

INSPECTION REPORT

SHIPBOURNE SCHOOL

Shipbourne, Tonbridge

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118311

Headteacher: Mrs Catherine Farthing

Reporting inspector: Mrs Judith Charlesworth
21501

Dates of inspection: 11th – 12th October 2000

Inspection number: 224827

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 –11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stumble Hill Shipbourne Tonbridge Kent
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr George Kirk
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Shipbourne school takes pupils from Shipbourne village, other local villages and Tonbridge. Pupil numbers are fairly stable year on year, and there are currently 60 pupils aged four to eleven. The school is much smaller than average. There are two classes, the first for pupils in their reception year, and in Years 1 and 2, and the second for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Some reception-aged children start part time in September, and build up to full time by January. There were nine reception-age children at the time of the inspection, six of whom were part-time. Reception-age children's skills are generally above expectations for their age when they first start school. Most pupils are from socially advantaged families, and below average numbers are eligible for free school meals. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups, which reflects the population of the area. One pupil has English as an additional language which is a lower number than average. Eight pupils (13%) are on the school's special needs register, and although this number is below average, this is greater than at the time of the last inspection. No pupil has a Statement of their special needs. The school is currently working successfully towards achieving the Quality Mark, awarded by the Basic Skills Agency.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Shipbourne is a very effective school. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She is very well supported by the staff and together they create a dynamic and positive atmosphere. Teaching is of high quality, and pupils flourish and achieve very high standards. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' attainment in the national tests for English, mathematics and science at the age of seven and eleven is very high.
- Teaching is good overall, and nearly half the lessons observed were very good. Teachers cater for the mixed age groups in their classes very successfully, and as a result pupils learn very well.
- The leadership of the head teacher is very good and steers the work and development of the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and work, their behaviour, relationships and personal development are all very good. They have particularly good independent working skills.
- The school gives parents many good opportunities for finding out about their children's educational programme and progress, and for becoming involved.

What could be improved

- The working practices of the governing body are not sufficiently well developed.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is not drawn together into a planned programme.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Shipbourne was last inspected in May 1997 and improvement has been very good since then. Pupils' attainment in the national tests at the age of seven has risen to very high levels, and the high attainment of the eleven year olds has risen further. The quality of teaching has improved throughout the school. Previously, there was 25 per cent unsatisfactory teaching; now there is none and 44 per cent of lessons observed were very good. The head teacher's role has strengthened, and the new head teacher now carries out many previously unfulfilled management functions. Children under five are now very well catered for and follow the appropriate curriculum. Teachers' expectations of all pupils to do well are now high, and planning has improved so that work is now very well matched to the different age and ability groups within each class. Curriculum planning has developed well. The latest guidelines have been followed, and all subjects, apart from personal, social and health education have a proper programme. The school has improved communication and relationships with parents, and their concerns have considerably reduced. Parents now receive much more information on what their children are learning, and how well they are doing. Procedures to follow if they have concerns or if their children are distressed are much clearer. In addition to improvements in these key issues arising from the last inspection, the work for pupils with special educational needs is now effectively managed and they make good progress, whereas it was previously unsatisfactory. The outside area has been vastly improved by the addition of an all-weather court for physical education and activities.

STANDARDS

Pupils achieve very well indeed at Shipbourne. In 1999, all pupils in Year 2 (age seven) reached at least expected levels for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Almost all reached the level expected for average nine year olds in mathematics, three quarters in reading and one third in writing. These results are very high in comparison to those achieved nationally, and in similar schools. Results in 2000 were similar.

