found that provision for ICT was poor and did not meet statutory requirements. The school has made good progress since then, and although there is still some way to go, standards overall are now satisfactory. The computer suite is in regular use and basic skills are being well taught by the co-ordinator with able assistance from support staff. There is still some way to go in ensuring that ICT plays a full part right across the curriculum.
126. Two lessons were seen in the computer suite, both taken by the co-ordinator. In a session with pupils in the reception group, some of whom had only been in school for a few weeks, it was clear that the pupils were already absorbing the basic skills, and their confidence in using the technology was above national expectations. Most were able to name different parts of the machine such as monitor, keyboard and computer, and knew how to double click the mouse. They were able to load a disc “shiny side down” and the older ones used the cursor with confidence to locate the correct buttons. Work on display suggests that pupils in year 2 are proficient in creating computer-generated images such as different shapes of leaves, and in creating abstract patterns in the style of a famous artist.
127. Year 6 pupils were finding and presenting information from the Internet in connection with a topic on pollution. They were all confident in searching the net to find useful websites for their projects, and were beginning to use the information selectively for their own purposes. They know how to select, copy and paste passages of text, and can save work to individual folders. In geography, many have used these skills to produce interesting studies of different countries.
128. There was not enough evidence in folders or on display to give a clear indication of standards in all areas of ICT. The planning suggests that all areas are now being covered but, because the systematic teaching of skills and knowledge has been fully implemented only since the last inspection, there is not yet a clear progression through each year group. The school recognises that there is a need for the further development of opportunities to develop data handling, multi-media work and control technology. The teaching seen during this inspection was good and matched by the response of the pupils. They clearly enjoy the subject and are able to talk confidently about things they have learned since the computer suite came into operation. The technology is being effectively used to support pupils with special educational needs and makes a good contribution to personal development. This was particularly evident in the lesson with the youngest pupils where the way in which they were able to take turns, share and help each other was quite outstanding for such young children.
129. Leadership in the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a very good grasp of where the school is now and what is needed in the immediate and longer term. The action plan contains everything that is necessary for the subject to go forward, including the need to continue to develop resources, particularly for such things as data handling and control technology, and linking the ICT work more closely to the existing rolling programme of topics. Further training for staff is needed to ensure that the technology is used to maximum effect in the classroom, and this too is central to the plan. Very effective use is made of the expertise of the co-ordinator and a member of the support staff, but the school recognises that this on its own is not enough. Systems for monitoring and evaluating pupils’ work have been set up and, although these are in the early stages, they should lead to a greater certainty about standards and the levels expected in each year group.

MUSIC

130. Only one Class 3 music lesson for Years 4, 5 and 6 was seen, but evidence from this, the very good portfolio of work, music in assembly and teachers' planning documentation, shows that the subject is well taught, and that the majority of pupils are attaining above the levels expected at the end of Year 2 and in line with those expected by the end of Year 6. Throughout the school all pupils sing with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They have a well-developed sense of musical shape and melody and sing with expression
131. The youngest pupils in the school explore sounds and recognise how they can be made and changed. For example, they experiment with short and long sounds using their voices, bodies, and tuned and untuned percussion. They then record these sounds and sort them in pictorial form. They work on sounds in the environment and develop a good understanding of high and low sounds, using their voices in different ways to follow notation in contour lines to perform 'Incy Wincy Spider'. They develop a good understanding of how sounds can be made, for example, by looking closely at the guitar and violin, and shortening the strings to vary the sound.
132. As they move through the school pupils develop their understanding of how sounds can be organised and represented using symbols, and begin to recognise how the musical elements can be used to create different moods and effects. For example, they have studied 'hunter' from Peter and the Wolf, looked closely at how the music fitted with the story and then used the same musical structure to create their own stories, drawing a cartoon of the story, creating their own musical notation underneath, and finally recording their compositions.
133. They have a sound theoretical knowledge and can identify famous compositions, for example those of Albinoni, Beethoven, and Barber. They also have a good awareness of less traditional work such as that of Mike Oldfield. They have a sound grasp of some of the technical language used by musicians and recognise most of the instruments of the orchestra by sight and sound. The oldest pupils in the school recognise and follow simple forms of more formal notation. For example, they use the notes GABCD to work on pitch. They also develop a good understanding of how musical compositions are comprised of layers of sounds.
134. In the Class 3 lesson seen, teaching was very good. There was very good use of time from the moment pupils came into the classroom, when music was playing and questions had been written on the board for them to think about whilst the register was completed. There was skilful use of questions to encourage pupils to think for themselves and to move learning on. This included excellent open-ended questioning to establish pupils' level of understanding of the meaning of musical terms and resulted in some thoughtful answers, such as, "If your body was full of music, then your heart would be the pulse, keeping a steady beat". Questions are also appropriately challenging, frequently addressed to specific year groups within the class and focused on what they are expected to know and understand. As a result of this very good teaching, pupils made very good progress, working at the edge of their capabilities throughout the lesson.
135. The subject is very well led and fully complies with the requirements. Opportunities for pupils to have individual tuition, on a range of musical instruments, make a significant contribution to the standards achieved. All pupils are given an opportunity to take part in lessons and those with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils, make good progress. Termly quizzes are an innovative way of assessing progress and both these and ongoing questioning and feedback are used well to inform the next steps in learning for each class. Standards and provision have improved since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. During the inspection, only Class 1 were seen having physical education lessons. Therefore, no secure judgement can be made of standards at the end of Year 2, or at the end of Year 6, nor can a comparison be made with standards at the time of the last inspection, when they were in line with expectations.
137. Pupils in Year 1 can perform a wide range of ways of travelling between markers: they hop, jump and slither with a good degree of control. They follow instructions well and demonstrate enthusiasm when working independently or with a partner to produce a repeating pattern in their movements. The quality of teaching was good in the lessons observed and promoted effective learning. The teacher communicated well with the pupils, the pace was brisk and the teacher was careful to stress the importance of safe practice and to encourage the pupils to complete appropriate 'warm-up' and 'cool-down' routines before and after exercise. These strategies enrich the pupils' understanding of the importance of physical activity to their health. When the teacher gave specific teaching points such as reminding the pupils that they need to show when they are ready to start their movement, and when they have finished, the pupils responded very well and improved their performance.
138. The policy provides teachers with useful guidance and, throughout the school, the curriculum is planned using the nationally agreed national guidance. This guidance is used well to ensure that the pupils experience a full and well-balanced curriculum which is enriched by opportunities to take part in the football club and swimming gala and, for older pupils, to take part in two residential trips when they can further their skills in sports such as surfing, sailing, kayaking, and climbing. Due to unavoidable circumstances, sports clubs did not run during the inspection. However, the planning does not clearly indicate the progression pupils are expected to make year on year and this restricts pupils' progress. Teachers address individual needs by giving effective oral feedback, as well as help and support during lessons. Currently, assessment is based on the nationally recommended guidelines but this does not indicate what pupils need to do next in order to make progress.
139. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and is responsible for much of the teaching in this subject throughout the school. The subject enjoys a high profile and a significant amount of time is devoted to it. The school is keen that the pupils understand the importance of exercise and of having 'Healthy Hearts' and so offers a 15-minute exercise spot before school each morning. Unfortunately, it was not possible to observe this in action during the inspection due to severe weather conditions. However, Class 3 pupils were observed performing a range of stretching exercises and in Class 1 the pupils engaged in actions and activities that helped to promote good co-ordination skills. To help further the pupils' gymnastic skills, Classes 2 and 3 are soon to have a block of six one-hour lessons from a specialist lecturer.
140. As the action plan is based on tasks rather than objectives, and the expected outcomes do not relate to how the quality of teaching and learning can be improved, it is not as useful as it might be. Resources are satisfactory overall, and there are sufficient small items of equipment for a whole class to use them effectively. These resources are used well to support teaching and learning. The school has access to the spacious village hall and the village playing field, which provides a good space for pupils to move around. The school has a hard surface playing area and a small adventure playground, which provides opportunities for challenging activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

141. No lessons were seen in religious education and so it is not possible to give a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. However, evidence

from pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that pupils make sound progress as they move through the school and achieve the standards expected by the end of Year 6.

142. Pupils have a sound knowledge and awareness that religious traditions in the United Kingdom are mainly Christian although other principal religions are represented. They know some of the traditions of the Christian faith as celebrated in the United Kingdom and the stories behind them – for example, those leading up to Easter. They are also aware of some of the stories and festivals of the Jewish and Hindu faiths.
143. They develop their understanding of the distinctive features of religious traditions and their application to everyday life to believers in their studies of famous people. For example, in their work on such people as Florence Nightingale, Mother Theresa, Nelson Mandela, and William Wilberforce, they have reflected on how people can make a difference to the lives of those around them and of how their religious beliefs can sustain them in time of difficulty. They are also aware of the importance of Mecca to Islam, and some of the traditions attached to pilgrimage.
144. They have a sound grasp of basic religious concepts and symbolism through their frequent visits to the local church and their studies of rites of passage, such as baptism. In the course of their work they have discussed the differences between right and wrong, and good and evil, and how such images can be represented. They have also thought deeply about images of God and what such images would be like if 'God was a colour', or 'God was an animal' – for example, "If he was a giraffe he could see everything". They have reflected deeply on the differences between peoples and their points of view, for example, the feelings of American children and Muslim children about the situation after 11th September.
145. Pupils' ability to form thoughtful views on religious issues is very good. Evidence from their work shows thoughtful reflections on the feelings of characters in religious stories and how people were helped through their difficulties by their faith in God. For example, they have written about their thoughts on how Moses may have felt in the events that led to him leaving Egypt ('lonely, sad, frightened'), and considered how angry he must have felt at the sight of his people's suffering. In their work on religious traditions such as harvest they reflect about their lives in relation to other countries and those who are less fortunate than themselves and who do not get enough to eat. Children have reflected on the wonder of creation and have devised rules on how to keep the world beautiful. They have reflected on the differences in the perceptions of those with different religious beliefs and this has deepened their understanding of how to see things from various points of view.
146. The subject is well led and fully complies with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There is a well-planned programme of work which develops progressively through the school. Well-planned assemblies also make a significant contribution to pupils' religious education.