There are too few pupils in Year 6 to make statistical comparisons of their results in the national tests with pupils in similar schools, or with national results. However, they, too, achieve very well. This is reflected in the ambitious targets set and reached for pupils' achievements in the Year 6 tests for 2000, and even more challenging targets set for 2001. In the 1999 national tests for Year 6 (age 11), almost all pupils reached at least the level expected for their age in the three subjects. Half reached levels expected for average 13 year olds in mathematics and science, and over half the pupils reached this level in English. In 2000, these results were further improved. All pupils reached at least levels expected for their age, and almost all reached levels expected of 13 year olds in English; three quarters of them did in mathematics, and just under half did in science. Lesson observations and analysis of work confirm these results. Pupils' speaking and reading skills, and their mathematical abilities and understanding, are all very impressive for their age. The abilities of pupils with special educational needs are close to those typical for their age. Throughout the school, pupils' well-developed English and mathematical skills give good support to their achievement in other subjects such as science, history and geography.

Lesson observations and analysis of some work show that pupils' achievements in art in both classes, history at Key Stage 2 and geography at Key Stage 1 are also above expectations for pupils' age. Standards in information technology in both classes are as expected, and pupils are beginning to use it usefully throughout the curriculum. Standards in religious education in Key Stage 2 are at expected levels.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to their work, learning and the school community are very good. They are highly motivated to learn and take part in all aspects of school life. They relish a challenge, for example in mental mathematics sessions. This positive approach helps pupils enjoy school and make good progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are generally very well behaved. Their enthusiasm can occasionally get the better of them, whereon noise levels rise temporarily. However, they are very easily calmed down.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Relationships are very good and the mixed-age classes allow older pupils to look after and support the younger ones. This continues in the playground. Pupils have particularly well-developed independent learning skills and most need minimum support to organise themselves, work hard and solve their own problems.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is very high, and slowly rising. Parents confirm that their children enjoy coming to school. All absence is properly accounted for and there is no unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
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.

The quality of teaching is good in both classes. Four of the nine lessons observed were very good, three lessons were good, and two were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. As a result of this good teaching, pupils learn very well. Literacy and numeracy are very well taught, and pupils' attainment is very high in both classes. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by work that matches their needs, and extra help if necessary. The style of the two main class teachers is very different, but ideally suited to the age-group in each class. Strengths common to all teaching observed, and which contribute particularly well to pupils' achievements, include:

- Careful pupil groupings which change according to the subject. For example, they are different for English and mathematics in both classes.
- Very good planning which ensures that each year group in the class has work that builds on what they already know, and promotes their progress without being too difficult. The reception-age pupils have their needs particularly well met in this way.
- Topic work is very well planned. It incorporates several subjects, covered at a penetrating depth.
- Teachers promote wide-ranging discussions which reinforce several subjects, as well as pupils' speaking and listening skills and personal development.
- Teachers manage pupils very well and have high expectations of them to behave, listen, concentrate and give of their best, which they do.

Occasional features of the less effective lessons include teachers being less secure in their subject knowledge; not keeping to time which means that all the tasks planned can not be completed, and not giving pupils sufficient instructions about what they are expected to do in practical work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. All subject areas are fully covered in depth. Work is suitably based on government-produced guidelines, but is presented in a way which links subjects together and makes them particularly interesting. The National Literacy and Numeracy strategies are very well implemented and taught, and meet the needs of the mixed-age groups very well. The range and number of extra-curricular activities is appropriate for the size of the school. The community and visitors are used well to bring the curriculum to life.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	These pupils are well provided for and they make good progress. Work is well matched to their needs in class, and individual education plans form a good basis for the extra support given.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal and social development is good and threaded through the school's daily life and work, although it is not drawn together into a planned programme of work. The school encourages responsibility, autonomy and initiative, and values pupils' achievements. It provides a democratic community in which pupils can develop their notions of right, wrong and responsibility. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development are well promoted throughout the curriculum and everyday life of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes good provision for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. It has good systems for recording their personal development, and their academic progress in English and mathematics. Systems for assessing their achievements in other areas are satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own strengths and areas for development regularly which contributes well to their personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership provided by the head teacher is very good and underpins the successful work and development of the school. She is very well supported by the school staff. The head assumes many extra management responsibilities, such as overseeing most of the subjects. This enables the other teachers to concentrate on their class responsibilities and contributes to the high standards achieved.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Individually, governors are supportive and committed to the school. As a body, most of their responsibilities are fulfilled but they have not yet addressed important issues raised by the last auditor's report, such as having a finance policy in place, or properly minuted committee meetings. Furthermore, working practices are not based upon a suitable working relationship with the head teacher. Expectations and responsibilities are not properly defined, which prevents clear, easily understood, corporate decision making.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school staff analyse pupils' performance data carefully and use it to plan improvements. Evaluation of other aspects of the school's performance, such as cost-effectiveness, is less well developed.
The strategic use of resources	Use of the school's finances to maintain high standards and obtain best value are satisfactory. The school development plan is not well enough prioritised or costed to give a properly strategic basis for improvement. The school's use of additional grant money is good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Teaching is good and pupils make good progress. • Staff have high expectations of pupils; they are well supported to become mature and sensible. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities. • Information about their children's progress. • Their working relationships with the school. • The homework system.

The inspectors fully support the parents' positive comments. However, they consider the range of extra-curricular activities to be appropriate for the size of the school, and that parents have many opportunities for finding out about their children's progress, and for working closely with the school. The school is aware that parents' perception of homework varies. New, clearer documentation has already been drafted and will be put into use in January.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils' attainment in the national tests for English, mathematics and science at the age of seven and eleven is very high.

In the 1999 national tests taken by seven year olds at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' performance was very good indeed. In the reading, writing and mathematics tests, and in the assessments made by teachers in science, all pupils reached at least levels expected for their age in all subjects. Many reached levels expected of average nine year olds. Results were similar in the year 2000.

Pupils continue to achieve well and maintain their high standards. Eleven year old pupils' attainment in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 tests was similarly high. At least half achieved levels typical of 13 year olds in English, mathematics and science. In 2000, pupils' attainment in these tests had improved, particularly in English and mathematics.

Inspectors' judgement of work seen in these subjects is that it is above average for pupils' age. Pupils' speaking skills and vocabulary are particularly good and are used very well in all that they do. For example, some pupils at Key Stage 1 talked about their holidays abroad, using language such as *climate, palm fronds, pampas grass, Hawaii and Barbados*. They spoke fluently, explaining what they had seen and done in a way that caught their friends' interest. Many older pupils at this key stage read simple books easily, for pleasure, and their writing is good. Most spell common words correctly, use capital letters and full stops, and try hard to spell unknown words. For example one able pupil at the **start** of Year 2 wrote "I went down *sters* but I fell down the *sters* and *hute* my leg...I had a plate of *bickit* in my hand." At Key Stage 2, pupils use technical vocabulary freely, such as *rhombus, dialogue, and narrative* and can make deductions about the meanings of words from their context. Pupils vary their speech for different purposes. For example, they can confidently address the whole class quite formally when giving a book review, using interesting, complex language, and dealing well with questions. Most pupils read out loud with great expression and clear understanding. Their writing is neat, well-spelt and plentiful, with good use of interesting vocabulary and "techniques" such as starting stories with dialogue. Pupils' good English skills support their achievement in all subjects of the curriculum.

Pupils' skills in mathematics are equally good. At Key Stage 1, the use of mathematics is embedded in pupils' everyday work. They turn to it naturally, for example using measurement confidently in science investigations when they easily added and subtracted items from a pile to vary its height by given amounts. At Key Stage 2, pupils' mathematical skills are very advanced. In one lesson observed for Years 5 and 6, pupils identified, classified and named a range of complex quadrilaterals (four-sided, two dimensional shapes.) They did this quickly and correctly, with complete understanding and free use of the correct terminology such as *axis of symmetry*. Pupils defined shapes by their properties, such as how many pairs of parallel sides they had, or that they "tessellate very easily." Analysis of work showed that they also understand percentages, fractions, decimals and place value to 1,000,000; they understand and work with common denominators and ratios, and can name and calculate a range of angles, such as *obtuse, acute and right*. Pupils with special educational needs also show impressive skills that are close to average for their age.

Analysis of work shows that pupils' attainment in some other subjects is also above average for their age. For example, in science at Key Stage 1, pupils understand some effects of forces such as magnetism, gravity and friction, and the variety of life found in different habitats. They are keen to set up and carry out their own investigations, making predictions and deductions, with minimal support. Pupils' art skills are very good in both classes. At Key Stage 1, pupils are already using suitable vocabulary, such as *hot and cold* colours, and mix paints together carefully to create subtle gradations of colour. Collage work is excellent and a lovely display of pupils' pencil drawings of objects, translated into detailed, very careful collage, using string, straw, matchsticks, wool and pasta show the extent of their skills. At Key Stage 2, pupils show how well they can study and interpret artists' work, and create their own, for example portraits in Holbein's style, done in pastels and paint.

Teaching is good overall, and nearly half the lessons observed were very good. Teachers cater for the mixed age groups in their classes very successfully, and as a result pupils learn

very well.

Teaching is good overall, but nearly half the lessons observed were very good and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. As a result, pupils learn very well. Teaching was equally good in both classes, and although the style of the two main class teachers is very different, the methods are entirely suited to the two age groups.

At Key Stage 1, particular strengths in teaching include very good relationships and an approach well-suited to young children. The teacher uses humour, song and expression in her voice to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. She explains and demonstrates new concepts, such as paying just one penny for one item 'bought', several times, slightly differently, to ensure that the pupils have fully understood. Very good questioning draws out and extends the pupils, and questions are pitched at the right level for each individual to be challenging, but achievable. This allows all pupils, from the youngest reception child who has only been in school four weeks, to the oldest pupil in Year 2, to learn and make progress in whole-class sessions. Constant reminders about listening, watching, staying quiet and concentrating introduce pupils to good work habits. This helps them settle and learn. The classroom is exceptionally well set out in different areas focusing on various subjects, such as history, writing, science and mathematics. Displays are stimulating and very well labelled with questions to help pupils with their work, to think about what they see and read, and to develop them further. Teamwork between the teacher and supporting adults is very good, and the classroom assistant works very effectively to support various groups, such as the youngest pupils or those with special needs. This ensures their full inclusion and good progress.

At Key Stage 2, very effective teaching includes penetrating questioning which really challenges pupils to think and make deductions. Questions are sometimes "closed" when they need a particular answer, such as when testing pupils on the names of mathematical shapes or their properties. At such times, the questioning is rapid and exciting and pupils are highly attentive and motivated. On the other hand, questioning is often "open" when the teacher wants pupils to give opinions, or develop ideas. At these times, she sets the question, and only prompts pupils if necessary, to help them achieve the task. They generally manage this very well on their own. Teachers make very good use of subject-specific vocabulary, such as the names of items used in various faith weddings. They use such vocabulary freely in their own language which helps pupils understand the meaning and use it in theirs. Homework is an automatic extension of class work, and is well set to reinforce what pupils have learned and develop it further.

Common characteristics of the best teaching in both classes include well thought out groupings of pupils which vary from subject to subject. This allows pupils to work with others at a similar level to themselves so they can collaborate easily. Planning of class work is very good and ensures that each year and ability group in the class has their individual and curricular needs properly met. For example, reception-age pupils and those in Year 2 may both be working on addition in mathematics. However, the youngest learn through a supported art activity where they print, adding on one more in each row, whilst the oldest pupils are working independently on calculations with money. Topic work is also very well planned and allows several subjects to be linked together which pupils find interesting and motivating. Teachers in both classes have very high expectations of pupils to work hard, be organised and sort out minor problems for themselves, which they do. This helps them become independent learners very quickly. Teachers have very good behaviour management techniques, and can easily bring pupils' wandering attention back. However, this is not often necessary because their exciting and relevant lessons are generally enough to maintain pupils' interest and desire to work and learn.

Features of less effective lessons include teachers being less secure in their subject knowledge; not keeping to time which means that all the tasks planned can not be completed, and not giving pupils sufficient instructions about what they are expected to do in practical work. As a result, too much time is spent trying to work this out for themselves.

The leadership of the head teacher is very good and steers the work and development of the school.

The head teacher has taken her role very seriously since her appointment three years ago, and has

sought to systematically improve the areas of weakness identified in the last inspection. One finding was that the previous head's heavy teaching commitment prevented some of her management functions from being carried out. In the light of the improvement needed, the decision to reduce the current head's teaching role to enable her to concentrate on management and development was very wise. As a result, school improvement and development has been very good. The school is now very effective and pupils' happiness, security and personal development are given equal priority to their academic achievement.

The head teacher maintains a high profile in the classroom, and is involved in all aspects of the school's work. She is very clear about what she wants to do, and what is possible in the school. The head has co-ordinated and driven much of the school's development by working towards achieving the Quality Mark, awarded by the Basic Skills Agency. This is based on the systematic development of teaching and learning, and the assessment of pupils' skills. The head recognises that good working practice and sustaining development in such a small school requires close team work and mutual support, and has worked hard to achieve this. She is very well supported by the staff, and they put the pupils and their achievements at the heart of all they do. The head has developed the monitoring of teaching and learning, with considerable improvement in both as a result. Whereas 25 per cent of teaching - all at Key Stage 1 - was judged unsatisfactory in the last inspection, there is now none and the Key Stage 1 class is working very well indeed. As a result, pupils are doing much better, and the needs of all age groups, in particular children in their reception year, are now being properly met. Pupils' progress is well supported by individual targets in English, mathematics and personal development set for them each term. Planning and support for pupils with special educational needs is now much improved and they, too, now make good progress. The employment of a part-time teacher to support the wide age-range in the Key Stage 2 class has helped the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and pupils' high attainment in these and other subjects.

A full, documented curriculum has now been put into place, based on government guidelines, and teaching time for the older pupils has been increased to ensure they get the most out of school. The head teacher has taken responsibility for the implementation and development of the foundation subjects. This allows the class teachers to concentrate on co-ordinating English and mathematics throughout the school, and on planning carefully for their own teaching. This has contributed to the high standards achieved. Staff look closely at pupils' test results and achievements, and plan well to continually improve them. For example, they are aware that science results are not quite at the level of English and mathematics at Key Stage 2, and have made good plans to support their improvement. A new commercial spelling and writing scheme was purchased as a result of a close look at English results, and have contributed to pupils' improved standards in these areas.

The head teacher has been very keen to develop relationships with parents and reduce the concerns expressed at the time of the last inspection. Much has been done to address these issues. The head is aware that some aspects need further improvement. For example, all parents are not yet clear about the homework system, but developments are already in hand and will be introduced by January.

Pupils' attitudes to school and work, their behaviour, relationships and personal development are all very good. They have particularly good independent working skills.

Pupils come to Shipbourne keen to learn and make friends, and the school is very successful in maintaining and developing these positive attitudes. Attendance is very high, and parents confirm that their children like school. Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning. They enjoy lessons, and particularly like a challenge. For example, in a mathematics lesson at Key Stage 2, one pupil said "Ooh, good, I like that game," and several others agreed, when the teacher told them what mental mathematics task they would be doing.

Pupils' behaviour is generally very good — in class, around the school and in the playground. Parents are pleased with the school's influence on their children's behaviour. Pupils are friendly and polite to visitors and to each other, work very well in pairs or small groups, and share the playground and classroom equipment well. Occasionally, pupils' enthusiasm causes noise levels to rise, but even so behaviour is good and they are easily brought back "down" again.

Pupils' relationships with one another, and with adults, are very good. The mixed age groups give great support for this, particularly at Key Stage 1. The youngest pupils learn from and are looked after by the older ones whilst they learn "the ropes." Older pupils are careful to relate to both boys and girls, and all

age groups in the class, when they are “in control”, for example on the playground or when leading a class discussion. Pupils feel valued. Their self-esteem is good and is reinforced by praise and events such as the Friday *Achievement Assembly* where awards are given for extra-positive behaviour and attitudes. Pupils understand the school rules and have a clear idea of responsibility and what is right and wrong. They enjoy accepting responsibility, such as for marking their own work which they do without cheating, and also for carrying out jobs which help the class and school community. Pupils take pride in the appearance of their work, and older pupils file away each piece of loose-leaf paper in the right place, reviewing the finished pages with pride.

Pupils have particularly good independent working skills which are developed from the moment they start in the Key Stage 1 class. Teachers throughout the school have very high expectations of the pupils to listen carefully, follow instructions, and get on without fussing. Pupils’ generally high attainment supports this approach, because they are mainly very quick to understand, and sort things out for themselves. Many instances of this independent approach were seen. For example, at Key Stage 1, a group of four pupils in Year 2 were set the task of investigating how far different cars roll off the end of slopes of varying steepness. These pupils collaborated instantly to work out their method, and “build” the support for their slope out of books and cushions. They understood immediately that they needed to measure both the height of the top of the slope, and the distance the cars travelled, and used a metre rule to do so. They worked out a very good method for comparing the distances travelled, and completed this investigation on their own. The teacher’s questioning after the investigation led them to try and explain results which differed from their predictions, and developed their understanding. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were asked to write character sketches based on drawings of people, but avoiding description of their physical characteristics. They were given 15 minutes to do this task. Several pupils found this quite difficult, but by the end of the time allocated, most had written at least half a page of neat, ink-written, well-formed sentences describing the personalities of their subject.

The school gives parents many good opportunities for finding out about their children’s educational programme and progress, and for becoming involved in its work.

At the time of the last inspection, parents had significant concerns about how their complaints were handled, and the lack of information about their children’s work and progress. The recent parents’ meeting and questionnaire returns show that the school has worked hard and successfully to reduce these concerns, and inspection judgements confirm this.

Although a number of parents still do not feel well-informed about their children’s progress, inspection findings are that parents are given many good opportunities for gaining this information. There are now termly consultation meetings, held at different times of the day so that working parents can attend. Written reports about pupils’ achievements are comprehensive, accurate summaries of what has been achieved. They increasingly contain clear statements about what pupils have to do to improve. Termly targets are set and fixed in pupils’ reading record books which go between school and home every day. This helps parents work in partnership with the school in helping their children achieve these targets, and also informs them of their children’s progress. Staff are readily available for informal discussions with parents. Although some parents still say that they find it difficult to approach the school for such discussions, the take-up of these opportunities to talk to teachers has been so great that the school has had to ask parents not to come in before 8.45a.m. to allow teachers time to prepare their classrooms for the day’s work. The Key Stage 1 teacher holds a weekly “drop-in” after-school session where parents can come and see their children’s work and discuss their progress informally.

Parents are sent each term’s educational programme for their child’s class to enable them to help and support their children at home, for example by planning family outings to complement the school’s work. Curriculum information evenings are held to give parents additional information, such as on drugs awareness and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Furthermore, when the Numeracy Strategy was implemented, parents were invited to come in to school and watch a numeracy session in progress. This gave parents good insight into what and how their children were being taught. Parents are formally consulted on school issues by questionnaire, once a year, and the results are carefully analysed to inform developments.

Parents’ contributions to the life of the school are welcomed and encouraged. Several help regularly in the classrooms, and during the inspection, parents were observed supporting small groups of pupils and were obviously well-used to this role. The contribution made by the parents as a whole is very good, and

they fund-raise diligently to provide additional resources for the school. For example, recently, parents raised a large sum of money to contribute to the installation of the all-weather court. This is an excellent facility and has considerably increased pupils' opportunities for physical activities and education.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The working practices of the governing body are not sufficiently well developed.

As individuals, governors are supportive of, and committed to, the school. They work hard to secure its future and improve its resources. However, as a governing body, not all members share the same understanding of their role, and there are weaknesses in financial planning.

The school development plan is not sharply focused on the school's priorities for development. There is insufficient detail to provide the basis for constructing future budget plans, and the current year's plan is insufficiently costed. There is, therefore, no clear way of showing how money is used to achieve the school's goals which does not ensure that the budget is suitably used. The link between the budget and school development plan is weak because the two are not considered at the same time. The headteacher draws up the school development plan, but in isolation from the budget which is drawn up by governors at another time. Consequently, at times, the head teacher has to make a case for necessary expenditure because it has not been properly accounted for in the school development plan.

A financial audit completed six months ago recommended the governing body made some improvements. These have not yet been completed. At the time of the inspection proper procedures had still not been completed to finalise the budget for the current financial year. Minutes are not kept of all committee meetings and there is no finance policy. The lack of a finance policy contributes to the lack of clarity in financial delegation and management as the respective responsibilities and expectations of the headteacher, finance committee and governing body are not properly laid out. As minutes of committee meetings are not routinely made, decisions and actions are made on the basis of individuals' memory and interpretation, not corporate, agreed, notes. This, too, contributes to the weaknesses in the financial planning system.

The governing body has not established a fully effective professional working relationship with the headteacher. For example, there has been no proper procedure for discussing and agreeing the head teacher's annual targets. The head and governors' various roles and responsibilities are not defined, and are dependent on individuals' perceptions. Not all governors visit the school regularly, or read available material. Consequently, governing body meetings are frequent and lengthy whilst members are brought up to date. At times, the governing body moves away from its role of strategic management and becomes too involved in day to day matters which hinders the smooth strategic management of the school.

The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is not drawn together into a planned programme.

Shipbourne provides well for pupils' personal development through its every day work. For example, the ethos of the school supports the development of pupils' notions of right and wrong, fairness and responsibility. Discussions during class *Circle Time* explore these and other such issues in more depth. The family atmosphere promotes the inclusion of all, and helps pupils understand the need to care for one another and contribute to the school community. The school emphasises the importance of good behaviour and has good systems in place to help pupils conform and to recognise their efforts. Aspects of pupils' personal development are tracked by staff and the pupils themselves each term. This helps pupils appreciate their own achievements and understand what they need to do to improve.

However, whilst provision for pupils personal development is good, provision for their personal, social and health **education** (PSHE) is not sufficiently formalised. Consequently, whilst all the above takes place, it is mainly on an informal basis. There is no clear means of ensuring that staff have the same view of the qualities they want the pupils to develop and are working towards the same end. This works well at the moment, but may not be so successful if staff were to change. Although there is some direct teaching, for example on sex education, bullying and healthy eating, this is in other subjects and is not identified as part of a PSHE programme. Topics covered in *Circle Time* are not part of a planned

programme. Overall, the school has not formally identified what they want PSHE to include, and through what means they will achieve it. This does not sufficiently secure pupils' education and learning in this area.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to maintain the school's strengths and improve the weaknesses identified in the inspection, the headteacher, governing body and school staff must:

- (1) review and develop the working practices and procedures of the governing body to create a more open and effective forum for management. Proper account must be taken of government and local authority guidelines and recommendations.
- (2) draw up a systematic programme for the personal, social and health education of pupils of all ages. It should identify, include and develop the work and good practice already in place.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	9
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	4

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	44	33	22	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		57
Number of full-time pupils 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		8

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.4

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.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	4	7	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	3	5	8

There were too few pupils in the year group to report their attainment in percentage forms or to compare results with those achieved nationally. However, in English, mathematics and science, almost all reached levels expected for their age. Half the pupils reached levels expected of average thirteen year olds in English and science, and nearly two thirds did in mathematics.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	51
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.04
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	154959
Total expenditure	148824
Expenditure per pupil	2565
Balance brought forward from previous year	12951
Balance carried forward to next year	19086

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	60
Number of questionnaires returned	45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	42	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	56	0	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	49	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	53	11	0	2
The teaching is good.	67	33	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	51	16	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	33	11	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	38	42	13	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	40	7	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	47	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	42	24	4	